

Joint statement by AU, R-JMEC, ADC, EU, Troika, and UNMISS on the situation in Unity State

Juba, 18 May 2022: A joint delegation comprising the African Union (AU), the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC), the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC), the European Union and its members states (EU), the Troika and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) conducted a high-level solidarity and diplomatic mission to Bentiu, Leer and Mirmir on 12 May 2022 following clashes in Adok Port and surrounding areas.

The joint delegation had constructive and frank discussions with the Governor of Unity State, the County Commissioners of Koch, Leer and Mayendit, along with traditional leaders, women, youth and others directly impacted by the conflict. The joint delegation heard accusations and counteraccusations on the atrocities committed leading to deaths, injuries, abductions, sexual violence against women, displacements as well as the destruction of civilian property and the burning of schools.

The joint delegation expressed its solidarity with the people and Government of South Sudan and welcomed the announcement by President Salva Kiir Mayardit, of a high-level investigation committee and the deployment of SSPDF to help restore security in the area. The joint delegation supports government efforts towards restoring the rule of law and holding perpetrators to account. The joint delegation stands ready to support the committee in its work and urges the investigation committee to deploy swiftly to the area.

The joint delegation called on national and state authorities to urgently take additional measures to protect civilians and to address the root causes of the conflict. It recalls that the expeditious graduation of the unified forces will help fill security gaps at the local level. The delegation appealed to local and national leaders to use their influence to deescalate the violence, deterring any actions that may further inflame tensions, and encourage healing and reconciliation among communities.

The joint delegation commended UNMISS for deploying additional peacekeepers to patrol the affected areas to prevent additional loss of life by providing protection to the displaced and vulnerable people. It further commended UNMISS for facilitating access to humanitarian agencies that are responding to the needs of affected communities.

The joint delegation calls for a peaceful resolution to current tensions in Unity State. While violence has ebbed, any further mobilization could threaten a resumption of the clashes and risks additional delays in the implementation of the security arrangements of the peace agreement. The joint delegation reaffirms its commitment to remain seized with efforts towards overall peace in the country.

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