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**PRESS RELEASE**

***The African Union Launches the African Union Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission in Mekelle, Tigray Region, Ethiopia.***

***Mekelle, 29 December 2022:*** The African Union launches the African Union Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM) in Mekelle, Tigray region, Ethiopia. The Launch of the AU MVCM was facilitated by the AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa and former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E Olusegun Obasanjo, together with AU High-Level Panel Members; former President of Kenya, H.E Uhuru Kenyatta and H.E. Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa and Member of the AU Panel of the Wise.

The launch of the African Union Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mission (AU-MVCM) is consistent with Article 11, Monitoring, Verification, and Compliance of the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) of 2 November 2022, wherein the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), agreed to the establishment of this mechanism. The Parties further agreed to the formation of a Joint Committee that shall compose of representatives from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and chaired by the African Union through the High-Level Panel.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat commends the Parties and the AU High Level Panel for this significant step in the implementation of the COHA and encourages them to continue with their efforts to restore peace, security and stability in Ethiopia.

The AU Commission expresses its appreciation to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), for their commitment to the spirit of African Solutions to African Problems and the AU's *Silencing the Guns agenda*.

The Commission further expresses its appreciations to the Governments of Republic of Kenya, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Republic of South Africa, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners for their continued support for the AU-led process.