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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

413TH MEETING

16 JANUARY 2014

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.2(CDXIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 413th meeting held on 16 January 2014, was briefed by the Commissioner for Peace and Security on the situation in the Republic of South Sudan and the efforts of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Mediators to resolve the armed conflict that erupted in South Sudan on 15 December 2013. Council also received statements from South Sudan, Rwanda, the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Norway.

Council recalled its earlier press statements and communiqués on the situation, notably communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.1(CDXI) adopted at its 411th meeting, held at the level of Heads of State and Government, in Banjul, The Gambia, on 30 December 2013.

Council reiterated its grave concern at the escalation of the political dispute in South Sudan into a full-fledged civil war. Council also reiterated its concern at the deepening humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, including mass displacement of civilians and reports of children succumbing to malnutrition and disease. In this respect, Council reminded the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the rebel forces that they bear the ultimate responsibility for providing for civilian populations, both through direct provision of essential assistance and through facilitating the work of humanitarian organizations extending assistance to affected populations. Council also expressed its sadness at the tragedy of those who drowned when the boat that they were using to escape to safety overturned and sunk in the Nile River. Council expressed its condolences to all the bereaved during the conflict.

Council, once again, reiterated its call for an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities, in order to prevent further loss of life and continuing escalation of conflict, including deepening ethnic mobilization and inter-ethnic antagonism, and its conviction that the political differences among South Sudanese stakeholders should be resolved solely by political dialogue.

Council reiterated its call to the leaders of South Sudan to rise to the challenge of acting in a spirit of national interest and selfless patriotism, taking the steps necessary to bring to an end the needless bloodshed and suffering of the people of South Sudan, and restoring peace, stability and national harmony to their nation.

Council expressed its full support to the efforts being deployed by IGAD, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia. Council expressed its appreciation to the IGAD Mediation Team, led by Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin and comprising General Lazaro Sumbeiywo and Mohammed al Dabi, for their continued efforts. Council urged the Parties to extend full cooperation to the Mediation Team, with a view to urgently resolving the current crisis.

Council welcomed the close coordination between the Mediation Team and the AU Commission. Council encouraged the Commission to take all necessary steps to enhance AU's support to the IGAD-led efforts, including further interaction with the South Sudanese parties.

Council recognized the important role being played by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in providing safety and assistance to the thousands of civilians who have sought sanctuary at its bases. Council called upon the Parties to the conflict to facilitate UNMISS in its mandated activities, especially those related to the protection of civilians.

Council expressed its deep concern at the reports of continued violations of human rights perpetrated during the conflict, including ethnically targeted killings. In this respect, Council reminded the South Sudanese parties of its decision to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate alleged violations, with the intention of making recommendations on accountability, reconciliation and other appropriate measures. Council re-affirmed its determination to hold to account those that would be found responsible for violations of human rights.

Council reiterated its determination to impose targeted sanctions against all those found to be obstructing peace and reconciliation efforts in South Sudan.

Council agreed to review the situation in South Sudan at its meeting, at the level of Heads of State and Government, scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa, on 29 January 2014, on the basis of a report to be submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission.

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