

UN chief hails Japan-China-South Korea cooperation to 'denuclearize' Peninsula

United Nations chief António Guterres has welcomed the Japan-China-South Korea summit held on Wednesday and their effort to cooperate in ridding the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons.

The Secretary-General "welcomes" the trilateral meeting and their cooperation for "[the denuclearization](#) of the Korean Peninsula," said his Spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, in a statement issued on Thursday.

"The Secretary-General hopes that the joint resolve of the countries in Northeast Asia will strengthen the path to achieve lasting peace and prosperity in this region," added the Spokesperson.

According to media reports, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Republic of Korea (ROK) President Moon Jae-in, met in the Japanese capital Wednesday and agreed that the Northeast Asian neighbors will cooperate on ending North Korea's nuclear program and promoting free trade.

This trilateral meeting followed the bilateral summit on 27 April between the leaders of ROK and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in which they agreed on measures toward lasting peace on the Peninsula.

Those agreements set out in Panmunjom Declaration include realizing the common goal of "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," and pursuing talks to declare an official end to the Korean War, which devastated the Peninsula, beginning in June 1950.

An armistice brought about a ceasefire in 1953, but the conflict never officially ended because the parties failed to reach agreement over a formal peace treaty.

Meanwhile, United States President Donald Trump announced on Thursday that he will meet DPRK leader Kim Jong Un on 12 June in Singapore.

'Durable solutions' needed for durable

peace in Darfur, UN envoy tells Security Council

The overall security situation in Sudan's Darfur region "remains calm", despite continuing low-level skirmishes, a top United Nations envoy said on Thursday; updating the Security Council on the UN mission's work on the ground.

"The general security situation in Darfur remains calm, except for sporadic clashes between the Sudan Liberation Army of Mr. Abdul Wahid, Government forces and nomads in the Jebel Marra," said Jeremiah Mamabolo, Head of the African Union-UN Mission in Darfur ([UNAMID](#)), speaking via video-link.

The mission is in the process of reconfiguring its forces, including the construction of a new Temporary Operating Base at Golo, on land provided by the government in Jebel Marra. The reconfiguration has involved withdrawal from some areas previously controlled by UNAMID.

While it was too early to make a final assessment, Mr. Mamabolo said there had been no "adverse impact" so far.

While the Government is expected to establish its authority in these areas, he added, "we continue to monitor the situation within the framework of our protection of civilians' mandate."

Mr. Mamabolo saw what he called "a glimpse of hope" in the stalled peace process with parties expressing a desire "for continued engagement" at a meeting in Berlin last month.

"I am, therefore, in contact with all the parties to bridge their differences so that they can agree on and sign a pre-negotiation framework as soon as possible" to pave the way for a "cessation of hostilities agreement and direct negotiations," he said.

For Darfur to be guaranteed of durable peace and development, durable solutions will have to be found for the plight of IDPs –
Jeremiah Mamabolo

Turning to the humanitarian situation, revised figures reveal that some 1.76 million displaced people are registered in approximately 66 camps.

With no systematic registration of those displaced outside the camps however, estimates vary considerably for those unregistered and living in rural settlements and urban areas.

UN humanitarian agencies and partners estimate that an additional 500,000 displaced people live in some 108 host communities and settlements in Darfur.

Mr. Mamabolo indicated that from UNAMID's interactions, they would like to return to their places of origin, provided they have security and basic services.

Meanwhile, others say they are willing to settle where they are – with assurances that they retain their traditional land rights in their original homes.

For Darfur to be guaranteed “durable peace and development, durable solutions will have to be found for the plight of IDPs,” he stressed.

“It is imperative that concerted efforts be exerted towards mobilization of financial resources to consolidate and sustain the prevailing peace and stability in the region,” he concluded.

The Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur can be found here: [S/2018/389](#).

[Avoid ‘new conflagration’ urges UN chief, in wake of military escalation in Golan](#)

The United Nations chief has called for an immediate halt to all hostile acts and provocative actions to “avoid a new conflagration” in the Middle East, following reported exchanges of artillery fire over the Golan Heights.

According to media reports, the Israeli military attacked Iranian military installations in neighbouring Syria in retaliation for an Iranian-instigated rocket barrage on Israeli positions in the Golan.

UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) “followed, [with utmost concern](#), reports overnight of missile launches from Syria targeting Israeli positions and retaliatory strikes by the Israel Defense Forces,” said his Spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, in a statement issued on Thursday.

Mr. Guterres “notes, with relief, today’s partial normalization of the situation,” and “urges for an immediate halt to all hostile acts and any provocative actions to avoid a new conflagration in the region already embroiled in terrible conflicts with immense suffering of civilians,” added the statement.

The Golan was captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, and in 1974, a UN observer force was set up to monitor the ceasefire reached that year by Israel and Syria.

Mr. Dujarric noted that the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has maintained contact with forces of both sides during the latest hostilities and urged them to exercise “maximum restraint” and abide by their obligations under the 1974 agreement.

[UN rights expert welcomes return of detainees from DPRK, urges release of others](#)

The release of three United States nationals by North Korea is “another important building block” towards peace, said a United Nations human rights expert on Thursday, while urging the release of six South Korean nationals who are still being held.

In a statement reacting to the release of the US citizens, Tomás Ojea Quintana, the UN expert on human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) said that he had “consistently advocated for the release of these foreign detainees, who were reportedly under arbitrary detention and prevented from enjoying their basic freedoms.”

“I welcome this important decision of the DPRK Government,” the Special Rapporteur continued, “which I hope will offer an opportunity to further address human rights and humanitarian concerns,” he added.

Kim Sang-duk, known as “Tony Kim”, Kim Hak Song and Kim Dong-chul were among several foreign nationals arrested in recent years in the country.

Mr. Ojea Quintana urged the north to also release six South Koreans who remain in detention, including three pastors.

“I remain concerned by reports that the foreign detainees have not received due legal process and may be held in inhumane conditions without consular access,” he said.

“Moreover,” continued the Special Rapporteur, “as peace talks progress, a comprehensive assessment of the overall penitentiary system in North Korea will become unavoidable.”

During the first week of July, Mr. Ojea Quintana will visit the south, and in October present his next report to the UN General Assembly.□

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are

not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

[UN chief applauds Malaysians for 'strong commitment' to democracy](#)

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres congratulated the people of Malaysia on Thursday, following the peaceful holding of national and provincial elections, and praised voters for their “strong commitment” to the democratic process.

In a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson, the UN chief welcomed the formation of a new Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and paid tribute to outgoing Prime Minister Najib Razak.

The UN chief added that he was looking forward to working closely with Malaysia on issues of mutual interest.

The new Prime Minister is no stranger to the job, having led the country for much of the 1980s and 1990s, and at 92 he has become the world’s oldest elected leader.

The coalition of parties which he led to victory, secured 113 of the 222 seats being contested.

The elections, held on 9 May, saw a voter turnout of 76 per cent, according to media reports.