



PRESS RELEASE

The African Union reiterates the need for a complete cessation of all hostilities and the immediate resumption of the AUHIP-led negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan

Addis Ababa, 22 April 2012: The Chairperson of Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, has been closely following the most unfortunate fighting, in the past few days, between the armies of the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan.

The Chairperson of the Commission recalls AU's previous statements on the issue of Heglig and the pressing appeals to the Parties to end the senseless fighting between the two countries, fully implement the security commitments they have entered into, and resume, under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), the negotiations on their post-secession relations.

The Chairperson of the Commission pays tribute to IGAD, in particular its current Chairman, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, for its continued involvement and support to the ongoing AUHIP efforts. He notes with satisfaction the unified position of the international community on the recent crisis in Heglig. In particular, he expresses AU's deep appreciation to the United Nations Security Council, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the European Union (EU) and its member states, the League of Arab States, the United States, China and other international partners, for their timely interventions in the Heglig crisis.

The Chairperson of the Commission emphasizes, once again, that recourse to force will never bring about a lasting solution to the issues at hand. The peoples of Sudan and South Sudan need to leave in peace with one another and to cooperate, as their destinies are inter-twined. Both Parties need to exercise the much-needed statesmanship and to be driven by a vision that takes into account the long-term interests of their countries and peoples, as well as by their responsibility towards the region, the rest of Africa and the larger international community.

In light of the most recent developments in Heglig, and the statements made in this respect by the two countries, the Chairperson of the Commission reiterates AU's request for Sudan and South Sudan to immediately implement the security agreements that they have reached under the facilitation of the AUHIP, with the support of IGAD and the United Nations, particularly the Decision of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) of 18 September 2011, which, *inter alia*, established the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission (JBVMM). It should be noted that UN Security resolution 2024(2011) of 14 December 2011 has mandated the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to support the JBVMM.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses the need for both Parties to refrain from inflammatory statements which not only complicate the current and delicate situation, but also undermine the prospects for brotherly relations between the two states and their peoples. Such statements run contrary to the principles on the basis of which the two countries agreed to resolve the post-secession issues.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges the two Parties to immediately and unconditionally resume negotiations, under the auspices of the AUHIP, to reach agreements on all outstanding issues as they relate to security, border demarcation, nationality and citizenship, Transitional Financial Arrangements (TFA) and Abyei, in accordance with the overriding principle of establishing two viable states in Sudan and South Sudan. He stresses the need for the international community to continue to demonstrate the necessary unity of purpose and resolve, to facilitate the early resolution of the outstanding issues between Sudan and South Sudan, within the framework of the AUHIP-led negotiations.