“So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it “. (1 Cor 12:25-27) NIV

To:
The African Union (AU)

Through

The Chairperson
Her Excellency Dr Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini-Zuma

Your Excellency The Chairperson of AU,

Ref: Our Concern on the continued Killings of Innocent Civilians in South Sudan

Greetings of Peace from Church Leaders in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa

We, the Church Leaders in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa under the auspices of The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), a regional Faith Based/ Ecumenical organisation that addresses peace building and conflict transformation in the region. Having accompanied the people of South Sudan in the Peace Processes that led to the formation of the National Government of South Sudan.

We are concerned about the non observance and enforcement of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) signed between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (in Opposition) in Addis Ababa on January, 23rd 2014. This has led to overwhelming suffering of innocent civilians leaving thousands dead, injured, displaced and property destroyed.

Under the Agreement on (CoH) both parties agreed on cessation of all military actions aimed at each other and any other action that may undermine the peace process. The Parties committed to cease all military operations and freeze their forces; to refrain from taking any actions that could lead to military confrontations including all movement of forces, ammunition resupply, or any other action that could be viewed as confrontational; to ensure that all forces or armed groups under their
influence, control or/and command shall observe this Agreement and that they would disengage forces or armed groups under their control. And to redeploy and/or progressively withdraw forces, armed groups, and allied forces invited by either side from the theatre of operations in the Republic of South Sudan.

We are saddened by the thousands of people in South Sudan that have been killed and the millions that have been displaced and lost property during this conflict. We are especially distressed by the recent ethnic-motivated attacks that took place in Bentiu, Unity State leaving over one thousand innocent civilians dead. Reportedly, these included attacks on a hospital, mosque, church, and a UN World Food Programme (WFP) compound.

Our Appeal:

We appeal to the International community to declare the situation in South Sudan a Humanitarian Crisis and enforce full observance and implementation of the CoH Agreement. This includes cessation of hostile propaganda/hate-speech/incitement to violence; protection of civilians; ensuring easy access to humanitarian assistance; and effective monitoring of the implementation of the Agreement on CoH at all levels by the Monitoring and Verification Team (MVT).

We call upon the GRSS to ensure that full investigation of the recent killings in Bentiu (15th and 16th April 2014) is carried out and that the perpetrators and their commanders are held accountable. This will deter similar attacks from occurring in other places within South Sudan.

We continually urge all parties to expedite the peace process that ensures a peaceful, safe, and prosperous South Sudan.

Signed:

Ethiopia Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)/
FECLLAHA Executive Committee
Chairperson: Rev. Dereje Jemberu

National Council of Churches of Burundi
General Secretary: Rev. Sylvestre Bizimana

National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK)
General Secretary: Rev. Canon. Dr. Peter Karanja
South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC)
Acting General Secretary: Rev. Mark Akec Cien

Sudan Council of Churches (SCC)
General Secretary: Rev. Kori Elramla Kuku

Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT)
General Secretary: Rev. Dr. Leonard A. Mtaita

Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC)
Executive Secretary: Rev. Fr. Dr. Silvester Arinaitwe Rwomukubwe, A.J.

FECCCLAHA Secretariat
Executive Director: Mrs. Elizabeth Z. Kisiigha

CC: The Chairman of the AU Assembly H. E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz
    The Secretary General, AU, Ambassador Jean Mfasoni