



## Security Council

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### **Letter dated 29 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit the present document, containing the decisions of the fourteenth extraordinary session of the African Union Assembly, on Silencing the Guns, including a decision on the question of Western Sahara (see annexes), and request that it be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jerry Matthews **Matjila**  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative



**Annex I to the letter dated 29 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**DECISION OF THE 14TH EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION ON SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA**

**The Assembly,**

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Activities and Efforts towards Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020;
2. **COMMENDS** the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for its leadership and engagement in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa, the commemoration and conduct of the Africa Amnesty month for collection of illegally owned weapons, as well as the Theme of the Year 2020, which have resulted in significant gains in the efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts/crises in the Continent;
3. **ALSO COMMENDS** the Member States, and the Regional Economic Communities and the Regional Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), the AU Commission, as well as the United Nations (UN) and other partners for their support towards silencing the guns in Africa, as espoused in the Solemn Declaration of the 50th Golden Jubilee of the Organization of African Unity/African Union (OAU/AU) adopted by the Assembly of the Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 25 May 2013 and AU Agenda 2063;
4. **COMMITTS** to redouble efforts to remove deficits in governance in the Continent in line with the provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development, in order to address the governance-related causes of conflicts/crises;
5. **NOTES WITH DEEP CONCERN** that the illicit flows of arms contributes to insecurity and violence in various parts of Africa, thereby undermining social cohesion, public security, socio-economic development and the normal functioning of state institutions; in this regard, **URGES** Member States to enhance their efforts, including capacitating of their law enforcement agencies, for them to curb the illicit flow of weapons into and within Africa and to destroy any illicit weapons;
6. **REAFFIRMS** the AU principle of respect of borders existing at independence and the principle of prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among Member States of the Union, in line with Article 4 (b) and (f) of the AU Constitutive Act; in this regard, **ENCOURAGES** Member States to promote cross-border cooperation and to ensure peaceful resolution of border disputes in line with the provisions of the African Union Convention on Cross Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 26 to 27 June 2014, as well as the Declaration on the African Union Border Programme and its Implementation Modalities as adopted by the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Border Issues, held on 7 June 2007, in Addis Ababa.”;
7. **ACKNOWLEDGES** the progress made in the implementation of the AU Border Programme at the national, regional and continental levels, and the Programme’s important contributions to the structural prevention of conflicts,

promotion of regional and continental integration, and strengthening socioeconomic development in Africa;

8. **EMPHASIZES THE NEED** to address all structural factors that lead to illicit financial flows through strengthening and improving financial governance, combating corruption, investing in addressing tax evasion and tax havens, secrecy jurisdictions, anonymous companies, under-invoicing of trade transactions, as well as trade-based money laundering; in this regard, **AGREES** to promote transparency of ownership and control of companies, partnerships and other legal entities that can hold assets and bank accounts for illicitly acquired resources;

9. **EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN** over the persistence of terrorism and violent extremism, and the surge of foreign terrorist fighters from outside the Continent, as well as their linkage with transnational organized crime, drug and human trafficking, which results in enormous losses of human lives and widespread destruction, especially in the most affected regions of the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin and the Horn of Africa, and most recently in northern Mozambique;

10. **UNDERScores THE URGENT NEED** for Member States to continue deploying the requisite resources to better capacitate national health institutions and the Africa Centres for Disease Control (Africa CDC) in order to create adequate preventive and intervention infrastructures, including against future outbreaks of epidemics and pandemics; **STRESSES** that these efforts should go hand-in-hand with the promotion of industries and laboratories, coupled with the relevant human resources and trainings, to support such preventions and interventions;

11. **EMPHASIZES** the need for accelerated action by Member States to ensure full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with a view to realizing its potential to stimulate sustainable economic growth, job creation, strengthening of livelihoods, and improvement of standards of living which are conducive conditions for addressing the root causes of conflict in the Continent; to this effect, **ENCOURAGES** Member States, with the support of the AU Commission, to coordinate their actions in order to expedite the trade exchanges within the Continent in implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement;

