

## South Sudan: Phased deployment of regional protection force begins

8 August 2017 – The phased deployment in South Sudan of the United Nations-authorized regional protection force has begun, freeing existing peacekeepers to extend their presence to conflict-affected areas beyond the capital, Juba.

“Having additional troops means we can carry out more tasks related to our mandate, to protect civilians and build durable peace,” the Secretary General’s Special Representative and the head of UN Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)), David Shearer, told a news conference today in Juba.

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement, South Sudan slipped back into conflict due to renewed clashes between rival forces – the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) loyal to President Salva Kiir and the SPLA in Opposition backing former First Vice-President Riek Machar.

The deployment of the 4,000-strong regional protection force was authorized by the UN Security Council in its Resolution 2304 (2016). UNMISS says the force will provide protection to key facilities in the nation’s capital, Juba, and the main routes into and out of the city. It will also strengthen the security of UN protection of civilians’ sites and other UN premises.

Mr. Shearer said the arrival of the first company of Rwandan soldiers, in addition to a Nepalese High Readiness company and more than 100 Bangladeshi engineers already in the mission area, marks the beginning of the phased deployment of the regional protection force.

This will allow the existing UNMISS troops based in Juba, to be reassigned to different locations across the world’s youngest country to protect civilians, support humanitarian assistance, and monitor and report on human rights abuses.

“For example, it would enable us to put more patrols along insecure roads where there have been attacks on civilian convoys – such as the Juba-Nimule and Juba-Bor roads,” Mr. Shearer said.

He went on to explain that the Juba-based regional protection force comes under the command of UNMISS.

“While it is separate in a sense of its mandate and its delivery here, it remains under one command which is the UNMISS Command, so it will be commanded by a brigadier general, but ultimately it comes under the force commander who ultimately comes under me, so it is part of UNMISS, it is not a separate stand alone,” he said.

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## Ahead of elections, UN calls on Kenyan authorities to ensure peaceful polls

7 August 2017 – On the eve of Tuesday’s general elections in Kenya to elect the President and other officials, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres called on all national stakeholders to renew their commitment to credible and peaceful elections, as well as their confidence in the institutions constitutionally mandated to conduct the elections.

“The Secretary-General has been closely following developments pertaining to the electoral process in Kenya, and he has remained in regular contact with the relevant political leaders and other key stakeholders,” [said](#) his Spokesman Stephane Dujarric in a statement.

“The Secretary-General underlines the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as professional and impartial conduct of law enforcement officials during the elections,” the Spokesman added.

Meanwhile, three United Nations human rights experts have urged the Government to ensure that all parties maintain the highest standards of behaviour before, during and after Tuesday’s general elections to avoid a repeat of the violence that took place in 2007.

“We call on the Kenyan authorities to do their utmost to [ensure peaceful elections](#), as well as a free and fair voting process tomorrow,” [said](#) the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Annalisa Ciampi, on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, and on summary executions, Agnes Callamard.

“Respect for people’s fundamental rights and freedoms – including the right to vote, freedom of expression, association and assembly – are the key to free and fair elections and public participation,” they noted in a joint statement.

Since 2007, when the country plunged into bloodshed over disputed election results, “Kenya had made significant progress in strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law,” they said, noting it had taken important steps towards peacefully resolving tensions in the context of elections.

“However, in the light of recent incidents of political violence, the rise of hate speech and prevailing tensions, we emphasize the importance of all those involved in the process to commit themselves to peaceful conduct during and after elections,” they said.

“We also call on their supporters to remain peaceful and refrain from any incitement to violence,” [added](#) the experts.

The Special Rapporteurs welcomed the Government’s commitment not to shut down the internet, urging the authorities to ensure that media and civil society

could report on and scrutinize the poll unhindered.

They also highlighted the responsibility of security forces to facilitate the holding of peaceful demonstrations, and to hold constructive dialogue with protesters in an effort to defuse any tensions.

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## [UN chief urges Venezuelans to ease tensions and engage in negotiations](#)

7 August 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres is closely following recent developments in Venezuela, his Spokesperson told reporters today.

“In this critical moment for the future of the country, he urges all Venezuelans to make all possible efforts to lower tensions and engage in political negotiations,” [underscored](#) Stéphane Dujarric, when asked about the latest developments in the South American country.

The Secretary-General and other top UN officials have been calling for calm in Venezuela since late July when, according to media reports, clashes erupted between security forces and protestors opposing the Constituent Assembly elections.

According to media reports, President Nicolás Maduro declared victory in elections for a Constituent Assembly convened by him. The new body could replace the current legislative body, the National Assembly.

