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PRESS RELEASE

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION CONDEMNS THE FIGHTING IN JUBA ON 8 JULY 2016

Addis Ababa, 8 July 2016: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma has learned, with extremely great concern, of the very serious incidents that took place on 8 July 2016, during which the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition (SPLA-IO) forces engaged in very deadly exchange of gunfire in parts of Juba, including at the Office of the President while the President, the 1st Vice-President and the Vice-President were in a meeting.

This incident follows a series of violent episodes, most notably the attacks in June 2016 in Wau and Raja towns, which led to many deaths and the displacement of over 40,000 people, the shooting dead of a senior military officer in Juba on 2 July 2016, the escalating new tensions in the Bahr-al-Ghazal and Equatoria regions, and the shooting that took place on the 7th of July 2016 between the forces of the SPLA and the SPLA-IO.

The Chairperson condemns in the strongest terms this senseless act which led to the loss of so many lives. She presents her heartfelt condolences to the aggrieved families and to the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU). She urges the TGoNU to undertake very quickly an extensive investigation and to bring to court all those who instigated, planned and conducted this heinous act.

The Chairperson underscores the fact that the TGoNU has the responsibility to provide the necessary political leadership to ensure that security forces operate within the limits of the law and order, and exercise maximum restraint, given that such occurrences could heighten the already very tense security situation in the country and negatively affect the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCISS) of August 2015.

The Chairperson congratulates the President, the 1st Vice-President and the Vice-President for the swift action they jointly undertook the same night in appealing for calm in the aftermath of the 8th July incident, thus demonstrating their leadership in face of a very tense and explosive situation. She congratulates them for their re-commitment to the full implementation of the ARCISS and for their strong resolve to create the necessary trust between the parties and their subsidiaries.

At this 5th anniversary of the independence of South Sudan, she calls upon the South Sudanese Leadership to continue showing in a consistent manner to the deserving people of South Sudan irreversible signals that peace has come back. The Chairperson urges all the South Sudanese, including the members of the armed and security forces, to support their leaders in their efforts to reconcile the people of South Sudan, and to bring back law and order.

The Chairperson requests the TGoNU, working with the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), chaired by H.E. Festus Mogae, former President of Botswana, to ensure scrupulous adherence to the transitional security arrangements. Meanwhile, the Chairperson reaffirms the complete support of the African Union through, among others, the AU High Representative for South Sudan, H.E. Alpha Oumar Konare, former President of Mali.

The Chairperson commends the IGAD and the larger international community for their tireless efforts to return the country to security, stability and development and encourages them to continue doing so until South Sudan attains peace and stability.

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