12. **COMMITTS** to mobilizing the requisite resources, once a peace agreement has been signed, in order to ensure its immediate, effective and full implementation, to prevent the risk of relapse into violence; **REQUESTS** the AU Commission and RECs/RMs to mobilize support, through organizing joint resource mobilization initiatives, to enhance post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development engagements in line with the 2006 AU Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD); to this effect, the Assembly **FURTHER REQUESTS** the AU Commission to take all necessary steps to ensure full operationalization of the established African Union Centre for Post- Conflict Reconstruction and Development, in Cairo, Egypt;

13. **AGREES** to continue deploying efforts to endow the AU Peace Fund to facilitate management of peace and security activities in the Continent; in this context, **REITERATES** its request to the PSC to articulate a common African position on financing peace support operations in Africa, to guide the African Members of the UN Security Council (A3) in championing and mobilizing support within the UNSC for adoption of a resolution that will enable Africa to access UN assessed contribution for peace support operations in the Continent; in this regard, **TAKES NOTE** of the reservations regarding the use of the scale of assessment for the regular budget to assess Member States contributions to the AU Peace Fund brought by some Member States of the Northern region;

14. **REQUESTS** the PSC to work with all relevant stakeholders, including the UN, to take timely and concrete measures towards expeditiously ending the unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago of Mauritius, the Comorian Island of Mayotte, and the Glorious Malagasy Islands of Juan de Nova, Europa, and Bassas da India;

15. **EXPRESSES** deep concern over the escalating military tensions between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Sahrawi Republic that have developed in Al-Guerguerat, the narrow Buffer Strip in Western Sahara, leading to the violation of the 1991 Ceasefire Agreement, including the military agreement Number 1, and the unfortunate resumption of war; in this context, **CALLS FOR** the revitalization of the Troika Mechanism in accordance with the Decision Assembly/AU/Dec. 693 (XXXI), and **REQUESTS** the Peace and Security Council at Heads of State and Government level, to make the expected contribution of the African Union in support of the efforts of the United Nations and in line with the relevant provisions of its Protocol, to engage the two parties, both of whom are Member States of the AU, to address the unfolding situation in order to prepare conditions for a new cease-fire and to reach a just and durable solution to the conflict, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in line with the relevant AU-UN decisions and resolutions and the objectives and principles of the Constitutive Act of the African Union; furthermore, **FURTHER CALLS** on the United Nations Secretary General to appoint a Special Envoy for Western Sahara;

16. **REQUESTS** all Member States to assist in completing the decolonization of Mauritius, including by supporting all efforts in all international and regional organizations through initiatives, decisions and resolutions aimed at enabling Mauritius to assert its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago pursuant to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 25 February 2019 and UN General Assembly Resolution [73/295](#);

17. **TAKES NOTE** of the recommendation of the PSC on the conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month as contained in communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(CMXLIII)] of 3 September 2020 on the extension of Africa Amnesty Month, in order to accomplish the goal of collecting and disposing arms illegally owned by civilians; the Assembly **ALSO TAKES NOTE** of the Declaration of the 13th Ordinary Meeting of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security, adopted on 5 November 2020, recommending extension of the time- frame for implementation of both the AU Master Roadmap and the Africa Amnesty Month;

18. **UNDERLINES** the imperative for Member States of the PSC to fully shoulder the responsibilities embodied in membership of this Organ, which condition is critical in sustaining the central role of the PSC in promoting peace, security and stability in the Continent in line with the article 5 of the PSC Protocol;

19. Hereby **DECIDES**:

(i) To **EXTEND** the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa for a period of ten (10) years (2021–2030), with periodic reviews every two (2) years, within the context of Agenda 2063; **ALSO EXTENDS** the commemoration and conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month during September of each year for a period of ten (10) years (2021–2030), within the context of Agenda 2063; **REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the Commission to put in place an institutional mechanism to coordinate the effective planning, monitoring and Evaluation of the implementation of the Master Roadmap; To **CONTINUE** and also enhance implementation of the AU Master Roadmap, and conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month in September each year, focusing on domesticating these initiatives to silence the guns through tailored national action plans adapted to promote participation and contribution of the population, in particular women and youth; to

this effect, the Assembly **CALLS ON** civil society organizations, private sector and partners to continue supporting these initiatives;

