

## Baku Forum: Time to find 'magic formula' for peaceful coexistence, says UNESCO chief

6 May 2017 – It is time to find that “magic formula” that will encourage people to live together in peace, the head of the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization ([UNESCO](#)) urged earlier today at the end of a UN-backed conference on intercultural dialogue in Baku, Azerbaijan.

In her closing remarks at end of the event, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova expressed hope and optimism that the world is “on the right path” towards building “inclusive and resilient” societies.

Hundreds of delegates, experts, academics, business and civil society leaders from 120 countries took part in this year’s [4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue](#), which aimed at further promoting and sustaining understanding and dialogue within and between cultures.

The UN-backed intercultural dialogue ended on a high note with the UNESCO chief calling on participants to act now to stamp out extremism and “build peace in the minds of men and women,” echoing the UN agency’s own timeless message about the need to make the most of the opportunities to bolster peaceful coexistence provided by our globalized world of increasing interconnections and diversity.

I think we all feel a certain sense of urgency, that we have to act [...]the world is very fragile, and peace is very fragile

The past three days were a flurry of debates, panel discussions, exhibits and concerts held by renowned artists working to bring people of different walks of life closer together, what UNESCO has called “a rapprochement of cultures.”

Preventing terrorism in cyberspace, educating girls to combat violent extremism, and changing people’s negative perception of migrants in cities were some of the topics broached at the Forum. The agenda also included such topics as the role of faith, religions, human security, sport, education, art, sustainable development, preventing violent extremism, and business in building trust and cooperation among cultures and civilizations.

Ms. Bokova urged the participants to try and establish an intercultural dialogue in their respective countries.

“I think it’s a moment of commitment, of engagement, I think we all feel a certain sense of urgency, that we have to act [...] but outside this beautiful country [...] the world out there is very fragile, and peace is very

fragile,&#8221 she said, emphasizing that: &#8220How to sustain peace, how to build these inclusive, resilient societies, and how to prevent, in certain cases this extremism, and find this magic formula of living together [...] deserves all our efforts and all our commitments.&#8221

Reflecting on the outcome of the Baku Forum, Maher Nasser, Acting UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, said it is too early to &#8220cry victory&#8221 or dismiss the event as a failure because that can only be determined by what will follow.

#### ***Baku Forum spotlights importance of culture as a way to connect societies***

&#8220The discussions that I have seen bring back the importance of dialogue and using culture as a way to connect and to connect societies &#8211 sometimes within the same country. How culture bring us together as humans. We may see things differently, but there are also, sometimes, things that can bring us together. Culture and art are important elements of that,&#8221 he explained.

Speaking to *UN News*, Mr. Nasser also highlighted the important connection between tourism and culture. &#8220Tourism today is one the top employers around the world,&#8221 he said. &#8220Tourism depends on stability. No one wants to go to a region in conflict, unless you are war reporter. So tourism has a vested interest in promoting peace.&#8221

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is one of the organizing partners of the Baku Forum, along with UNESCO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), the Council of Europe, the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

Mr. Nasser concluded by saying that the conference was &#8220timely&#8221 and that he was optimistic moving forward.

The UNESCO Director-General praised the Government of Azerbaijan for hosting the World Forum for the fourth time, praising the country as an example of a nation where people of different faiths and cultures can live in peace.

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## **[Security Council condemns attack against UN Mission in South Sudan](#)**

6 May 2017 – Strongly condemning the attack against the United Nations Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)) on 3 May, the Security Council has called on all parties to immediately adhere to the permanent ceasefire called for in an August 2015 peace agreement.

Between 11pm and midnight on 3 May, the Mission's temporary operating base in Leer town in the former Unity State came under small-arms attack from the direction of the nearby Government-held town. According to the Mission, peacekeepers' quick [defensive action](#) secured the safety of all of the internally displaced people who had sought UN protection adjacent to the base.

The members of the Security Council recalled that individuals who, directly or indirectly, engage in attacks against United Nations missions, international security presence, or other peacekeeping operations, or humanitarian personnel, may be designated for targeted sanctions, [said](#) a statement issued overnight by the 15-member body.

Further in the statement, the Council members expressed appreciation for the actions taken by UNMISS peacekeepers to repel the 3 May attack, further condemned the continued violence committed by all parties, including the ongoing military offensives, and called for removal of all obstacles to the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

Earlier this week, the UN human rights chief urged the Government of South Sudan to halt any further military offensives towards Aburoc in the Upper Nile region.

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.

Violence has caused [a spike](#) in the number of displaced people.

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## [In Colombia's central Meta region, Security Council witnesses first-hand progress on peace deal](#)

5 May 2017 – While touring the Amazon region of Colombia where one of the monitoring mechanism facilities was set up under a historic peace agreement, a delegation from the United Nations Security Council met today with members of La Reforma community, as well as Government representatives and FARC-EP members.

The purpose [field visit](#) is to witness first-hand implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), and to observe the progress as well as the challenges of carrying out the aims of a hard-won peace deal.

This monitoring mechanism facility in Colombia's Meta Department is one of the designated locations where the Government of Colombia as well as FARC-EP continues to work together paving the path towards peace.

While addressing all parties present in the transitional zone, Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, of Uruguay, which holds the Council's presidency of the month of May, highlighted the trust between Government and FARC-EP representatives.

He said he was struck to see, on one hand people with the UN (blue) jackets and on the other, Government representatives as well as guerrilla component using the same brown colour, adding that this further affirms the absolute confidence, certainty, that this process goes forward and has no return.

