



Brussels, 24 December 2013
131224/01

S T A T E M E N T

by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation 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 am extremely concerned that South Sudan risks spiralling into a disaster for both its own people and the region. Such a situation can, and must, be avoided. It is the responsibility of all the country's political leaders to ensure that this does not happen. The people of South Sudan have suffered war for too long to be plunged once more into an avoidable conflict.

It is essential that all political leaders commit immediately to a political dialogue to resolve their differences. This dialogue must include all groups, including those whose leaders are currently imprisoned and those in revolt against the government. The use of force will achieve nothing, and all must use their influence to immediately cease hostilities and prevent further fighting which will only cause the further shedding of innocent blood.

The failure to do so will put not just the stability of South Sudan, but that of the whole region at risk. It is the responsibility of the leaders of South Sudan to prevent this happening.

The European Union pledges its firm support to the efforts of neighbouring countries and regional organisations, particularly IGAD and the AU, to put in place a dialogue between all interests in the country. We will continue our efforts set to relieve the humanitarian suffering. But only South Sudan's own political leaders can bring the country back to the path of peace, a path along which the EU and others have committed to help the country to

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 584 9780- Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu @EUHighRepSpox
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu @AshtonSpox Maja
Sebastien Brabant +32 460 75 09 98 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu
Iulia Costea +32 460 75 07 17 - Iulia.Costea@ec.europa.eu

Follow us on Twitter [@eu_eas](https://twitter.com/eu_eas)

www.facebook.com/EuropeanExternalActionService

www.eeas.europa.eu

achieve development and growth. The cost of abandoning this path is too high a price for the people of the country who have struggled so recently and for so long for their freedom.

An immediate commitment to peace and dialogue is essential. The EU stands ready to support that process."
