



PRESS RELEASE

African Union Commission Chairperson Launches African Union Campaign to Restore the Dignity of Women and to Ensure Accountability in South Sudan

Addis Ababa, 13 October 2016 – “We cannot accept this pervasive and ongoing sexual violence against women”, AUC Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, said as she launched the, “African Union Campaign to Restore the Dignity of Women and to Ensure Accountability in South Sudan”. Condemning impunity in the strongest terms, H.E. Dr. Zuma reiterated the AU’s “zero-tolerance” policy on sexual and gender-based violence and decried the dire situation in Africa’s youngest nation.

“The message from the Chairperson is very clear, that women across the continent and all peace-loving Africans are outraged about the violence being inflicted on the women, girls and other children of South Sudan.”, AUC Chief of Staff, Ms Jennifer Chiriga, noted at a press conference organized at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa to launch the campaign.

“This campaign is organized in solidarity for the women of South Sudan, who sometimes cannot speak because they are the ones that are facing the atrocities”, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, H.E. Ms. Bineta Diop, added as she explained that the campaign is a response to an appeal made by women in South Sudan and African peace movements to the AUC Chairperson during the AU Summit which held in July 2016 in Kigali. The appeal for solidarity and support to the women of South Sudan was made following the, “continued occurrence of violence in many parts of South Sudan... [and] persistent use of sexual violence against women and girls as a weapon of war.” It came at a time when, “very serious incidents involving about 120 documented cases of sexual violence”, were reported.

The campaign is a rallying call for all Africans and friends of Africa to unite and increase pressure on South Sudan authorities to end the atrocities in their country. It calls for, “leaders to ensure that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes are held fully accountable for their actions in an expeditious manner.” And for justice to prevail, including reparations for the women of South Sudan.

The campaign will run from 13th October, the month when UNSC Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, was adopted, to 10th December 2016, the International Human Rights Day. The outcomes of this campaign will be presented to high ranking South Sudanese officials. You can join the conversation on social media using hashtag #4WomenofSouthSudan.

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