The members of the Council are accompanied by the head of the [UN Mission in Colombia](#), Jean Arnault, senior Colombian Government officials and FARC-EP leaders.

The Colombian Government's High Commissioner for Peace recalled that Meta was one of the areas most affected by violence. "We know what peace means for this community and we hope they can talk to the people immersed in the conflict," Sergio Jaramillo told the members of the Security Council.

Also present was FARC-EP leader, Iván Márquez. He expressed a sincere, deep thanks to the Security Council.

Upon departure from New York earlier this week, Mr. Rosselli stressed that the presence of the Security Council would carry a message to Colombia that the UN was committed to the special political mission established there, and would provide additional support, as requested.

After finishing the visit to Colombia, the Members of the Security Council will return to New York, where they will hold an informative session about their visit later in May.

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## ['Save Lives: Slow Down,' urges UN health agency ahead of Global Road Safety Week](#)

5 May 2017 – Spotlighting the relationship between speeding and traffic fatalities speeding contributes to one in three traffic deaths the UN health agency, ahead of Global Road Safety Week, is urging countries to take measures to curb dangerous driving behaviour.

According to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), 1.25 million people die

every year on the world's roads. Close to half of those tragic deaths are caused by drivers going faster than posted speed limits.

Speed is at the core of the global road traffic injury problem, WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan said in a [news release](#) issued on the eve of the week, which runs from 8 to 14 May. If countries were to address just this key risk, they would soon reap the rewards of safer roads, both in terms of lives saved and increases in walking and cycling, with profound and lasting effects on health.

To raise awareness and avoid tragedy hundreds of events are being organized throughout [Global Road Safety Week](#). WHO points out that these events will contribute to achievement of the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

The UN health agency points to research that shows that a five per cent cut in average speed can result in a 30 per cent reduction in the number of fatal road traffic crashes.

Speed reduction is a key contribution [to the [SDGs](#)], said Etienne Krug, Director of the WHO Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention in an interview with *UN News*. We have planned our cities for cars. Cars are everywhere, they are speeding and [as a result] people don't feel comfortable in many cities to cycle or even to walk.

Mr. Krug further pointed out that public transportation is underdeveloped and if we continue [like this], we are going straight into the wall if we develop our cities just for cars.

The campaign [Save Lives: #SlowDown](#) is also part of a larger initiative [Save LIVES: a road safety technical package](#) promoting 22 key measures to address road traffic deaths and injuries, including on managing speed.

Aside from speed management the plan focuses on leadership, infrastructure design and improvement, vehicle safety standards, enforcement of traffic laws and post-crash survival.

Speed is not the only factor, stressed Mr. Krug. Drunk driving is also a key factor and distracted driving such as texting and being on the phone.

He saw a clear need to campaign for improving infrastructure and modes of transportation. We need to make cycling, walking and public transportation more safe and more accessible because that is the future and it is also much healthier. People will have less [non communicable diseases](#) if they walk and cycle more. I'm talking about cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes.

Krug confirms that the work is paying off. We are seeing progress there are many cities, I could highlight Freiburg, Sao Paulo and New York, adding that we want more of that, and we want it faster because the clock is ticking.

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## UN migration agency transports hundreds of South Sudanese refugees from border into Ethiopia

5 May 2017 – The United Nations migration agency has begun transferring South Sudanese refugees from Ethiopia's Pagak border entry point in Gambella to the Gore-Shembola refugee camp in Benishangul Gumuz Regional States approximately 835 kilometres away.

IOM [International Organization for Migration] has set up two way stations, one at Metu [275 km from the Pagak entry point] and the other at Gimbi [310 km from Metu], said Anezier Ebrahim, IOM Officer in charge of the operation, explaining the route taken to reach Gore-Shembola refugee camp in a press [release](#) announcing the effort, which began on 1 May.

The way stations have been constructed with the financial assistance of the United Kingdom Department for International Development and provide overnight accommodation, shelter and meals for refugees in transit from the border entry point to the camp, he continued.

With recent fighting and severe food insecurity further worsening the already dismal humanitarian situation in South Sudan, an additional 30,000 refugees are expected to enter Gambella over the coming months, according to IOM. Refugee camps in Gambella, one of Ethiopia's least developed regions, are currently at maximum capacity with the total number of South Sudanese refugees surpassing that of the local population.

In collaboration with the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs and the Office of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), IOM carried out an assessment of the potential route from Pagak border entry point to Gore-Shembola refugee camp in Benishangul, to ensure the safe and dignified migration of the refugees.

Prior to relocation, IOM provided pre-departure medical screenings to ensure that refugees are fit for travel, referring those who present medical concerns to local health facilities. IOM is also working in coordination with Plan International to provide psychosocial support and protection services for unaccompanied minors.

Nyakim and her four children are among the 365 refugees who were transferred to Gore-Shembola refugee camp in Benishangul this week. The struggles of the journey to reach Ethiopia are clearly visible and all of her children suffer from skin rashes and a cough.

The journey from Jonglei to Pagak has been really difficult. We have walked for six days straight and my children and I have eaten only wild fruit

from the forest,&#8221 Nyakim said.

Renewed fighting led her to make the perilous journey for the safety of her children, leaving her husband behind.

IOM worked in collaboration with Action for the Needy in Ethiopia (ANE) for way station site preparations and the provision of latrines, showers and water.

&#8220Continued transportation assistance is urgently required to ensure newly arrived refugees' access to basic services in the camps.&#8221 added Mr. Ebrahim, with the reminder that IOM remains committed to assist refugees with transportation from Pagak border entry point to Gore-Shembola refugee camp in the coming months.