



4 September 2014

Petition to members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development– immediate embargo on arms supplies to South Sudan

We, the undersigned, call on members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to immediately impose a comprehensive arms embargo on South Sudan. We also call on IGAD to issue a communiqué requesting the United Nations (UN) Security Council to adopt a resolution imposing a comprehensive international arms embargo.

Since the conflict in South Sudan broke out in December 2013, tens of thousands of people, many of them civilians, have been killed and 1.5 million forced to flee their homes. Human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and the South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA), have documented how both sides in this conflict have used small arms and light weapons to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity. These include targeting individuals, including women and children, based on their ethnicity, and killing civilians seeking refuge in hospitals and places of worship.

As long as these weapons are imported into South Sudan, they are likely to be used to commit further atrocities.

So far, agreements to cease hostilities and protect civilians have failed. Representatives of the government and the opposition forces signed a cessation of hostilities agreement on 23 January 2014, and agreed to renew this agreement on 5 May 2014. On 9 May 2014, President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, leader of the opposition forces, signed an agreement “to resolve the conflict.” However, these agreements have not only been ignored by both sides, they have also failed to deter both forces from carrying out targeted violence against civilians. An arms embargo is needed to halt the supply of weapons to individuals and groups who have committed gross violations of human rights, war crimes and crimes against humanity and to protect civilians at grave risk.

An arms embargo, first imposed by IGAD and then by the UN Security Council, would require every state to take measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms to South Sudan. Such an embargo should last until effective mechanisms can ensure that weapons, munitions and other military equipment and technology sent to South Sudan will not be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. It must also ensure that alleged violations of the embargo are thoroughly and impartially investigated and a system of accountability is put in place, so that any person responsible for a deliberate violation is brought to justice in a fair trial.

Even before an IGAD arms embargo comes into effect, we call on IGAD’s member states to immediately suspend international arms transfers to South Sudan.

Signed,

African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies
Amnesty International
Assistance Missions for Africa
Association of Media Women in South Sudan
Charity Aid Foundation
Citizens for Peace and Justice
Clip-Poverty
Community Empowerment for Progress Organization
Cordaid
East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project
End Impunity Organization
Equatoria Rehabilitation and Development Association
Global Witness
Human Rights Development Organization-South Sudan
Human Rights Watch
Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust
International Centre for Policy and Conflict
Juba Civic Engagement Centre
Justice Africa
Organization for Nonviolence and Development

PAX

Rally for Peace and Democracy

Save the Children

Seed for Democracy for South Sudan

South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms

South Sudan Human Rights Society for Advocacy

South Sudan Law Society

Soweto Community Based Organization

Standard Action Liaison Focus

Support Peace Initiative Development Organization-South Sudan

The ROOTS Project

Voice for Change – South Sudan

Voice for Nyala

Waging Peace