

Warring parties in South Sudan show 'little interest' pushing peace process forward, UN envoy warns

26 September 2017 – A window of opportunity for compromise over the 2015 peace agreement by warring parties in South Sudan is narrow, the United Nations envoy for the country said today, stressing the urgency to find a political solution and for international support to the process.

“The parties have shown little interest in engaging in serious negotiations on the way forward, despite the various initiatives aimed at finding a political solution to the conflict,” David Shearer, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for South Sudan, told the Security Council.

With only a few months remaining in the transitional period stipulated under the peace agreement, external momentum to support peace is not keeping pace with developments in the country, he added.

He urged the international community to show a [unity of purpose](#) to support an implementable peace process that leads to credible elections in due course, but only after a period of transition marked by inclusivity and stability.

Political mediation through the high-level revitalization forum of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) must be the central conflict resolution strategy, he said.

IGAD comprises Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

On the humanitarian situation, Mr. Shearer said the total number of people in need of aid in the country has risen to 7.6 million, citing UN agencies assessment.

The number of people displaced in South Sudan rose to nearly four million during the first half of this year, with two million of them having fled to neighbouring countries – Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Within the national border, some places, such as parts of the Greater Upper Nile region, parts of the Equatorias, and areas south and west of Wau, are inaccessible due to the ongoing government military operations against the SPLA in Opposition. The splintering of opposition forces also has a negative consequence for humanitarian efforts. For example, the World Food Programme’s regular convoys to Yambio – two days’ travel from the capital, Juba – now requires 13 separate permissions from armed groups along its route, he said. Increasingly, civilians and aid convoys are being targeted along major roadways. This year, 18 aid workers have been killed in South Sudan. Mr. Shearer, also the head of the UN Mission in South Sudan, said the Mission

will soon open a permanent presence in Yei and reinforce presence in Torit and Yambio to deter violence and human rights abuses, and build confidence for people to be able to safely return to their homes.

The small Melut protection site in the country's north is closing in coming weeks as people there want to return to their homes, he said. Further downsizing of protection sites in Wau and possibly even Bor are also being considered.

But ultimately, this movement critically depends on how the government and opposition forces behave, he said. Where those forces continue to prey on civilians, the POC sites will remain a necessary refuge, he added.

The deployment of the UN-mandated Regional Protection Force will enable peacekeepers to extend their reach into areas most in need. This includes establishing a permanent presence in Yei, and reinforcing troops in Torit and Yambio in the Equatorias to deter violence and human rights abuses and build confidence among local communities, Mr. Shearer said.

[Civilians pay 'very heavy price' amid unfolding violence in western Central African Republic – UN](#)

26 September 2017 – Since the beginning of September, the humanitarian situation in western Central African Republic (CAR) has deteriorated as armed groups have taken over several localities – particularly Bocaranga and Niem – which has forced thousands of people to flee into the bush where they cannot access aid, the United Nations relief wing reported today.

“Again, [civilians continue to pay a very heavy price](#) for clashes between the armed groups,” said the Humanitarian Coordinator in the CAR, Najat Rochdi.

The vast majority of the 15,000 Bocaranga inhabitants and the 8,000 from Niem took refuge in the bush, rendering them inaccessible to humanitarian assistance. As these incidents occurred, acts of violence against relief workers also prompted several organizations to temporarily suspend their activities in the area.

“While fleeing, the population is not only cut off from much needed assistance but is also more vulnerable to the adversity and abuse by armed groups and the destruction of their properties,” added Ms. Rochdi.

The Humanitarian Coordinator warned against a new outbreak of violence in the west, but also in the east of the country, threatening new humanitarian needs.

Ms. Rochdi recalled that the operational capacities of the humanitarian community are already under intense pressure in a context marked by the lagging funding.

“The simultaneous emergence of new outbreaks of tension in several regions will undoubtedly exacerbate the already fragile situation of thousands of displaced people and the communities that are barely recovering from repeated crises,” she stressed.

The persistence of violence in the CAR since the beginning of 2017 and the dramatic rise in needs have led the aid community to revise the Humanitarian Response Plan.

The statement noted that to date, only 30 per cent of the required funding has been secured. If not addressed, this would lead to a quantitative and qualitative reduction of the humanitarian response.

