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The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Alpha Oumar Konare, expresses serious concern at the deterioration of the security situation in Darfur, as a result of continued violations, by all the Parties, of the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement signed at N'djamena, Chad, on 8 April 2004, and the Humanitarian and Security Protocols signed on 9 November 2004, at Abuja, Nigeria.

It should be recalled that, in late November, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM) carried out attacks on various places, including Tawilla, in North Darfur, Adwah village, in South Darfur, the town of Um-Asal and at Draida. These attacks constitute serious and unacceptable violations of the afore-mentioned N'djamena Agreement and the Abuja Protocols.

In the same vein, the military operation launched on 8 December 2004, by the forces of the Government of the Sudan (GoS), at Bilel and Isham, equally constitutes a serious and unacceptable violation of the Ceasefire Agreement and the two Protocols, especially as it has been undertaken on the eve of the resumption of the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks in Abuja. This operation, which was meant to "clear roads of lawless elements", resulted in foreseeable renewed fighting between the GoS and SLMA/JEM forces. Immediately after the launching of this operation, the Chairperson of the Commission approached the Sudanese authorities and urged them to put an immediate end to the operation. His Special Representative for the Sudan, Amb. Baba Gana Kingibe, and the AMIS Force Commander, Maj. Gen F. Okonkwo, have maintained continued contact with the Sudanese authorities with the view to ending the hostilities.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges all the Parties to put an immediate end to all hostilities and demands that they abide by the N'djamena Agreement and the Humanitarian and Security Protocols they signed, as well as all the relevant decisions and resolutions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The AU Commission undertakes to bring any serious violations to the attention of the PSC and the UNSC, as appropriate.

It is the hope of the Chairperson of the Commission that, as the Parties gather in Abuja to seek a political solution to the conflict, they will make it their responsibility to fully honour their commitments and create a propitious atmosphere for the resumption of Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks.

In the meantime, the Commission pledges to redouble its efforts towards the speedy deployment of AMIS II, to enable it fulfill its expanded mandate, as decided by the PSC on 20 October 2004.

Addis Ababa, 10 December 2004