



PRESS RELEASE

THE AU AND IGAD REITERATE THE CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE IN SOUTH SUDAN AND URGENT DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PARTIES

Addis Ababa, 25 December 2013: The Chairperson of the African Union (AU) and Chairperson of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia, and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, reiterate the AU's and IGAD's call for an immediate cessation of hostilities in South Sudan. This renewed call comes against the background of a rapidly escalating tension in South Sudan that has led to the outbreak of an armed conflict.

Today's call also comes on the basis of intensive consultations by the AU and IGAD with President Salva Kiir Mayardit and other South Sudanese stakeholders, as well as with a number of international actors, notably permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, including the United States Special Envoy, and Norway.

The AU and IGAD are profoundly concerned by reports of the mobilization of tribal militias in South Sudan, which threaten to further escalate the conflict and transform it into an exceptionally destructive inter-ethnic violence that would put in danger the very existence of South Sudan. The South Sudanese stakeholders should be fully cognizant of these perils and their responsibilities to save their young State. The AU and IGAD reiterate their call on both leaders to act with a sense of patriotism and responsibility towards the entire community of South Sudan.

During this Christmas season, the AU and IGAD wish to emphasize the fundamental values of peace and respect for human life shared by all Africans, including the people of South Sudan, who have experienced the horror of war for far too long.

The AU and IGAD reiterate the urgent imperative of an inclusive dialogue among all concerned stakeholders based on the rejection of the use of force, respect for human rights and dignity, the rule of law and constitutional legality, and their readiness to facilitate such a dialogue, building on the outcome of the visit undertaken to Juba by an IGAD Ministerial delegation led by the Foreign Minister of Ethiopia and including the AU Peace and Security Commissioner and the UN Special Envoy. They welcome the expressed commitment of both sides to engage in dialogue and call on them to create a conducive environment for dialogue, which should be inclusive, including detainees.