



PRESS RELEASE

The African Union reiterates its call to Sudan and South Sudan to act responsibly and to heed the appeals made by the AU and the International Community for an immediate end to the current conflict between the two countries

Addis Ababa, 17 April 2012: The African Union (AU) continues to be gravely concerned by the prevailing logic of war between Sudan and South Sudan, and notes with particular concern the escalation of military operations, as well as the recent troop movements into and around Abyei. These flagrant violations of the 20 June 2011 Agreement on the Temporary Security and Administrative Arrangements for Abyei are unacceptable. The AU reiterates its demand that the remaining 300 SAF forces in Abyei and 700 South Sudan Police Forces are also immediately and unconditionally redeployed out of the Abyei area. The AU fully supports UNISFA and its efforts to foster security and assist the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee through its Facilitator.

The AU calls upon the two countries to take immediate steps to reduce tensions, and to act responsibly in the spirit of cooperation in pursuit of establishing two viable states. In this respect, the AU recalls the draft decisions of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM), proposed to the Parties by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), on 4 April 2012, which provide a sound basis for establishing mutual security along the common border between Sudan and South Sudan and, to this end, urges the Parties to:

- scrupulously implement the security agreements already entered into, which are sufficient by themselves to address the principal concerns of the Parties. These include especially the 18 September 2011 decisions of the JPSM and the 10 February 2012 Memorandum of Understanding on Non-Aggression and Cooperation;
- ensure that their respective armed forces adhere scrupulously to relevant provisions of human rights law and international humanitarian law, with respect to the protection of civilians, prisoners of war and the wounded;
- respect and protect the oil installations and related infrastructure both in the north and south, recognizing that these are the property of the people of north and south Sudan respectively.

For the purposes of defusing the current tension and taking the necessary practical measures to disengage their respective armed forces, the AU urges the two countries to adopt a security and administrative centreline for the border. This centreline should be based upon the border as it existed on 1 January 1956, following the delineation in those areas in which it has been agreed, and respecting the administrative arrangements as they existed on the ground on 9 July 2011. The AU emphasizes that such an arrangement in no way prejudices the final resolution of the status of the disputed areas and the claims that can be made by either side.

The AU continues to make available the services of its Border Programme (AUBP), which stands ready to assist the Parties in resolving their concerns in the delineation, demarcation and the resolution of disputed areas based on African best practices and international principles. The Parties are urged to pay attention to the option of using best practices for resolving border issues, and are reminded that unilateral action does not increase their claims to any territory.