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**PRESS RELEASE**

**African Union condemns the violence ahead of second round presidential election in Sierra Leone**

**Addis Ababa, 20 March 2018:** The Head of the African Union Election Observation Mission to Sierra Leone, H.E. Kgalema Motlanthe recalls the interim statement that AUEOM issued immediately after the General Election of 7 March 2018. In that statement the AUEOM congratulated all political stakeholders and the people of Sierra Leone for the peaceful, transparent and credible manner in which the elections were held. In the same statement, AUEOM implored Sierra Leone stakeholders to uphold peace and avoid violence as the country gears itself up for the run-off presidential election.

The Head of AUEOM has however learned with dismay the worrisome prevalence of election-related violence which is increasingly become wide-spread across the country, including an incident that occurred in Bo City in which a staff member of the National Electoral Commission was reportedly injured. The Chairperson condemns such acts of violence which are inimical to the holding of democratic elections. The Head of AUEOM calls on the candidates of All Peoples' Party (APC) and the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP) and their supporters to take immediate steps to avoid recurrence of such unfortunate incidences.

The Head of AUEOM would like to reiterate his earlier call to all Sierra Leone political stakeholders to refrain from acts and utterances that would undermine the credibility of the electoral process and the legitimacy of its outcome.

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Peace and Security

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