(ii) That the PSC, with the support of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the Panel of the Wise, **ENSURES** strict adherence to the AU Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol and other relevant policy frameworks, in undertaking timely response to looming crises in the Continent to avoid escalation into violent conflict; in this regards, **MANDATES** the PSC to name and shame actors who deny emerging crises, as provided for in the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns and to complete the process of building a platform/framework of engagement between the PSC and Member States in situations where a looming crisis comes to the surface;

(iii) To **ACCELERATE** efforts to sign, ratify, harmonize and fully implement regional, continental and international instruments on illicit weapons, including relevant OAU/AU and RECs/RMs decisions and Declarations;

(iv) That the PSC, in collaboration with Policy Organs on peace and security of the RECs/RMs, **ESTABLISHES**, on a case-by-case basis, inquiry mechanisms, whenever information emerges concerning a country of origin, transit, or destination and facilitators of movement, payment, storage and use of illicit arms/weapons reaching Africa; in this regard, **REQUESTS** the AU Commission and RECs/RMs Secretariats to continue providing technical assistance to Member States in disposing the stored illicit arms/weapons;

(v) To **MAKE FULL USE** of the AU tools, such as the Early Warning System and Structural Vulnerability Assessment Tool, in order to address internal weaknesses before they translate into crisis, in accordance with Assembly Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.755(XXXIII)] adopted at the 33rd Ordinary Session of the AU held on 9-10 February 2020;

(vi) To **FULLY UTILIZE** all mechanisms within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and African Governance Architecture (AGA), as well as the cooperation mechanisms in the fight against terrorism, the surge of foreign terrorist fighters from outside the Continent and transnational organized crime, including the African Centre for Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT); the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) in Algiers, Algeria; the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes; and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa (CISSA), and in this regard, **REQUESTS** the AU Commission to develop a comprehensive strategy for countering terrorism in Africa, in order to consolidate coordination and enhance actions in the fight against terrorist and criminal groups; to this effect, the AU Commission should take the necessary steps to **OPERATIONALIZE** the AU Special Fund on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa;

(vii) To **ACCELERATE** AU efforts in strengthening law enforcement agencies along border areas, seaports and airports, and ensure effective presence of state institutions throughout the country to avoid vulnerability of their peripheral areas as provided for in the AU Border Programme;

(viii) To **DEPLOY** collective efforts towards addressing threats posed by foreign interferences in African peace and security matters, including those caused by imposition of unilateral sanctions, and the presence of foreign military bases in the Continent; in this connection, **URGES** Member States that intend to host foreign military bases, to engage in prior consultations with the PSC, RECs/RMs and neighboring countries and the AU Commission, to ensure that the foreign military bases serve the interest and the objectives of the Union, in line with the Common African Defence and Security Policy and the AU Non-Aggression Pact;

(ix) To **MANDATE** the PSC to develop a mechanism for naming and shaming those foreign actors and entities which interfere in the internal affairs of the AU Member States, as well as those which sponsor the influx of illegal arms/weapons and provide covert military support to armed groups in the Continent, thereby consequently undermining AU efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts;

(x) That the PSC, with the support of the AU Commission, follow up on the implementation of decisions of the Assembly and the PSC in compliance with the provisions in its Protocol. In this regard, the PSC should **SUBMIT** a matrix-report on the implementation of the Assembly and the AUPSC decisions, on matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security in the Continent, together with its annual Report on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa;

(xi) **DECIDES** to declare the African Standby Force (ASF) fully operational and **DIRECTS** the PSC to utilize its framework in mandating and authorizing AU peace support operations; in this regard, **ALSO DECIDES** to dissolve the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) taking note of the fact that ASF is operational and **REQUESTS** the Heads of State and Government of the ACIRC Volunteering Nations to wind down the operations of ACIRC by the February 2021 Ordinary Session of the Assembly.

