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PRESS RELEASE

**THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION CALLS ON SOUTH SUDAN
WARRING PARTIES TO DESIST FROM ESCALATING VIOLENCE**

April 30, 2017, Addis Ababa: The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, wishes to express his deep concern over the increasing military clashes in South Sudan, especially in the restive Upper Nile region. The Chairperson calls on the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition and other armed movements in South Sudan to immediately desist from fighting, which continues to negatively impact on the security, safety and life of civilians in the country.

The Chairperson wishes to recall that during his visit to South Sudan in March 2017, the leadership of South Sudan committed to announce a unilateral ceasefire and issuance of amnesty to protagonists who were willing to return to Juba for political engagement. Indeed, such confidence building measures would have facilitated the provision of the much-needed humanitarian assistance and access, as well as create an environment conducive for the long awaited National Dialogue process.

The renewed fighting in South Sudan is a clear indication that the warring parties continue to believe in a military solution, fully disregarding the plight of innocent civilians which they claim to represent and defend. The immediate consequences of the military clashes on the civilian population are shattering and therefore it should be understood that those engaging in this callous behaviour should be held accountable.

The Chairperson therefore strongly calls on the TGoNU, as well as on the other warring parties to immediately cease hostilities and uphold their responsibilities to protect civilians as provided for in the Constitution of the country and the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The Chairperson also calls for unhindered movement of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) and the UNMISS, as well as for facilitation of access by humanitarian actors to the affected areas.

The Chairperson of the Commission wishes to underscore AU's unflinching commitment to assist the South Sudanese leaders and people in their search for lasting peace, though, amongst others, the engagement of the AU High Representative for South Sudan, former President Alpha Oumar Konare. In this regard, the AU will be engaging in consultations on the deteriorating security situation in South Sudan with the Inter-Governmental Authority on

Development and the United Nations, in line with the decision reached by the three Organizations at their meeting held in Addis Ababa on 29 January 2017.

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Peace and Security

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