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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
685TH MEETING
12 MAY 2017
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(DCLXXXV)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 685th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 12 May 2017, considered the renewal of the mandate of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA) and adopted the following decision:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of the Implementation of the RCI-LRA (PSC/PR/RPT. (DCLXXXV), as well as the introductory remarks of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, delivered on his behalf by the Acting Director for Peace and Security. Council **also takes note** of statements made by representatives of the RCI-LRA member countries, namely: the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Uganda; and Gabon, in its capacity as Chair of the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS). Council **further takes note** of statements made by the representatives of the United Nations(UN), the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA);
2. **Recalls** all its previous decisions and pronouncements on the fight against the LRA, particularly the communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(CCXCIX)] of its 299th meeting held on 22 November 2011, authorizing the deployment of the RCI-LRA, and the Communiqué(PSC/PR/COMM.(DCI) adopted at its 601st meeting held on 30 May 2016, in which Council endorsed the Conclusions of the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM) of the RCI-LRA, held in Addis Ababa, on 20 May 2016;
3. **Also recalls** the decisions of the Summit of the RCI-LRA member countries adopted in Addis Ababa, on 29 January 2017, in the margins of the 28th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Council **further recalls** the Conclusions of the 6th Ministerial meeting of the JCM, held in Addis Ababa, on 30 March 2017.
4. **Notes with satisfaction** the progress made by the RCI-LRA towards the elimination of the LRA, particularly through the operations conducted by the Regional Task Force (RTF), which have significantly degraded the fighting capacity of the LRA. In this regard, Council **commends** RCI-LRA troop contributing countries for their relentless commitment to defeat the LRA. Council **also commends** the troops of the RTF for their commitment in the fight against the LRA, **pays particular tribute** to the RTF soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice and those who have sustained injuries in line of duty;
5. **Expresses its deep appreciation** to all AU partners, notably the USA, the EU and the UN, for their continued support to the RCI-LRA and **urges** them to enhance their support, with a view to enabling the RTF to pursue and intensify its action towards the elimination of the threat that LRA continues to pose to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region;
6. **Stresses** that, in spite of the progress achieved to date, the LRA has not yet been eliminated and still maintains the potential to rejuvenate itself, particularly, if the security vacuum following the withdrawal of the Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and the US Special Forces is not urgently filled, and if the current momentum and pressure by the RTF are not sustained;

7. **Reiterates its deep concern** over the continued criminal activities of the LRA, as well as over the negative impact of those conducted by CAR armed groups, notably the ex-Seleka (*Popular Front for the Rebirth of the Central African Republic* or FPRC, and *l'Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique* or UPC), and Anti-Balaka, which undermine the peace process in that country and cause displacement of civilians, loss of lives and destruction of property, in the same theatre of LRA operations. In this regard, Council **reaffirms its commitment** to the elimination the LRA and all negative forces operating in the region, as well as to stabilize areas affected by the activities of this terrorist group;
8. **Welcomes with appreciation** the offer made by Uganda and South Sudan to train the CAR armed forces (FACA), with a view to enabling them to better contribute in the fight against the LRA. Council **also welcomes** the offer by Uganda to host the new RTF Headquarters in the north-western part of the country. In the same context, Council **commends** the partners, namely the EU and US, for the readiness they expressed to support the RTF Headquarters;
9. **Requests** the Commission to engage with the CAR authorities and other AU Member States, as well as with partners to assist in training, equipping, mentoring and sustaining of at least two FACA Battalions and four Formed Police Units, to enable them to assume a greater responsibility for the security and protection of civilians in the LRA-affected parts of their country;
10. **Also requests** the Commission to redouble its efforts in the stabilization and rehabilitation of the LRA-affected areas, including through implementation of peace strengthening and quick impact projects, within the context of the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Programme and the African Solidarity Initiative. Council **stresses** that, in the short term, this will enable the population affected by the activities of the LRA to enjoy peace dividends while, in the longer term, enabling RCI-LRA to win the hearts and minds of the population and deprive the LRA of human and logistical support;
11. **Urges** the UN Security Council to take into account the disarmament of the LRA in the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA);
12. **Decides** to renew the mandate of the RCI-LRA for further twelve (12) months until 22 May 2018, taking into account the need to realign the Concept of Operations (CONOPs) of the RTF with the latest developments on the ground, mainly the withdrawal of the UPDF and US Special Forces, and **requests** the Commission to take the necessary steps to expedite the review of the CONOPS and mobilize adequate resources to sustain the Initiative during this period;
13. **Further requests** the Commission to convene the next Summit of the RCI-LRA member countries, as soon as possible, with a view to providing the necessary guidance on the future configuration of the RCI-LRA;
14. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

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