**Annex II to the letter dated 29 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION ON SILENCING THE GUNS IN AFRICA**

**“SILENCING THE GUNS: CREATING CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS FOR AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT”**

**WE**, Heads of State and Government of the African Union assembled to deliberate and consider the efforts deployed by African Union and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and resolution (RECs/RMs) to silence the guns in Africa,

*Guided* by the principles enshrined in the Constitutive Act of our Union, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the relevant provisions of the Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP) and other relevant policies, as well as our shared values, in particular respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of our countries,

*Also guided* by the vision of our Union to “build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”,

*Recalling* the Solemn Declaration adopted by the 50th Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity/ African Union (OAU/AU) on 25 May 2013, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in which the Assembly of the Union pledged not to bequeath the burden of wars to the next generation of Africans and undertook to end all wars in Africa by the year 2020, as well as decision Assembly/AU/Dec.630 (XXVIII) by which the 28th ordinary session of the Assembly, held in Addis Ababa, on 30–31 January 2017, adopted, following submission by the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020,

*Reaffirming* our full commitment to prevent conflicts and to end existing ones in order to create conditions conducive for realizing a conflict-free Africa,

**ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:**

I. *The African Union and its Member States* have made significant progress in addressing the root causes, triggers and drivers of conflicts/crises in the Continent, working with the RECs/RMs, in the effort to achieve the AU objective to silence the guns as espoused in the Solemn Declaration adopted by the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU on 25 May 2013 and in the AU Agenda 2063.

II. *Africa still faces multiple and complex challenges*, particularly gaps in governance; terrorism; violent extremism; the surge of Foreign Terrorist Fighters from outside the Continent; illicit circulation of arms/weapons; corruption; illicit financial flows; transnational organized crimes, drug trafficking, human trafficking, siphoning of benefits from natural resources away from the population; foreign political and military interference; outbreaks of epidemics and pandemic; impact of climate change and slow process of ratification of AU instruments, among others. These challenges continue to hamper efforts to accelerate integration and socioeconomic development in the Continent.

III. *In addressing these multiple challenges*, it is critical to ensure political commitment and active engagement of all Member States, including taking all necessary measures to strengthen our common institutions and provide them with the necessary powers and resources to enable them to effectively discharge their respective mandates. In this vein, it is necessary to continue tapping from the energies of the grassroots populations/African citizens. It is also imperative to fully implement our relevant normative frameworks and ensure accountability for non-compliance with these frameworks, in line with our collective responsibility and commitment to the principle of Non-Indifference as enshrined in our Constitutive Act.

***WE HEREBY DECLARE:***

Our unwavering commitment to the full implementation of the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, with the objectives of preventing and ending conflicts and wars in the Continent in line with the vision and aspirations in Agenda 2063. In this regard, we **commit** to:

