

AFRICAN UNION

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**THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION
URGES BURUNDIAN PARTIES TO STOP FIGHTING**

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, welcomes with a lot of hope the holding of a PALIPEHUTU-FNL Congress in Kigoma, Tanzania, from 18 to 21 April 2004, as well as the announcement made by this Movement “to immediately cease hostilities” with Government Forces and its determination to negotiate a ceasefire with the Transitional Government.

However, the Chairperson of the Commission deplores the resumption of fighting in Burima, in the Rural Bujumbura Province. He therefore urges PALIPEHUTU-FNL to clearly commit themselves to a ceasefire and to scrupulously implement it. He calls on both Government troops and PALIPEHUTU-FNL to end all attacks.

The Chairperson of the Commission underlines the fact that there is no alternative to negotiations. He strongly encourages both parties to stop fighting and to jointly seek for a negotiated solution in order to restore hope among Burundians severely affected by protracted violence.

The Chairperson of the Commission reaffirms the resolve of the African Union to help Burundians restore peace and achieve national reconciliation.

Addis Ababa, 24 April 2004