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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION WELCOMES THE RELEASE OF THE SUDANESE POLITICAL LEADER SADIQ AL-MAHDI

The AU reiterates its support to the National Dialogue Initiative

Addis Ababa, 17 June 2014: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosozena Dlamini-Zuma, welcomes the release of former Prime Minister of Sudan and President of the National Umma Party, Imam Sadiq Al-Mahdi, on 15 June 2014. Mr. Al Mahdi was arrested on 17 May 2014, following public statements he made regarding the role of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the Darfur region.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that this decision is a step in the right direction that will contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to the successful conduct of the National Dialogue Initiative announced by President Omar Hassan Al Bashir in January 2014. She reiterates AU's support to this Initiative, and appeals to the Government to ensure that the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of Sudan are protected. She calls on all concerned to desist from actions that would threaten the proposed National Dialogue and to recommit to a transparent, inclusive and holistic process that will ensure stability, democracy and development in the Republic of Sudan.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the AU's continued commitment, through the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), to assist the Government and people of Sudan, in their efforts to address the challenges facing their country through dialogue.

