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September 23, 2015

H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma
 Chairperson, African Union Commission
 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

CC: Members of the Peace and Security Council

CC: Members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

Your Excellency,

We write as a group of South Sudanese and international non-governmental organizations to encourage you to take advantage of the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting on South Sudan scheduled for September 26, 2015 in New York to express your commitment to establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and to help ensure publication of the report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) without delay. These actions would make clear the African Union Commission's commitment to justice and to South Sudanese victims of crimes under international law in a conflict that has devastated millions of lives.



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As you are aware, the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, signed by South Sudan’s government on August 26, 2015 and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army-in Opposition on August 17, 2015, provides for a Hybrid Court for South Sudan to be established by the African Union Commission as well as a Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Commission and a Compensation and Reparations Authority.

A credible, independent, hybrid court to try crimes under international law committed during the conflict and that meets internationally accepted standards of fairness and impartiality has the potential to provide an essential contribution for South Sudanese looking for sustainable peace following a war that has destroyed civilian towns and villages, killed thousands of civilians, displaced over 2 million people and plunged much of the country into humanitarian crisis. Investigations into these crimes and the identification of perpetrators should start now before further evidence is lost or disappears.

Experience has shown the failure to address past crimes has fueled renewed abuse. Lasting stability, national healing and opportunity for South Sudanese looking to build a human rights-respecting state will require that crimes committed are addressed. Swift and robust support from the AU and others is crucial for these hopes to become reality.

Publication of the report of the AUCISS report remains of great importance. Both the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) were provided with copies of the report, but the victims of human rights violations, many of whom provided information to the AUCISS at great personal risk, are left with no information about its findings and recommendations. Publication of the report may also prove important to future investigators. The AU took a significant step in creating this commission, and international and local partners continue to eagerly await publication of the commission's report in order to consider its contents.

Sincerely,

Amnesty International

Affirmative Action Initiative for Women (Nigeria)

Arab Coalition for Sudan (Egypt)

Assistance Mission for Africa (South Sudan)

Centre for Livelihood, Research and Poverty Reduction (South Sudan)

Citizens for Peace and Justice (South Sudan)

Civil Resource Development and Documentation Center (Nigeria)

Club des Amis de Droit du Congo (DRC)

Coalition for the International Criminal Court (Benin)

Coalition of Eastern NGOs (Nigeria)

Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (South Sudan)

Darfur Relief and Documentation Centre (Switzerland)

Dialogue and Research Initiative (South Sudan)

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (Uganda)

End Impunity Organization (South Sudan)

The Enough Project (USA)

Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme (FIDH)

Humanity United (USA)

Human Rights Development Organization (South Sudan)

Human Rights Watch (USA)

International Justice Project (USA)

International Centre for Policy and Conflict (Kenya)

Jewish World Watch (USA)

People4Sudan (Switzerland)

South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (South Sudan)

South Sudan Human Rights Society for Advocacy (South Sudan)

South Sudan Law Society (South Sudan)

South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections (South Sudan)

South Sudan Network for Democracy and Elections (South Sudan)

Soweto Community-Based Organization (South Sudan)

Standard Action Liaison Focus (South Sudan)

The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (Uganda)

Sudan Advocacy Action Forum (Sudan)

Sudan Social Development Organization (United Kingdom)

Support Peace Initiative Development Organization (South Sudan)

United to End Genocide (USA)

Voice for Change (South Sudan)

Zorga Organization for Rural Development (Sudan)