Statement of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, to the IGAD council of ministers

31 may 2018
Sheraton, addis ababa

Excellency the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of
Excellences IGAD Ministers,

Excellency/ Representative of, Chairperson of JMEC,

Excellency Ambassador Wais, IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan,

Representative of, Special Envoy of the Secretary General of
the UN for Sudan and South Sudan.

Excellences, Special Envoys and Ambassadors,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank my brother Workenhe / the Chairperson of
the IGAD Council of Ministers, first and foremost, for inviting
the AU Commission to this important meeting following the
end, on 24 May 2018, of the second session of the
revitalization process of the 2015 Peace Agreement for South Sudan. I am bringing to you the warm greetings and best wishes for fruitful deliberations of this meeting of Chairperson Moussa Faki.
Ladies and gentlemen, almost a year ago the IGAD Summit took a forward looking decision to revitalization of the South Sudanese peace process, in order to restore full and permanent ceasefire, to fully implement the peace agreement in an inclusive way, and to develop a new and realistic timeline of implementation of the revitalized agreement, up to the end of the transitional period. Subsequently, the December 2017 decision, by the parties, to sign the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access brought hope and relief to the people of South Sudan. It is quite unfortunate that these hopes were sooner shattered as the agreement was violated only a few hours into its signing. While IGAD continues to labor in search for peace, it would seem that the parties may have the illusion of gaining a military victory in the battle field.

Excellencies, the African Union is very much conversant with the efforts to end the war in South Sudan deployed by IGAD and thus commends the Council of Ministers for these untiring efforts. The AU Commission, as well as the
members of the AU High-Level ad-hoc Committee for South Sudan have witnessed the proceedings of the February 2018 and May 2018 session. We witnessed the relentless efforts as well as the vigorous shuttle diplomacy during this period.

We have been impressed by the change of approach that included the affected citizens through the civil society and faith based groups. In spite of all these efforts, peace has continued to be illusive for the people of South Sudan. Meanwhile the CTSAAM continues to record, deaths, displacements, and reports of food insecurity have reached alarming rates at a time where humanitarian actors are reported to be hindered from doing their work.

Excellencies Ministers, I want to thank you also for the efforts that put together ‘Bridging Proposal’ during the last session of the HLRF. The AU Commission does hope that the South Sudanese leadership, both in the Government and in the opposition, will re-examine their positions and summon the political will to utilize the bridging proposal and make the necessary efforts to attain genuine peace.
Excellences, what we have today in South Sudan is a truly intricate political and security impasse that requires decisive leadership to be resolved. The call of the people of South Sudan is loud and univocal. I want to hear today progress, compromise and eventually good news for our sisters and brothers in South Sudan that armed are definitively silenced. If we don’t address this situation urgently, the people of South Sudan will rightly ask the fundamental question, of whether there is complicity to the crimes being perpetrated.

Ladies and Gentleman,

This is the time of decisions. I should therefore assure this meeting that the AU is open to any suggestions, and will provide strong support to any regional proposal that can end impunity and save the people of South Sudan. Our own failure to act as the region and the continent will only emboldened those who now see fighting as the only means of survival. Furthermore it will encourage alternative solutions as we are already witnessing. We should all acknowledge that time is not on our side, as the transitional period set by the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in 2015 comes to an end very soon. We at the AU Commission share concerns expressed over the constitutional challenges that may arise if progress is not achieved and the parties to the conflict differ on the best way forward leading to further clashes and human loss.
With these thoughts, I wish very fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.