In some regions, a number of actors have had to withdraw because of the financial shortfall –halting the only assistance available to those in need.

Ms. Rochdi called on the international community “not to abandon the [CAR] where half the population needs assistance for its survival.”

Mali: Security Council strongly condemns deadly attack on UN peacekeepers

26 September 2017 – The United Nations Security Council has strongly condemned the attack by unknown assailants against a UN mission convoy in the region of Gao, northern Mali, on 24 September, that left three Bangladeshi peacekeepers dead and injured four others.

Through a [press statement](#), the Council expressed deepest condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims, the Government of Bangladesh and the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali ([MINUSMA](#)), according to a statement.

Calling on the Malian Government to swiftly investigate the attack and bring the perpetrators to justice, Council members underlined that “attacks targeting peacekeepers may constitute war crimes under international law.” Moreover, they stressed that involvement in planning, directing, sponsoring or conducting attacks against MINUSMA peacekeepers constitute a basis for sanctions designations pursuant to Council resolutions.

The members of the Council went on to reaffirm that terrorism in all its

forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of the reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice.

Reiterating full support for MINUSMA and the French forces that support it, the Council also reiterated “strong support” for Mission chief Mahamat Saleh Annadif, and recognized the determination of the Group of Five Sahel States (G5) – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – to address the impact of terrorism and transnational organized crime, including through the conduct of cross-border joint military counter-terrorist operations.

The Council members went on to express their concern over the security situation in Mali along with the transnational dimension of the terrorist threat in the Sahel region. They urged the Malian parties to fully implement the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation without further delay, noting that its full implementation and the intensification of efforts to overcome asymmetric threats can contribute to improving the security situation across the country.

[UN envoy condemns killing of Israeli security personnel by Palestinian in West Bank](#)

26 September 2017 – The United Nations envoy for the Israel-Palestine peace efforts has condemned today’s fatal shooting attack by a Palestinian perpetrator against Israeli security personnel in the West Bank, deploring that such an incident undermines the prospect of a peaceful future for both sides.

According to preliminary reports, one Israeli policeman and two security guards were killed, and another was seriously injured in the attack that took place this morning in the Har Adar settlement in the occupied Palestinian territory.

“It is [deplorable](#) that Hamas and others continue to glorify such attacks, which undermine the possibility of a peaceful future for both Palestinians and Israelis. I urge all to condemn violence and stand up to terror,” said UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, in a statement.

He expressed condolences to the families and friends of all victims and wished the wounded a full and speedy recovery.

[In UN address, Venezuela decries effects of capitalism as enemy of Mother Nature](#)

25 September 2017 – Echoing the sentiments of other speakers from the Latin American and Caribbean, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza Montserrat, told the United Nations today that countries in the region are suffering extreme weather and climate catastrophes due to rampant consumption and consumerism in which they played no part.

Calling for adherence to the principle of ‘shared and differentiated’ responsibility when tackling climate change, Jorge Arreaza Montserrat, voiced solidarity with those affected by recent natural disasters, noting that such events had made millions of people victims of “a war they did not choose; this is the war of the developed countries and their capitalist system against Mother Nature.”

Indeed, he said: “Let us not change the climate, let us change the system.” The responsibility must not fall on developing countries alone; it was especially unfair for the United States – the world’s largest emitter – to withdraw from the [Paris Agreement](#).

He went on to say that while the UN is a “noble instrument” intended to serve as a podium for discussion of pressing issues like the State of the planet it nevertheless played host to “arrogant powers” such as the US, which “desecrated, disrespected and offended [this] the house for peace.” He said Venezuela’s people had been directly threatened by President Donald Trump, including by military threats and the imposition of unilateral sanctions.

While Venezuela would always deal with the United States and other nations through mutual respect, it was nevertheless prepared to defend itself “in any way,” he stressed.

As for the situation in his country, Mr. Arreaza said democracy in Venezuela is “active and popular” and the “violence of the opposition” had been eased after the July 30 elections in which Venezuelans went to vote to choose to the members of the National Constituent Assembly.

“Total political peace returned to the country from July 31. Our National Constituent Assembly is [in line] with the rest of the constituted powers,” he explained, calling it an instrument for national dialogue and dealing with the most urgent problems of the country.

[Full statement \(in Spanish\) available here](#)