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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

634TH MEETING

18 OCTOBER 2016

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(DCXXXIV)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 634th meeting held on 19 October 2016, was briefed by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Peter Maurer, on the activities of the ICRC in Africa and challenges related to humanitarian aspects of crisis and conflict situations on the continent. Council also received a briefing from the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, highlighting the status of cooperation between the AU and the ICRC.

Council recalled its earlier press statements on ICRC's activities in Africa, and took note of the ICRC's briefing, as well as the ICRC Report entitled ICRC 2016, *Translating the Kampala Convention into Practice: A Stock Taking Exercise*.

Council welcomed ICRC's commitment to the partnership and cooperation, as well as to regular consultations with the AU, in particular the PSC, within the framework of Article 17 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU.

Council commended the efforts deployed by the ICRC, particularly in Africa, and reaffirmed AU's commitment to facilitate its activities relating to the provision of support and assistance to populations living in conflict and post-conflict areas, as well as in other situations of violence and need in Africa, so as to strengthen peace, security and stability on the continent. Council also noted with concern the increasing demands for ICRC's support in conflict and crisis situations in Africa and the resulting challenges. In this context, Council applauded ICRC for putting Africa high on its priorities.

Council welcomed the commitment of ICRC to work on the issue of gender-based sexual violence in conflict situations with a view to finding solutions, in collaboration with the office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

Council appealed to all Member States to extend their full cooperation in support of the activities of ICRC in their respective countries. In this regard, Council stressed the need for closer collaboration between ICRC and the AU Commission, as well as all other stakeholders in protecting civilians and providing humanitarian assistance in conflict situations.

Council acknowledged the importance of adhering to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights Law (HRL) in conflict situations and called for training for all actors in conflict situations, with a view to contributing to capacity building and to laying solid foundations for the prevention of violations. In this regard, Council requested the AU Commission to continue providing pre-deployment IHL and HRL training to troops for AU peace support operations in order for them to respect human rights and to effectively protect civilian populations in conflict situations. Council further called upon all Member States to comply with relevant African and international instruments relating to IHL.

Council welcomed the proposal by ICRC to review the definition of the concept of 'humanitarian crisis' so as to widen its scope to also include dimensions relating to displacement of civilians and the impact in urban areas.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.

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