

**PRESS RELEASE**

ICRC

AU-ICRC Roundtable on Operationalization of the obligation to ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law

Addis Ababa, 1 June 2018: The African Union (AU) Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) organized the third annual Roundtable on the Operationalization of the obligation to ensure respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), on 30 and 31 May 2018, at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Roundtable received opening remarks from the Acting Director for Peace and Security, Dr. Admore Kambudzi. The Roundtable was aimed at discussing challenges, measures and good practices experienced by AU and UN peace support operations in Africa, related to ensuring respect for IHL.

This Roundtable comes at a time when the number and intensity of peace support operations in Africa is increasing, with their mandates also becoming more robust and intensive. In this regard, the protection of civilians is amongst the core tasks of peace support operations. However, the peace support operations personnel also face various challenges, including the changing and asymmetric nature of warfare, its urbanization in some cases, and the difficulties to distinguish between combatants and civilians.

In this context, the Roundtable exchanged views on some of the challenges experienced by peace support operations, including aspects of protection of civilians, use of force in multinational operations and some critical issues relating to the handover of detainees. These discussions feed into ongoing AU efforts to enhance its comprehensive framework of compliance with IHL, human rights and conduct and discipline obligations and standards in peace support operations. It also contribute to on-going processes aimed at ensuring enhancement of mechanisms for prevention and response to all forms of violations. A number of recommendations for AU, UN, TCCs and other stakeholders were agreed upon, including aspects related to the need for adequate staffing and resources, as well as appropriate equipment and contextualized training.

The Roundtable gathered representatives from the AU and UN headquarters and field missions (namely AMISOM, MNJTF, Group of Five Sahel Joint Force, MONUSCO, MINUSMA); Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (ECOWAS, EASF, SADC); selected African Troop Contributing Countries (including Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia and Malawi), the EU delegation to the AU and UNOAU.

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