



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Commissioner Chergui receives Ministers of Foreign Affairs of The Democratic Republic of Congo, The Gambia and Norway**

**Addis Ababa, 24 January 2018:** The African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, Amb. Smail Chergui, received today at the AU Headquarters, Foreign Ministers of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Gambia, and Norway.

In their meeting, the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the DRC, Leonard She Okitundu, discussed the latest developments in the DRC. The two recognized the imperative of reducing the current tension while respecting the provision of the constitution related to the freedom of demonstration and equally preserving public order and security of all Congolese citizens.

The Commissioner for Peace and Security stressed the AU's commitment to the stability of the DRC while noting the need to hold the elections within the deadlines as outlined in the electoral calendar published by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) in November 2017. In this regard, he underlined the importance of the joint Mission of African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) to visit Kinshasa soon as part of a coherent and effective support to the electoral process.

Commissioner Chergui also received the Gambian Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and Gambians Abroad, Ousainou Darboe, and exchanged views on a range of issues including the planned AU Technical Support to the Transitional Justice, and Security Sector Reform processes in the country.

The Commissioner informed the Gambian Minister that as a follow up to the high level needs assessment mission conducted to the Gambia in May 2017, the Commission is in the process of deploying ten (10) Experts to support the Government in the areas of Human Rights, Transitional Justice, Rule of Law, and Security Sector Reform (SSR).

Minister Darboe expressed his gratitude to the Commission for the role it played during the transition period and for its continued support to the Gambian Government in its efforts to consolidate democracy, human rights and governance in the country. He emphasized the imperative for public sector reforms, most notably of the country's defence and security institutions. Furthermore, he informed the Commissioner about progress relating to the establishment of a Truth, Reconciliation and Compensation Commission in order to foster healing and social cohesion.

In his meeting with Mrs. Ine Erikson Soreide, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, the two Officials exchanged views on several current peace and security issues in Africa, including the AU's conflict prevention efforts, the Horn of Africa, AU-UN relationship, terrorism and violent extremism as well as the recently launched initiative by the AU Commission of Pan African Network of Women Mediators (FEMWISE). The Commissioner and the Minister highlighted the importance of multilateralism and expressed their satisfaction about the continued reinforcement of the AU-UN partnership.

The Commissioner Chergui seized the opportunity to reiterate the AU's appreciation to the Government and People Norway for their friendship and fruitful partnership in the quest for peace, security and stability in Africa.

2018-01-24

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Peace and Security

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