



Cooperating to disarm

**RECSA STATEMENT FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE
SEPTEMBER 2021 AFRICA AMNESTY MONTH
CAMPAIGN UNDER THE AU'S SILENCING THE GUNS
INITIATIVE**

LT GEN. BADRELDIN ELAMIN ABDELGADIR

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

REGIONAL CENTRE ON SMALL ARMS (RECSA)

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greetings of Peace and Love,

In 2020 Seven (07) African countries were supported with a one-year project called Africa Amnesty Month project and jointly supported by the AU Commission and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) with the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) as an implementing partner.

The 2020 project was carried out in seven African States namely: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and was funded by the Government of Japan and the Federal Government of Germany respectively.

Despite the challenging factor of the global outbreak of COVID-19, project partners delivered on project objectives and generated tangible outputs. All seven countries have made significant progress in advancing small arms control at the national and regional levels.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the 2020 Amnesty month has achieved the following:

- The combination of the project's international, regional and national partnership setting showed to be vital to generate **high-level political support and national ownership**, as countries have fully appropriated the concept and feel responsibility as AU Member States to deliver on their commitment to the African Union "Silencing the Guns" flagship initiative.
- In many States, high-level authorities presided the launch events of the project while others officiated the public destruction of illicit firearms that were collected during the 2020 Amnesty campaign.
- The involvement of high level authorities generated not only **crucial political momentum and increased visibility of National**

Commissions but has also elevated SALW control and weapons and ammunition management (WAM) within the politico-security peacebuilding agenda at the national, regional and continental levels.

This year, three countries namely Madagascar, Niger and Uganda have been selected for the 2021 Amnesty month implementation. These countries have been chosen to conduct an effective awareness campaign for the voluntary surrender of weapons that are illegally held by civilians.

Activities of the 2021 amnesty month will be conducted by the National Commissions on Small Arms and Light Weapons Control of each of the three (03) countries and will be consistent with national laws and regulations and the countries' commitments to international, regional and sub-regional small arms agreements.

Furthermore, all African countries through their respective National Commissions are requested to place a special emphasis on the participation of women in the various activities.

On behalf of RECSA I would like to reiterate our commitment and full support to the September 2021 Africa Amnesty Month campaign under the African Union's silencing the Guns Initiative.

Finally, I want to express my sincere thanks to the Federal Republic of Germany for the financial support through UNODA to the African countries that demonstrated interest of implementing the September 2021 Africa Amnesty Month activities and the African Union Commission for choosing RECSA as an implementing partner.

I thank you for your kind attention