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## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

### **THE 13<sup>TH</sup> JOINT AU-ICRC SEMINAR HELD UNDER THE THEME ‘TERRORISM, COUNTER-TERRORISM AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW’**

***Addis Ababa, 18 October 2017:*** The Commission of the African Union (AU) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) convened the joint seminar on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, on 13 October 2017. The 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the seminar was dedicated to the theme “*Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and International Humanitarian Law*”.

The seminar was attended by AU member states affected by the scourge of terrorism, the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Multi-National Joint Task Force against the Boko Haram terrorist group, as well as international partners and humanitarian actors.

The seminar aimed at deepening the understanding of IHL, specifically with regard to its applicability to African-led counter-terrorism efforts. Experts and practitioners discussed contemporary challenges to the applicability of the law of war in the context of fight against terrorism. They also reflected on humanitarian concerns resulting from counter-terrorism activities, and the impact that they may have on neutral, independent and impartial humanitarian action. The seminar also reviewed the experiences and challenges encountered by Member States in their fight against terrorism.

The participants stressed the urgent need to take action in order to avoid the negative impact of counter-terrorism measures on neutral, independent and humanitarian action, including the criminalization of humanitarian and aid organizations. They further highlighted the importance of protecting people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence related to terrorism. On this occasion, they recalled the communique of the 455<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Peace and Security Council on preventing and combating terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, which emphasized the imperative for AU Member States to uphold the highest standards of human rights and international humanitarian law in the fight against terrorism.

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Peace and Security

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