Statement by the spokesperson of Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative, on the recent violent clashes in Southern Kordofan

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

"The High Representative is deeply concerned about the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Southern Kordofan state. She deplores the escalation of fighting, loss of life and displacement of civilians in the state capital Kadugli and many other areas of Southern Kordofan and strongly condemns reports of aerial bombardment and indiscriminate attacks on civilians.

The High Representative is also gravely concerned about reported acts of violence against individuals based on their political or ethnic affiliation and calls for these actions to be halted and investigated by the UN.

The High Representative urges the Government of Sudan to halt its pursuit of a military solution to disarm the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Southern Kordofan and to dissolve the Joint Integrated Units established under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to agree on security arrangements through direct, high-level negotiations, not by the use of force.

The High Representative calls on all parties to cease hostilities immediately, take all necessary measures to protect civilians and resume negotiations under the auspices of President Mbeki. Unhindered humanitarian access must be allowed by all parties to those in need of assistance."

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