

South Sudan: UN and regional partners call for immediate cessation of hostilities

29 January 2017 – The United Nations, the African Union (AU) and regional partners today reiterated their call for an immediate cessation of hostilities in South Sudan and urged the parties to ensure an inclusive political process, both in the proposed National Dialogue and in the implementation of the 2015 peace agreement.

Meeting in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, on the margins of the 28th African Union Summit, the AU, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the UN, held a joint consultative meeting on South Sudan.

According to a joint press statement issued after the meeting, the participants expressed their deep concerns over the continuing spread of fighting, and risk of inter-communal violence escalating into mass atrocities, and the dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan. As such, they reaffirmed their continued and collective commitment in the search for lasting peace, security and stability in the country.

Stating that there can only be a political solution to the conflict, within the framework of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS), the AU, IGAD and UN reiterated their call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and urged the parties to ensure an inclusive political process, both in the proposed National Dialogue and in the implementation of the peace deal.

The AU, IGAD and the UN reaffirmed their commitment and determination to further enhance their cooperation in support of the South Sudan peace process

Further to the press statement, the participants commended the important work performed by the Chairperson of the Joint Ministering and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the Agreement and encouraged the AU High Representative for South Sudan to undertake active shuttle diplomacy towards ensuring the inclusivity of the National Dialogue and the implementation of the peace accord, in close consultation with the JMEC Chairperson, the UN and IGAD.

The AU, IGAD and the UN reaffirmed their commitment and determination to further enhance their cooperation in support of the South Sudan peace process, the statement added.

The meeting, chaired by Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Chairperson of IGAD, was also attended by Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson

of the AU Commission; and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. The AU High Representative for South Sudan, former President Alpha Oumar Konare, and the Chairperson of the JMEC, former President Festus Mogae briefed the meeting.

Also in attendance, were the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, the Executive Secretary of IGAD, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, and other senior officials of the three organizations.

South Sudan has faced ongoing challenges since a political face-off between President Salva Kiir and his then former Vice-President Riek Machar erupted into full blown conflict in December 2013. The crisis has produced one of the world's worst displacement situations with immense suffering for civilians.

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement that formally ended the war, conflict and instability have also spread to previously unaffected areas in the Greater Equatoria and Greater Bahr-El-Ghazal regions of South Sudan.