

AFRICAN UNION

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PRESS RELEASE

THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ABYEI

Addis Ababa, 22 May 2011: The Commission of the African Union (AU) has noted with very grave concern the violence in the Abyei Area, which escalated since the beginning of May 2011 between the two Parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and culminated in generalized fighting in and around the town of Abyei and its subsequent death toll.

These unfortunate developments come at a time of renewed hope towards a political settlement of the Abyei impasse, the resolution of all other CPA remaining issues and the conclusion of the post-referendum matters, in view of the impending independence of South Sudan and the birth of two viable and sister States.

At this delicate period, the AU Commission would like to urge all the Parties to immediately withdraw all the unauthorized forces from the area, in compliance with the CPA and the Kadugli Agreement, and to restrain from any provocative actions. In that line, the Commission would like to request the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) to continue facilitating this exercise.

The AU Commission calls on the Parties to resume the dialogue towards a political settlement on Abyei by returning to the negotiating table under the facilitation of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), which they have, at the highest level, asked to develop a proposal on resolving the impasse.

Furthermore, the AU Commission reminds the Parties of their common responsibility to protect the civilian population and to ensure their well-being, especially in the border areas.