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**DEVELOPMENTS IN BUKAVU, EAST OF THE DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, is monitoring with serious concern developments in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo which have culminated in the capture of Bukavu, the provincial capital of South Kivu, by renegade soldiers.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission condemns this act, which occurs one year before the planned elections through which the Congolese people will freely establish new institutions within the framework of the new political dispensation called for by all the Congolese Parties. He views this act as a challenge to the International Community which has been making relentless efforts for more than eight years now to help the Congolese people restore peace and security in the country.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission urges renegade soldiers to withdraw from the city of Bukavu and demands that General Nkunda and Colonel Mutebusi, the two leaders of the armed rebellion, transfer back the command of the 10<sup>th</sup> Military Region to General Felix Budja Mabe appointed by the Transitional Government, in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the agreement on the Congolese Armed Forces.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission supports the efforts aimed at restoring State authority over the entire Congolese national territory and at ensuring the success of the transition process. He reiterates the commitment of the AU Commission and his personal determination, alongside the International Community, to help the Congolese Parties find a solution to a decade long crisis.

He urges all countries of the region to favor dialogue and concertation in their relations and to pool their efforts in order to back up those of the International Community aimed at sustaining the present momentum and ending protracted and repeated violence in the Great Lakes Region.

**Addis Ababa, June 04, 2004**