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**Statement by IPSS during the Open Session of the AU Peace and Security Council
held on Wednesday, 14 January 2015, on the Theme: *Prevention of Election-
related Conflicts in Africa***

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As part of its mandate as the capacity-building, research and think-tank arm of the Africa Union, the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) wishes to thank the AU Peace and Security Council for the invitation to offer perspectives during the session on: Prevention of Elections-related Conflicts in Africa.

This statement is presented as recommendations to the AU/PSC, taking cognisance of the spectrum of issues and concerns increasingly associated with elections in Africa. The recommendations are divided into three categories: Prevention, Monitoring and Intervention¹:

a. Recommendations for Prevention:

1. Build the capacity of civil society institutions, preferably under the framework of a non-partisan umbrella national election monitoring group, capable of investigating and reporting on potential threats.
2. Develop and maintain a robust and longer term engagement with national elections management bodies/commissions.

¹ These recommendations were prepared jointly by IPSS' Education and Professional Development Lead Dr. Charles Ukeje and Dr. Amr Abdalla, Senior Advisor on Policy Analysis and Research.



3. Develop and implement regular training programs on joint early warning for key stakeholders involved in election processes; including governments, political parties and civil society actors/institutions reaching into the community levels.
4. Encourage and actively engage with the media, including the new social media, to promote examples of peaceful election-related practices across Africa and the rest of the world.

b. Recommendations for Monitoring:

1. Need for the AU to identify and maintain a roster of credible and capable civil society institutions, preferably working together under an umbrella national coalition of election monitoring groups, to observe and report exclusively to the AU on developments that are capable of impeding the smooth conduct of any election;
2. Continue the practice of deploying Long Term Observation (LTOs) teams prior to every election, and have them work with key stakeholders, including credible umbrella civil society institutions identified above.
3. For every election, appoint on a medium terms basis; three months each before and after an election, a Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU to maintain a high-profile representation and visibility on behalf of the AU in a target country. During election proper, the SR should serve as Deputy Head of Mission providing critical support to the Head of AU Election Observation Mission, EOM.
4. Designate a desk officer within the AUC to monitor, on a regular basis, progress towards elections and related developments prior to, during and soon after elections; as well as support the offices of the SR and the AUEOM.

c. Recommendations for Intervention:

1. Make official statements when pre-election concerns are brewing/evident, regardless of whether such concern emanate from the incumbent or opposition political parties alike;
2. Whenever a situation arises that might jeopardize the safety, quality or integrity of elections, appoint a team of credible African dignitaries, in coordination with the Panel of the Wise, who may intervene in order to restore the election process on a peaceful and transparent course.



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3. Maintain a team of experts to assess, on a continuous basis, emerging trends and patterns of elections-related conflicts capable of undermining election, political stability and development.

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