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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**
**1290TH MEETING**

**22 JULY 2025**
**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**PSC/PR/COMM.1290.1 (2025)**

# COMMUNIQUÉ

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**Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1290th meeting, Open Session, held at Ambassadorial level, on 22 July 2025 on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Children formerly Associated with Armed Conflict.**

**The Peace and Security Council,**

***Recalling*** the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC); Decision [EX.CL/Dec.712 (XXI)] adopted by the AU Executive Council at its 21st Ordinary Session held from 9 to 13 July 2012, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in which the Executive Council requested the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC), the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECS) to take into account the rights of the child in their agenda and to cooperate actively with the Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC); and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC);

***Also recalling*** its previous pronouncements and decisions on children affected by armed conflicts, in particular, Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1101 (2022)] adopted at its 1101st meeting held on 18 August 2022, in which Council reaffirmed the essence of fighting impunity and of strengthenning mechanisms to end child sexual abuses and exploitation, as well as the need to ensure that accountability mechanisms are in place to bring perpetrators to justice;

***Acknowledging*** the critical role of effective, sustainable, and child-centred rehabilitation and reintegration in restoring dignity, promoting resilience, and preventing re-association with armed actors;

***Taking note*** of the Opening Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Rebecca Amuge Otengo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for July 2025, and also as the Co-Chairperson of the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts; and ***also taking note*** of the Introductory Statement by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and Co-chair of the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (AP CAAC), as well as the statements by H.E. Ambassador Nts'iuoa Sekete, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Lesotho to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union as the Vice-Chairperson of the AP-CAAC; by H.E Ambassador Nonceba Lorsi, Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the African Union; Honorable Professor Robert Nanima, Member of ACERWC and Special Rapporteur on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts; and by Mr. Victor Ochen, Founder of the African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET);

***Further taking note*** of the statements by the representatives of Save the Children International; the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), Norway; AU Member States and of Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs); and

**Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:**

1. ***Reaffirms*** the unwavering commitment of the AU to ensure the protection of children in situations of armed conflict and ***underscores the urgent need*** to ensure the rehabilitation and reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups (CAAFAG) across Africa;

2. ***Expresses deep concern*** over the increasing recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups, and who, upon release, face severe challenges including psycho-social trauma, stigma, lack of access to education and other social services, as well as the risk of re-recruitment;



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3. ***Also expresses deep concern*** over the ongoing armed conflicts in parts of the Continent, which continue to have a devastating impact on children, whose defencelessness exposes them to grave violations and undermines the protection of fundamental rights and welfare of children, including through recruitment, sexual violence, indiscrimate killings and maiming, and denial of essential and basic services;

4. ***Strongly condemns*** the continued recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts by both State and non-state armed groups in parts of the African Continent in violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and categorically ***emphasises*** that no child should be recruited and used in any conflict situation in the Continent;

5. ***Affirms*** the continued commitment to ensure that the structural root causes and drivers of conflicts are comprehensively addressed and ***calls on*** Member States, RECs/RMs, and the AU Commission to mainstream child protection into mediation and peace processes and to support effective implementation of child protection components within post-conflict reconstruction, peacebuilding and development (PCRD), Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, as well as in reintegration frameworks;

6. ***Encourages*** AU Member States to take decisive punitive measures against all perpetrators of violations against children and to ensure the unconditional release and protection of all children formely associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG);

7. ***Underlines the importance*** of full and coordinated implementation of AU normative frameworks and policy instruments relating to child protection, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Policy on Mainstreaming Child Protection in APSA, and the Policy on Child Protection in AU Peace Support Operations, with particular emphasis on ensuring sustainable reintegration support for children associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) and alignment of child protection programmes with Continental and international child protection standards;

8. ***Emphasizes the need*** for enhanced resource mobilization efforts to ensure predictable, adequate and sustainable resourcing of child protection efforts, ***and the need*** for effectively implementing long-term, inclusive, and trauma-sensitive reintegration programmes that are also gender-sensitive, community-based, and tailored to the specific needs of both boys and girls, particularly, the survivors of sexual violence, with a view to facilitating the recovery and psycho-social well-being of children affected by conflict;

9. ***Commends*** all partners supporting the AU Child Protection Agenda; and ***appeals*** to the rest of the international community to scale up efforts to mobilise sustained and predictable funding for child rehabilitation and reintegration efforts and to support national systems in delivering coordinated responses;

10. ***Encourages*** Member States to enhance the provision of basic and essential services for children formerly associated with armed conflict, such as education, vocational training, psycho-social support, healthcare, and civil documentation, as well as to promote social acceptance and community-based reintegration processes;

11. ***Underscores the importance*** of ensuring coordination and complementarity of efforts by all stakeholders to more effectively deliver child-sensitive and rights-based services;

12. ***Applauds*** Member States that have already signed, ratified and are actively implementing the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as well as other relevant international instruments, such as the Safe Schools Declaration and, ***encourages*** those Member States that have not yet done so to ratify these instruments and to take concrete steps toward their full and effective implementation;

13. ***Commends*** the advocacy efforts of the AP-CAAC; ***reiterates the importance*** of the operationalisation of the Banjul Process as a key initiative to sustain high-level advocacy, coordination, and knowledge-sharing on the protection of children affected by armed conflict; and in this regard, ***commends*** the tireless efforts deployed by the former Co-Chairperson of the AP-CAAC, H.E. Jainaba Jagne, former Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the AU; in this regard, ***Calls*** for the implementation of the Conclusions of the Banjul Process;

14. ***Reiterates*** the request for the Chairperson of the Commission to expeditate the appointment of a Special Envoy on Children in Conflict Situations in Africa to facilitate effective implementation of the AU child protection agenda across the African Continent;

15. ***Urges*** all stakeholders to ensure that children formerly associated with armed groups are treated as victims of conflict in accordance with International Law, and to avoid criminalisation or detention practices that undermine the recovery, reintegration and rehabilitation processes;

16. ***Encourages*** Member States, RECs/RMs to expedite the implementation of child protection frameworks, mainstream child protection in conflict prevention, management, resolution and in post conflict reconstruction and development efforts, as well as in peace and security processes; and to prioritise child protection in conflict situations;

17. ***Once again calls*** for the reinforcement of accountability mechanisms to bring to justice those responsible for the recruitment and exploitation of children, in accordance with national and international legal frameworks;

18. ***Urges*** Member States to establish child protection focal points in their Armed Forces and enhance training and awareness raising on child protection and accountability in their defence and secureity forces;

19. ***Encourages*** all stakeholders, international partners, civil society organisations, and humanitarian actors to enhance advocacy, research, and knowledge management related to children in conflict situations, to strengthen evidence-based responses and policy coherence;

20. ***Underscores the need*** for continued engagement by all stakeholders with affected regions and communities to support the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of children recruited and used in armed conflict, and to prevent the risk of re-recruitment or further exploitation;

21. ***Requests*** the AU Commission to continue to provide technical capacity building assistance to Member States, as well as to take stock of its child protection activities thoughout the Continent;

22. ***Decides*** to remain actively seized of the matter.