

AFRICAN UNION

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P.O. BOX: 3243, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, TEL.:(251-11) 551 38 22 FAX: (251-11) 551 93 21  
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

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## PRESS STATEMENT

### THE AFRICAN UNION DEEPLY CONCERNED BY THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN SOUTHERN KORDOFAN, SUDAN

**Addis Ababa, 20 June 2011:** The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Jean Ping, is deeply concerned with the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Southern Kordofan, following the armed conflict that broke out between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), on 5 June 2011. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced from their homes and face hunger and diseases, due to fighting, aerial bombardment and the interruption of essential supplies. There are also reports of human rights abuses which need investigation.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls upon both Parties to facilitate access by humanitarian agencies to the civilian population in all parts of Southern Kordofan. He reminds the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/SPLA of their respective obligations under International Humanitarian Law, and calls upon them to act immediately to enable assistance to reach the affected population, and for people in distress to be evacuated to safe areas.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls upon the Parties to engage wholeheartedly in their negotiations towards a political settlement of the conflict in Southern Kordofan, in the talks currently underway, in Addis Ababa, under the facilitation of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP). The AU insists that there is no military solution to the current political conflict and that the Parties should urgently agree to a cessation of hostilities.

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