STATEMENT

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on
on the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in South Sudan

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, issued the following statement today:

I welcome the agreement on the Cessation of hostilities in South Sudan just signed in Addis Ababa.

This agreement must now be turned to reality and the parties must move immediately to implement in good faith. This means that the killing must end now. Women must be safe again. Children must be protected. The displaced must be able to return home. Humanitarian assistance must reach all in need without obstacle or abuse.

All international friends of South Sudan stand ready to help. The United Nations must be supported without hindrance. The United Nations is our collective institution. To threaten the UN is to threaten us.

What began as a political dispute must rapidly return to political dialogue without the threat of violence. I appeal to all parties to engage in those discussions excluding none who can contribute to a resolution and to reconciliation.

I wish to extend my particular gratitude to IGAD and the negotiators for their unstinting efforts to bring peace and to chart a new political path for South Sudan. Our support for IGAD from the beginning of this crisis has been unwavering and will continue to be so.

We also welcome the African Union's commitment to establish a Commission of Enquiry and stand ready to support it. This is a vital part of the process of identifying responsibility but also paving the way for future reconciliation.

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The eyes of the world are on South Sudan. What began so promisingly and after so many sacrifices in 2011 must never again be squandered as it has been in the last four weeks. The political leadership of South Sudan must now rise to this challenge.