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Press Release N°039/2014

South Sudan Commission of Inquiry established and members appointed

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 7March, 2014:A Commission of Inquiry has been appointed to investigate human rights violations and other abuses committed during the armed conflict that broke out in South Sudan in mid-December 2013. The five-member Commission of Inquiry will be headed by former President OlusegunObasanjo.

Announcing the establishment of the Commission and its members during a press briefing at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Dr. NkosazanaDlaminiZuma, said the Commission was established in implementation of a decision of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) made by Heads of State and Government.

The mandate of the Commission as decided by the PSC, is to *“investigate the human rights violations and other abuses committed during the armed conflict in South Sudan, and make recommendations on the best way and means to ensure accountability, reconciliation and healing among all South Sudanese communities.”*

Dr. DlaminiZuma said the Commission was established after deep consultations with the different parties involved in the conflict as well as with the armed opposition groups. The consultations took place in Addis Ababa and during her visit to Juba.

The five members of the African Union Commission of Inquiry in South Sudan are:

- **H.E. Olusegun Mathew Aremu Obasanjo -Chairperson of the Commission –** Former President of Nigeria, and former Chairperson of the African Union. President Obasanjo has headed several AU Election Observation missions and initiatives. He headed the joint African Union and ECOWAS missions to Senegal during presidential polls in March 2012, paving the way for a smooth transition. He is UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to the Great Lakes and remains an integral actor in the DRC mediation efforts.
- **Lady Justice Sophia A.B. Akuffo - Member.** President and Justice of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights based in Arusha, Tanzania. She is a Justice of the Supreme Court of Ghana and has over 39 years of experience working with high-profile national and continental organisations.
- **Professor Mahmood Mamdani - Member.** He is the Executive Director of the Makerere Institute of Social Research at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. Prof. Mamdani was Chair of the National Commission of Inquiry into Local Government in Uganda in 1987-88. He specializes in comparative studies of colonialism since 1452, and the question of civil war and mass violence.
- **Ms. Bineta Diop - Member:** Recently appointed AU Chairperson's Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security. She has over 35 years of experience working in human rights, peace-building and development issues in Africa and internationally. Ms. Bineta founded the Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), a leading global organization with an objective to strengthen women's leadership and engender peace processes in Africa.
- **Professor Pacifique Manirakiza –Member.** He is currently a Commissioner at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights based in Banjul, The Gambia. He is an Associate Professor at the University of Ottawa School Of Law in the French Section of the Common law Program. Prof. Manirakiza specializes

in International Criminal law and more specifically on the fight against international crimes before national and international tribunals.

The Technical and Administrative Support Team will be based at the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Secretariat will establish necessary contacts with the AU Liaison Office in Juba, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) based in Juba, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as other relevant stakeholders, to enable members of the Commission to amply carry out their mandate.

The Terms of Reference of the Commission shall include:

- Establish the immediate and remote causes of the conflict;
- Investigate human rights violations and other abuses during the conflict by all parties from 15 December 2013;
- Establish facts and circumstances that may have led to and that amount to such violations and of any crimes that may have been perpetrated;
- Compile information based on these investigations and in so doing assist in identifying perpetrators of such violations and abuses with a view to ensuring accountability for those responsible;
- Compile information on institutions and process or lack thereof that may have aided or aggravated the conflict resulting in violations of human rights and other abuses;
- The Commission shall make recommendations based on the investigation on the following:
 - o appropriate mechanisms to prevent a recurrence of the conflict;
 - o mechanisms to promote national healing and cohesiveness, particularly focusing on the need for all South Sudanese communities to live together in peace;
 - o modalities for nation building, specifically focused on building of democratic institutions and post-conflict reconstruction;

- accountability mechanisms for gross violations of human rights and other egregious abuses to ensure that those responsible for such violations are held to account.

The AU Commission Chairperson said the AU will continue to support the IGAD (Inter Governmental Authority on Development) mediation efforts to end the ongoing hostilities and find sustainable solutions using political and diplomatic means.

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