

**PRESS RELEASE****THE AFRICAN UNION CONDEMNS THE MILITARY OFFENSIVE BY
REBELS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

Addis Ababa, 22 March 2013: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, is deeply concerned by the resurgence of armed conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR), which undermines the progress that had been achieved following the signing of the 11 January 2013 Libreville Agreements, negotiated under the auspices of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the AU's firm opposition to any attempt to seize power by unconstitutional means, particularly the recourse to armed rebellion to assert political claims. In this regard, she expresses the AU's firm condemnation of the resumption of hostilities, and urges the leaders of Seleka to immediately halt the ongoing offensive and embrace the political process aimed at a negotiated settlement, within the framework of the Libreville Agreements.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls on all AU Member States and international partners to support all efforts aimed at the immediate cessation of hostilities, and to send a strong message to the leaders of Seleka on the need for a political solution, including envisaging sanctions and any other legitimate measures, in support to constitutional legality and CAR institutions.