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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
644TH MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
12 DECEMBER 2016

PSC/PR/COMM. (DCXLIV)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 644th meeting held on 12 December 2016, adopted the following decision on the post-election situation in The Islamic Republic of The Gambia:

Council:

1. **Takes note** of the briefing made by the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, on recent developments in The Gambia, following the presidential election held in that country on 1 December 2016. Council **also takes note** of the statements made by the Representatives of The Gambia, as well as of Liberia, in its capacity as Chair of the Authority of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
2. **Recalls** the Press Statement of its 642nd meeting held on 6 December 2016, by which Council congratulated the out-going President Yahya Jammeh for the peaceful conduct of the presidential election of 1 December 2016, and commended him for his acceptance of the outcome of the election by recognizing the victory of the opposition candidate Adama Barrow, the President-Elect of The Gambia;
3. **Endorses** the Press Release issued by the Chairperson of the Commission, on 10 December 2016, reaffirming the imperative need for the concerned Gambian stakeholders to strictly comply with the rule of law and the respect of the will of their people as clearly expressed during the 1 December 2016 presidential elections that have been labelled free, fair and transparent;
4. **Also endorses** the Press Release issued on 11 December 2016, by the Chair of the Union, H. E. President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad, stressing the imperative for the respect of the will of the people of The Gambia, as expressed on 1 December 2016, as well as for a speedy and peaceful transfer of power to preserve, peace and stability in The Gambia and the region;
5. **Recalls** the relevant provisions of the AU Constitutive Act, as well as those of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, on the total rejection by the AU of unconstitutional changes of government, in particular any refusal by an incumbent government to relinquish power to the winning party or candidate after free, fair and regular elections, as provided for in Article 23 (4) of the Charter;
6. **Notes with particular concern** the statement made on 9 December 2016, by the out-going President, in which he rejected the outcome of the 1 December 2016 presidential election, after having already conceded defeat. Council **also notes with concern** the statements made by other political actors which have heightened tensions, following the announcement of the results of the election;

7. **Strongly rejects** any attempt to circumvent or reverse the outcome of the presidential election held in The Gambia on 1 December 2016, a clear expression of the popular will and choice of the Gambian people. In this respect, Council **calls upon** the outgoing President, Yahya Jammeh to keep to the letter and spirit of his speech delivered on 2 December 2016, in which he welcomed the maturity of democracy in The Gambia and congratulated the President-Elect, Adama Barrow;

8. **Calls upon** the Government of The Gambia and all other concerned Gambian stakeholders to work together to facilitate a peaceful and orderly transfer of power to the new President of The Gambia, as decided by the people of the country. In this context, Council **urges** all stakeholders, including defense and security forces, to exercise utmost restraint and refrain from any statement or action that may further complicate the rapid and peaceful transfer of power, in compliance with relevant provisions of the Gambian Constitution and relevant AU instruments;

9. **Expresses its appreciation** to the Chairperson of the Union for his initiatives and efforts aimed at supporting those of ECOWAS and countries of the region to urgently find a way for a speedy and peaceful transfer of power in The Gambia;

10. **Commends** the ongoing joint efforts led by ECOWAS, with the support of the AU and the UN, to facilitate the speedy and peaceful transfer of power, in line with regional and continental instruments to which The Gambia is party, in particular the AU Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. Council **expresses** its appreciation to the Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority, Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, for her commitment and determination towards finding a solution to the current political crisis in The Gambia. In this respect, Council **looks forward** to the outcome of the visit of the ECOWAS Heads of State Delegation to The Gambia;

11. **Decides** as follows with respect to the steps to be taken to give effect to the will of the Gambian people, as manifested in the outcome of the presidential election held on 1st December 2016:
 - a) to recommend that a High-Level delegation, led by the Chair of the Union, and comprising one representative from each of the AU regions, visit The Gambia, as soon as possible, to engage with all Gambian concerned stakeholders, with a view to facilitating the peaceful and speedy transfer of power,

 - b) to request the Chairperson of the Commission to urgently undertake the necessary consultations, at the appropriate level, with a view to finalizing the composition of the high-level delegation,

- c) to pursue and intensify coordinating efforts with ECOWAS and the UN with a view to facilitating a speedy and orderly transfer of power to the president-elect of The Gambia;
12. **Stresses the determination** of the AU to take all necessary measures, in line with the relevant AU Instruments, with a view to ensuring full respect and compliance with the will and desire expressed by the people of The Gambia on 1 December 2016;
13. **Further stresses** the imperative of dialogue and reconciliation across all layers of The Gambian nation, as it moves forward to consolidate democracy, peace and stability for the development of the country;
14. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

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