**African Christian Democratic Party**

 **10 May 2023

ACDP Parliament
Debate on Budget Vote 6: International Relations and Cooperation**

**Speech by ACDP Leader Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP**

**ACDP says AU must develop the political will to stop African wars**"Chairperson,

The ACDP welcomes news of the safe evacuation of all South Africans who were trapped in the war in Sudan.

According to the Sudanese army, two of the nation’s neighbours have been supplying the RSF rebels with weapons, ammunition, and other supplies. Also, some groups in Ethiopia are reportedly taking advantage of the conflict, by trying to retake parts of their common border.

Has the Minister and her Department verified these reports, and what are they doing to mitigate further attempts to escalate more tension or create another source of conflict?

In 2016, the AU adopted the Lusaka Road Map to an African Peace by 2020. This was a comprehensive plan which provided for proper funding for the African Standby Force, ways to stop rebel forces from accessing guns and money, also socio economic and as well political matters.

However, in 2018, there was an all-time high number of countries in conflict on our continent. The ACDP is convinced that the AU must develop the political will to stop African wars by confronting both destabilisers of peaceful co-existence and known instigators of wars.

This Department takes great pride in emphasising the centrality of Africa as the focus of South Africa’s foreign policy. It should do more to call for investigations into who instigates and funds the warring parties, particularly the rebels in these conflicts? South Africa’s Pan Africanist vision of unity, solidarity and a common African destiny of peace, development and prosperity, should be seen to be aggressively leading efforts to hunt down those who are distributing illegal guns on the continent.

Yesterday when the Portfolio Committee on International Relations deliberated on the Committee Report, concerns were raised about recommendations that the committee tables before this House, yet they seem to be ignored. Some noted that this committee has been rendered useless, as requests for trips to do oversight over the 116 South African missions abroad are mostly turned down.

A question was raised on whether the apparent reluctance to allow oversight visits abroad is a way of hiding from the committee the appallingly deteriorated and dilapidated state that some government properties are in.

The suspension and ultimate removal from office of former Director General Mahoai is a case in point. We know he was pushed out. The Minister and her department have failed to take the Committee of International Relations into their confidence, and don’t seem to be taking transparency seriously.

This lack of transparency in the department is the main reason why the ACDP will not support this budget vote."

**-ENDS-**