

[UN Mission welcomes agreement to revive South Sudan's peace pact](#)

22 December 2017 – Welcoming the signing of an agreement on cessation of hostilities and improving humanitarian access in South Sudan, the United Nations Mission in the country ([UNMISS](#)) has urged all parties to work collectively to ensure durable peace in the nation.

“The Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access is an important first step in the revitalization of the peace process,” said the mission in a [news release](#), Friday.

“UNMISS is committed to supporting the peace process in line with its mandate through advancing reconciliation efforts, strengthening conflict resolution mechanisms, building national cohesion and engaging in regional and international peace initiatives,” it added.

The Agreement was signed Thursday between the Government and opposing groups attending the High-Level Revitalization Forum in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia.

It aims to revitalize efforts to implement the 2015 peace agreement in South Sudan which came under increasing strain due to violence in the country.

Also in the news release, the UNMISS acknowledged the efforts of all actors involved in the Forum in reaching an agreement and thanked the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an eight-country trade bloc in Africa, for its leadership of the peace talks.

“[We] urge all parties to adhere to the Agreement and end the ongoing violence so that durable peace can be achieved in the interests of the people of South Sudan,” added the UN Mission.

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

[Security Council to consider set of elements in peacekeeping reviews](#)

21 December 2017 – The United Nations Security Council on Thursday expressed its intention to consider a set of elements when reviewing mandates and

configuration of peacekeeping missions.

Adopting a presidential statement, the Council outlined several elements related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace that would benefit the peacekeeping reviews, and expressed its intention to consider these elements “when and where relevant and on a case by case basis.”

Such elements include assessment of mandate implementation in all its dimensions, including cooperation of the host state; utilization of dedicated good offices and technical expertise within the missions to support national political processes; and existence of clearly defined goals and objectives guided by specific agreed upon milestones towards peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

When reviewing peacekeeping mandates, the Council will also consider elements, such as the conduct of periodic strategic and integrated analysis of the opportunities, risks and challenges faced by national and local authorities to build and sustain peace, as well as clarity on roles and responsibilities of UN peacekeeping operations, UN country teams and other relevant actors, including entities of the UN peacebuilding architecture and the UN agencies, funds and programmes for the delivery of prioritized support to a country.

In addition, peacekeeping reviews must take into account existence of an exit strategy that seeks to help lay the foundation for long-term and sustainable peace.

The Council took note of the intention expressed by the Secretary-General to conduct reviews of peacekeeping missions, requesting him to include, in his relevant reports, analysis of how recommendations on these elements are implemented.

Strengthen measures to counter threats posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters, Security Council urges

21 December 2017 – “Gravely concerned” over risks posed by foreign terrorist fighters returning from conflict zones, the United Nations Security Council on Thursday called on Member States to strengthen their efforts to counter the threat through measures on border control, criminal justice, information-sharing and counter-extremism.

In a unanimously adopted resolution, the 15-member Council called on UN Member States to strengthen measures to prevent the transit of terrorists, including ensuring that identity documents were not forged, as well as

employing evidence-based risk assessments, screening procedures, and the collection and analysis of travel data to identify individuals who posed a terrorist threat, in accordance with domestic and international law, without resorting to profiling based on discrimination.

The Council also called upon Member States to notify other countries of the travel, arrival, deportation or detention of individuals whom they had reasonable grounds to believe were terrorists as well as to take appropriate action in regards to suspected terrorists and their accompanying family members who entered their territories, including by considering appropriate prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration measures in compliance with domestic and international law.

While emphasizing that Member States were obliged to bring to justice anyone who participated in terrorist acts, the Council stressed the importance of assisting women or children associated with foreign terrorist fighters who might be victims of terrorism.

It also underlined the need for tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for family members that might have abetted terrorist acts in varied roles.

Further in the resolution, the Council welcomed measures being taken to strengthen travel security, including the approval of a new Global Aviation Security Plan by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and monitoring procedures, calling for continuous upgrading of such procedures in line with developing threats.

Outlining UN efforts to address returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters, the Council urged strengthened cooperation between all counter-terrorism bodies on the issue.

UN peacekeeping operations will keep aiming to reduce their environmental impact – Security Council

21 December 2017 – The Security Council on Thursday said that United Nations peacekeeping missions will continue to consider ways to reduce the environmental impact of their operations, in line with relevant UN resolutions and mindful of the goals set out in international accords on the environment, including the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

Through an agreed [press statement](#), the 15-member Council reaffirmed the basic principles of peacekeeping, while stressing that it remains cognizant of the possible environmental impact of the peacekeeping operations it mandates.

The Council underscored the importance that peacekeeping operations endeavor to minimize their impact on the sustainability of the ecosystems where they are deployed, based on sound consideration of the risks, benefits and costs.

Mindful of the goals set out by the international agreements on the environment, including the Paris Agreement, the members of the Security Council expressed willingness that UN peacekeeping missions, in full conformity with the established mandates, continue consideration for the reduction of their environmental impact.

The members of the Council underlined the importance to comprehensively address the environmental impact of peacekeeping operations, in close coordination with the relevant parties involved, including troop and police contributing countries, also through meetings of the Security Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and of the relevant bodies of the General Assembly.

In addition, the Council recognized that consideration for environmental management includes taking into account the impact of peacekeeping operations on the historical and cultural heritage in the areas of deployment and how segments of the population may be differently affected by environmental degradation.

The Council encouraged UN Member States to incorporate, as appropriate, environmental guidelines into their national training programmes for military and police personnel in preparation for deployment to UN peacekeeping operations.

Afghan parties must agree on 'convincing peace process' to end 40 years of conflict, says UN envoy

21 December 2017 – The United Nations envoy for Afghanistan on Thursday highlighted the need for the country to achieve a political settlement with the armed opposition, pointing to an upcoming February meeting between the parties as an opportunity not to be missed.

"We must use the upcoming winter months, when conflict levels tend to decrease, to advance on this issue before the cycle of violence is renewed next spring," Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, [told](#) the Security Council.

"I once again call on the Taliban to express a clear willingness to begin negotiations towards a political settlement, and to start the initial dialogue," he said.

In that context, he highlighted the significance of the 'Kabul Process' meeting, to be held on 1 February 2018, where the Government is expected to present a strategic concept for reaching the settlement, as an opportunity that must not be missed.

The so called Kabul Process spells out a transition to greater Afghan responsibility and ownership, in both security and civilian areas.

Mr. Yamamoto, also the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)), informed the 15-member Council of the holding of the parliamentary elections next year, followed by presidential elections in April 2019.

Timely, credible and accepted elections, he elaborated, are vital to maintain constitutional order and keep faith in the representative system of Government.

Above all, the security and women's political participation are vitally important the three key factors, added the UN envoy.

Also in the briefing, Mr. Yamamoto spoke of the country's regional relationships and expressed concern over increased military activities between Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan, and called on the two countries to find ways to collaborate more effectively to address the issues that affect the populations of both countries.

In closing, the senior UN official said that the Organization remains committed to advancing peace and prosperity in the country.

"I truly hope that empathy for the ongoing suffering of millions of Afghans will move us all to make the efforts necessary to achieve peace and realize the important opportunities that lie beyond a much needed peace agreement," he said.