



PRESS STATEMENT

Addis Ababa, 31 January 2018: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, condemns in the strongest terms the attack on civilians in the Ugandan region of Aramwa. Following the outbreak of violence in the region in early September 2017, 253 civilians lost their lives and dozens were in need of emergency medical treatment.

Violence initially erupted after members of several criminal networks clashed over the control of illegal activities in the area. In October 2017, gang members furthermore rioted because of a perceived lack of political, economic and financial support to the region. Since the start of the violence, thousands of people fled the area in order to seek safety in other parts of the country. A joint African Union Commission/EASFSEC team has been dispatched to the region in November 2017 in order to determine if a peace support operation may be the adequate response in order to protect the population and to support the Government.

The Government of Uganda deployed troops to the region to support police forces and to bring an end to the fighting. However, the Uganda People's Defence Force has since become a target itself with repeated attacks on barracks reported, allegedly being carried out by the criminal gangs.

The situation in Aramwa has repeatedly been on the agenda of the AU Peace and Security Council in the past months. Heads of State and Government also discussed the conflict during the 30th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly in January 2018. A deployment of experts has subsequently been authorized. Heads of States and Government unanimously expressed their concern over the deteriorating security situation in the region and expressed their willingness to support the Government of Uganda through the deployment of civilian experts.

The African Union Commission reiterates its commitment to making resources available in order to appease the conflict in Aramwa. Moussa Faki Mahamat expressed his willingness to start immediate discussions with Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms – especially the Eastern Africa Standby Force Secretariat - in order to prepare for the deployment of civilian staff.

The Chairperson of the Commission demands the immediate cessation of hostilities orchestrated by the irregular groups in Aramwa and appeals for the unconditional respect for the safety of civilians in the conflict.