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P.O. Box: 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tel.:(251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 551 93 21  
Email: [situationroom@africa-union.org](mailto:situationroom@africa-union.org), [oau-ews@ethionet.et](mailto:oau-ews@ethionet.et)

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### PRESS STATEMENT

The Commission of the African Union (AU) has just learned of the request made by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the indictment of the President of the Republic of the Sudan.

Over the past few days, and in anticipation of the announcement by the ICC Prosecutor, the Chairperson of the Commission, Jean Ping, has initiated consultations with the United Nations and other international stakeholders, including the Arab League and the Organization for the Islamic Conference, on ways and means of addressing the situation and ensuring that the hard-won gains made in the search for peace and reconciliation in the Sudan are not jeopardized.

In view of today's developments and their implications, and following a request by the Government of the Sudan, consultations are underway for the urgent convening of a meeting of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) at ministerial level to review the situation and take appropriate decisions.

In the meantime, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, will be traveling tonight to the Sudan to meet with President Omar Hassan Al Bashir and other senior officials of the Government of the Sudan.

It should be recalled that, on 11 July 2008, the PSC issued a Press Statement in which it expressed its strong conviction that the search for justice should be pursued in a way that does not impede or jeopardize efforts aimed at promoting lasting peace, and recalled that, in resolution 1593(2005) of 31 March 2005, the United Nations Security Council also emphasized the need to promote healing and reconciliation. The PSC further reiterated AU's concern with the misuse of indictments against African leaders.

  
Addis Ababa, 14 July 2008