PRESS RELEASE

AU dismayed by continued cases of sexual violence against women and children in South Sudan, calls for greater protection and accountability.

Addis Ababa, 30 July 2016: The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, is dismayed by the continued occurrence of violence in many parts of South Sudan. She is particularly hurt by the persistent use of sexual violence against women and girls as a weapon of war. The Chairperson condemns in the strongest terms the recent very serious incidents involving about 120 documented cases of sexual violence since the start of the current crisis on 7 July 2016.

The Chairperson is particularly shocked by the latest incidents, allegedly perpetrated by men in uniform, as well as others in plainclothes, in close proximity of UNMISS civilian protection camps, especially in and around Juba.

Dr. Dlamini Zuma wishes to remind the political and military leaders of all sides in the conflict of their responsibilities, and that sexual violence against women and children is a heinous crime and a serious violation of their rights, as Africa marks 2016 as the Year of Human rights with particular focus on the rights of women. She urges the leaders to ensure that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes are held fully accountable for their actions in an expeditious manner.

The Chairperson calls upon the Government of South Sudan to ensure security for all its citizens, particularly women, children and civilians, and to abide by its commitment to the full implementation of all provisions of the August 2015 Peace Agreement without any further delay.

The Chairperson encourages UNMISS to continue implementing its protection of civilian mandate as the AU, IGAD and UN finalizes consultations on the modalities for the rapid deployment of the regional protection force that was recently approved by the AU Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda on 18 July 2016.

The Chairperson reaffirms the AU’s unwavering commitment to support the full implementation of the August peace agreement so as to restore peace, security and stability for the people of South Sudan.