

[UN chief condemns double bombing in Libyan city of Benghazi](#)

24 January 2018 – Condemning the double bombing in the Libyan city of Benghazi, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres underscored that there can be no military solution to the crisis plaguing the country.

According to reports, more than 20 people, including civilians and children were killed in the attack in the city's Al-Salmani district and many others wounded.

In a [statement](#) attributable to his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres also expressed concerns over reports of summary executions being carried out in Benghazi in retaliation for the attack.

“The perpetrators of the attack in Al-Salmani, and of any criminal acts carried out in retaliation, must be brought to justice,” added the statement.

In the statement, the Secretary-General also expressed his deepest condolences to the bereaved families and wished the injured swift recovery.

[Spike in attacks on 'blue helmets' means UN peace operations must adapt, says peacekeeping chief](#)

24 January 2018 – With United Nations 'blue helmets' facing increasingly grave threats, including armed groups with no interest in peace, the UN peacekeeping chief called on Wednesday for greater political engagement and leadership from the Security Council and the world body's Member countries to ensure UN troops – and the populations they serve – are better protected.

“We are being attacked by the armed groups who are looting, killing, raping and they have no interest in peaceful solution,” Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, told reporters in New York at a briefing on a new report on reducing casualties among UN peacekeepers.

“So, it is because we have these very different dangerous environments that we have to change,” he said, calling specifically for deployment of troops that are well-trained, well-equipped and with the right mindset.

Doing so, Mr. Lacroix underlined, will not only help reduce fatalities, but

will also facilitate the implementation of mandates assigned to UN missions and protect civilian populations.

In November 2017, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres had appointed Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz of Brazil, who held senior positions at a number of UN peacekeeping missions, to lead a high-level review to identify why the UN has had so many casualties caused by acts of violence in recent years, and what should be done to reduce these casualties.

Made public on Tuesday, the report states that with the influx of armed groups, extremists, organized crime, and other criminal elements and threats, the 'blue helmet' and UN flag no longer offer "natural" protection to peacekeepers.

VIDEO: Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix talks about the 'Cruz report'.

Describing the overall report a "very, very candid assessment" of the problems and what should be done to address them, Mr. Lacroix said that an [action plan](#) has been developed to implement it.

"The 'Cruz report' and the action plan that we will implement, are about the reducing fatalities in peacekeeping but they touch most issues that are relevant to performance. They address issues such as are we implementing our own rules even down to the basic levels – are we playing by our own book," he added.

The plan focuses on three key areas – operational behaviour and mindset; capacity building and readiness; and support issues – and includes immediate UN Headquarters and field-level actions.

Since 1948, more than 3,500 personnel have lost their lives serving in UN peace operations with 943 due to acts of violence. Since 2013, casualties have spiked, with 195 deaths in violent attacks, more than during any other five-year period in history.

[South Sudan: Ceasefire violations, hostile propaganda undercut regional peace push, Security Council told](#)

24 January 2018 – While the signing last month of a ceasefire accord among South Sudan's warring parties is a great stride forward, it is just a first step toward peace and stability, the United Nations peacekeeping chief said

Wednesday, warning that the 21 December deal has already been violated numerous times.

“These violations by the parties and the continuing hostile propaganda undertaken against one another are worrisome, as they illustrate a lack of genuine commitment to honour their words, and de-facto undermine the regional and international efforts to revitalize the peace process,” said Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix told a Security Council briefing.

The world’s youngest country has spent much of its short life mired in conflict, as what began as a political face-off between President Salva Kiir and his then former Vice-President Riek Machar, erupted into full-blown war late in 2013.

The [Agreement](#) on the Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access among the warring South Sudanese parties was brokered by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an eight-country trade bloc in Africa.

“The South Sudanese parties must realize that the international community and the region will not continue to tolerate Agreements being signed, only to be violated in total impunity,” he said, urging 15 Council members to speak out very clearly against these violations, and to take the decisive actions necessary to impose real consequences for the violators.

IGAD’s High-Level Revitalization Forum is expected to resume on 5 February in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to focus on governance, transitional security arrangements and the permanent ceasefire.

“It will be crucial for the South Sudanese parties to participate in the Forum in good faith and with a view to make the necessary compromises required for South Sudan to return on the path to a sustainable peace,” Mr. Lacroix said.