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## [Yemen: Senior UN relief official voices concern at reports of airstrikes on civilians](#)

7 August 2017 – Expressing a deep concern about reports of airstrikes on civilians in Yemen’s Sa’ada Governorate, a senior United Nations relief official has urged all parties to the conflict and those who influence and support them to uphold their responsibility under international humanitarian law to protect civilians.

“All parties to the conflict continue to [show a disregard for the protection of civilians](#) and the principle of distinction between civilians

and combatants in the conduct of hostilities,&#8221 said Jamie McGoldrick, the Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, in a statement issued over the weekend by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

Attacks on a house in As Safra District and on a private vehicle in Razih District on Friday have reportedly resulted in the deaths of at least 12 civilians, including women and children and the injury of 10 more people.

While these new incidents are still being investigated by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)), they are an example of the brutality in which the conflict is being conducted, Mr. McGoldrick stated.

&#8220As I have said before, even wars have rules and such rules must be respected,&#8221 he added.

Meanwhile, UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric told reporters at UN Headquarters today that there had been a delay in the delivery of fuel needed for the UN's humanitarian operations in the country but UN team has got assurances that fuel will be moving this week from Aden to the capital, Sana'a.

&#8220We ask authorities for a mechanism to help ensure regular delivery of aviation fuel for UN operations,&#8221 Mr. Dujarric said.

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## [UN health agency working to boost malaria prevention and control in north-eastern Nigeria](#)

7 August 2017 – The United Nations health agency estimates that if more funds are secured, up to 10,000 lives in Nigeria could be saved by November through targeted steps in malaria prevention and control.

To manage malaria in the Borno state of north-eastern Nigeria, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and its partners are strengthening surveillance systems to monitor cases and outbreaks; increasing people's access to care in clinics and to health facilities; spraying insecticides and distributing bed nets as part of vector control; and administering malaria drugs to children under five every month from July to October.

Following more than eight years of conflict in Borno, some 3.7 million people need humanitarian assistance &#8211 and all are at risk for malaria. WHO estimates that through October, 8,500 people are infected weekly &#8211 with more expected.

&#8220The most effective way to reduce deaths in emergencies in fragile States, especially those facing malnutrition, is by [boosting malaria](#)

[prevention and control](#), however, this is often not viewed as the top priority during an emergency response,&#8221 said Dr. Pedro Alonso, Director of WHO's Global Malaria Programme. &#8220We are working with our WHO colleagues and many partners to change this.&#8221

WHO estimates that over half of recorded deaths there are due to malaria &#8211 comprising more than all other diseases combined, including cholera, measles and hepatitis E. The vulnerable population, consisting of 58.8 per cent children, stands at risk of disease outbreaks.

With more than 60 per cent of health facilities only partially functioning, many people have not had access for years to regular health services, including vaccinations and basic medicines. In addition to security concerns, deadly malnutrition is rising in parts of the state.

### ***Tackling health emergencies***

&#8220Malaria, malnutrition, fragile States and civil strife often feed each other,&#8221 said Dr. Alonso, adding: &#8220Wherever we have a humanitarian crisis in a malaria endemic country, we can almost always be sure that malaria is the number one killer.&#8221

However, malaria is preventable and curable, and increased efforts over the last 15 years have drastically reduced related mortality rates by more than 60 per cent, averting six million deaths.

Following a visit, WHO malaria experts commissioned a modelling exercise that concluded that joint actions could prevent up to 10,000 deaths in Borno state alone.

In early July, the first of four monthly rounds of mass drug administration reached more than 880,000 of the 1.1 million under-age-five children targeted.

WHO hopes for \$2.5 million to mobilize the emergency intervention and is relying on the existing polio vaccinator infrastructure to carry out the operation, which faces Boko Haram security threats.

&#8220We will give one curative dose of antimalarial drugs to a defined population, in this case children under-five,&#8221 said Dr. Alonso. &#8220In Borno state, we are giving an antimalarial drug to a child, whether they have malaria infection or not, to ensure they are cleared of parasites at that point and to protect them for four weeks. It's a necessary temporary fix to reduce malaria deaths for the next six months.&#8221

WHO has trained community health workers to offer rapid and read diagnostic tests, provide treatment and advise on prevention.

&#8220We will not know the full impact of our efforts until November, but we are confident that taking these steps will go a long way in reducing deaths and suffering of people from malaria so they can get on with their lives,&#8221 said Dr. Wondi Alemu, WHO Representative in Nigeria.