1. ***Take all necessary measures*** to promote Africa's leadership and ownership of our peace and security agenda by strengthening our continental and regional institutions through the provision of the necessary powers and resources to enable them discharge their respective mandates as they relate to the promotion of peace, security, good governance and development;
2. ***Fully implement*** the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), which guide Member States, as well as the RECs/RMs in their efforts to consolidate governance; prevent, manage and resolve conflicts; and undertake post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development;
3. ***Eradicate*** all root causes, triggers and drivers of conflicts, particularly by ending illicit arms/weapons circulation and use; removing socio-economic disparities and the widening inequalities among our citizens, including those caused by imposition of unilateral sanctions; addressing impunity through enhancement of continental, regional and national institutions;
4. ***Redouble*** efforts to control and curb the illicit flow of arms/weapons into Africa, including through commemoration and more robust conduct of the Africa Amnesty Month in September, each year, to accelerate the collection and disposal of such arms; we **agree** to address the flows and movements of illicit arms/weapons in Africa, and curb the inflow of illegal arms/weapons into Africa; we **mandate** the PSC to develop a mechanism for naming and shaming those foreign actors and entities which sponsor the influx of illegal arms/weapons into the Continent;
5. ***Deploy*** efforts and resources necessary to prevent and defeat terrorism and violent extremism, as well as transnational organized crimes in the Continent; in this respect, we **commit** to resource and equip the African Standby Force, including embedding within it a Special Unit for Countering Terrorism, to support Africa's efforts to eliminate the scourge of terrorism;
6. ***Accelerate*** efforts to address all structural factors that facilitate illicit financial flows, including weak institutional governance and corruption; in this context, we **undertake** to strengthen and improve governance by combating corruption, trafficking and transnational organized crime, as well as cybercrime; investing more in addressing the problems of tax evasions and tax havens, as well as trade-based money laundering;
7. ***Take strong measures***, in line with the provisions in the AU Constitutive Act, the PSC Protocol and the African Common Defence and Security Policy, as well as the United Nations Charter, to rid the Continent of the threat posed by foreign political and military interferences in African matters, including interference related to



sponsoring armed terrorist groups and Foreign Terrorist Fighters from outside the Continent;

8. **Reaffirm** the primacy of political solutions and peaceful settlement of all conflicts, and **undertake** to fully implement all provisions of signed peace agreements, with a view to facilitating amicable and durable solutions to the conflicts/crises in our Continent;

9. **Take ownership** of guaranteeing the nexus between peace, security and development in our Continent; in this regard, we **agree** to continue providing the requisite support to ensure effective implementation of post-conflict stabilisation, reconstruction and development activities, including through the African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Cairo, Egypt, in countries emerging from conflict and prevent relapse;

10. **Ensure** effective entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area in January 2021, with a view to ushering further opportunities for accelerating and strengthening the processes of integration and socioeconomic development in the Continent, as an imperative for realizing sustainable peace;

11. **Urge** all Member States to ratify the Lome Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development in Africa, together with its Annexes related to the development of Africa's Blue Economy, as well as the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and the African Union Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, in order to strengthen our efforts towards preventing and ending conflicts;

12. **Reiterate our strong commitment** to end all remnants of colonialism in Africa and the unlawful occupation of the Chagos Archipelago of Mauritius, the Comorian Island of Mayotte, the Glorious Malagasy Islands of Juan de Nova, Europa, and Bassas da India;

13. **Continue to create** a conducive environment, including by fully implementing all available AU instruments, for the effective participation of women and youth in the peace and development processes at national, regional and continental levels, with a view to enhancing the important roles and contributions of women and youth in the promotion of sustainable peace, security and development in the Continent;

14. **Totally address** the plight of the refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, as well as other vulnerable groups in Africa and to this effect, we **recommit** to eliminate root causes of this phenomenon and ensure their protection by fully implementing the relevant regional, continental and international instruments and policies;

15. **Mobilize** resources from within the Continent, to ensure predictability and sustainability of funding for our peace and security activities, within the spirit of enhancing our ownership and leadership of in the implementation of our continental peace and security agenda;

16. **Further consolidate** the strategic partnership between the AU and the UN in the area of peace and security, and **reaffirm** our commitment to multilateralism as embodied in the UN Charter and **commit** to work with international stakeholders to sustain and enhance multilateralism to address international peace and security issues;

17. **Decide**, within the context of AU Agenda 2063, to extend the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa for a period of ten (10) years (2021–2030), with periodic reviews every two (2) years; and **further decide** to extend the commemoration and conduct of the Africa Month during September of each year for a period of ten (10) years (2021–2030).

*As Heads of State and Government of the African Union, mindful of our responsibility and commitment, we pledge to act together with our Peoples and the African Diaspora to realize our vision of Pan Africanism and African Renaissance aimed at achieving a conflict-free and prosperous Africa.*

***Adopted by the 14th Extra Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, on 6 December 2020.***

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