The South Sudanese parties must realize that the international community and the region will not continue to tolerate Agreements being signed
USG Jean-Pierre Lacroix

On the security situation in and around Juba, he expressed concern over the attacks by unknown armed elements on Government security installations on 4 January. The same day, there were also shooting incidents between security forces and criminal elements near the ‘protection of civilians’ sites adjacent to the headquarters of the UN Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)) in Juba.

UNMISS immediately reinforced those sites with additional uniformed personnel to prevent any entry.

During the reporting period, inter-communal violence also escalated in the Jonglei, Lakes and Warrap areas, causing roughly 160 fatalities, including at

least 24 women. UNMISS reacted swiftly to these incidents by mobilizing community leaders and peace actors to de-escalate inter-communal tensions, and promote dialogue and reconciliation.

UNMISS will formally inaugurate a new base in Yei in Central Equatoria on Thursday. This base will allow the UNMISS force to project presence, to build confidence and restore stability to an area which has witnessed an exodus of the population to Uganda as a result of recent conflict.

Turning to human rights, he warned that the gravity of conflict-related sexual violence is deplorable and constitutes an emergency in its own right.

In 2017, there were 2,670 incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related incidents perpetrated by both State and non-State actors.

Unfortunately, these human rights violations are compounded by impunity, with perpetrators not being held to account, he said, calling on President Silva Kiir to end this impunity.

Also addressing the Council was Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, who [noted](#) that the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan for South Sudan seeks to assist six million people, more than half the population, and requires \$1.7 billion.



Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator briefs the Security Council. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Some 1.5 million people are in emergency-level food insecurity, just one step away from famine, and around 20,000 people are already in famine conditions, she said, warning that the next lean season, which begins in March, is likely to see food security worsen, and could see famine conditions spread to several new locations across the country.

Access challenges have continued to delay and interrupt the humanitarian response. Last month, in Unity state, truck drivers delivering humanitarian supplies by road from Juba reported a total of 66 checkpoints, she said.

In 2017, at least 28 aid workers were killed in the line of duty, and over 1,100 incidents were reported, the highest annual count since the conflict started in 2013.

[Bring human rights to discussion tables and into decisions at Davos, UN experts urge](#)

24 January 2018 – With world leaders converging in Davos, Switzerland, for the annual World Economic Forum, a group of United Nations human rights experts has called on government and business leaders to use the occasion to decide on concrete actions to bring about positive change.

“What we are seeing in the world today is the economically disenfranchised yearning for a fairer economic system that spreads the rewards of economic development to all,” Anita Ramasastry, the chairperson of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, [said](#) on Tuesday.

“The inclusion of human rights objectives into political and economic decisions are crucial if economic reforms are to tackle the root causes of populism, global unrest, climate change and inequality,” she added.

In particular, the experts underscored the need for Governments and businesses to act in accordance with the UN [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) by respecting the rights of workers across supply chains and avoid business operations that cause or contribute to adverse human rights impacts.

Welcoming a session of this year’s World Economic Forum on *Global Prospects for Human Rights*, they called on all participants to remind each other that human rights are not a fringe issue but are at the centre of the most pressing global risks and challenges, and therefore must be the focus of efforts to address those issues.

They also stressed that Governments and business leaders meeting in Davos wield the “power and influence” to set the world on a more inclusive and sustainable path and called on them to realize the commitments world leaders made “to realize the human rights of all” and “to leave no one behind.”

They reiterated their appeal on business leaders to support those pledges.

The Working Group on Business and Human Rights was established by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council in 2011.

Composed of five experts, the Working Group promotes the effective dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights through promoting sharing of good practices and lessons learned, integrating a gender perspective, and suggesting recommendations.

UN Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the 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.

[Afghanistan: UN chief 'appalled and deeply saddened' by deadly attack on aid partner](#)

24 January 2018 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has spoken out against the fatal attack on the Afghan offices of renowned international non-governmental organization Save the Children, saying that he was “appalled and deeply saddened” by the casualties.

In a statement issued Wednesday by his Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric, the Secretary-General expressed [his deep sympathy](#) to the families of the victims.

According to initial reports, the attack on the offices of Save the Children in Jalalabad killed two people and wounded dozens, including children.

“Humanitarian organizations provide life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable men, women and children in Afghanistan. Aid workers, and their premises and assets, should never be a target,” the statement said.

“The Secretary-General reiterates that all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan are obliged under international law to protect humanitarian workers and civilians,” it added.