

UN chief urges Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides to seize 'historic' chance for peace

30 June 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today called on the leaders of the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus to grasp “an historic opportunity” to reach a comprehensive settlement to the conflict that has divided the Mediterranean island for more than four decades.

“The road back to Switzerland has not been easy, but the path to lasting peace never is,” Mr. Guterres [told](#) a press conference in the Swiss town of Crans-Montana, where the UN-facilitated talks are taking place.

The Conference on Cyprus, which began on 28 June, brings together Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci, as well as the guarantors – Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The European Union is attending as an observer.

“To get to this point, the leaders have overcome significant challenges and making unprecedented progress, and I salute the determination and common vision which has led them here,” the Secretary-General stated.

He added that the reconvening of the Conference offers “an historic opportunity to reach a comprehensive settlement to the conflict that has divided Cyprus for too many decades.”

Cyprus has been divided since 1974. The negotiations have come down to six main areas, which include new territorial boundaries, power-sharing and the economy.

“I firmly believe that, through determination and political will, it will be possible to clear this final hurdle and reach a comprehensive settlement,” Mr. Guterres said, recognizing that some sensitive and difficult issues remain to be resolved, including in the area of security and guarantees.

Asked what the UN would do if the sides failed to produce a settlement at the Conference, the Secretary-General said that the Organization is “not impatient” and its role continues to be providing support for the parties to find a solution.

Security Council adopts first-ever

[resolution on mine action](#)

30 June 2017 – The United Nations Security Council today adopted its first-ever resolution on mine action, noting the serious and lasting threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, while also recognizing the positive contribution of mine action to sustaining peace and stability.

Resolution 2365 “calls on all parties to armed conflicts to end immediately and definitively any indiscriminate use of explosive devices in violation of international humanitarian law.”

The 15-member body unanimously adopted the resolution, noting the danger that they pose to civilians, including children, as well as refugees returning home, peacekeepers, aid workers, law enforcement, and other personnel.

Given the positive contribution of mine action to efforts to sustain peace and stability, the new resolution stressed “the importance of considering mine action during the earliest stages of planning and programming in peacekeeping operations and special political missions,” as well as in humanitarian responses.

The Council encouraged the international community to provide assistance for the care, rehabilitation, and economic and social reintegration of victims and persons with disabilities maimed by mines.

In addition, the Secretary-General has been requested to provide information on threats posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, and efforts to mitigate these threats, when reporting on peace operations and humanitarian responses.

Today’s adoption comes just two weeks after the Council held a debate on mine action and mitigating the risks associated with mines.

[After ‘successful’ visit to Haiti, Security Council notes window of opportunity for reforms](#)

30 June 2017 – Haiti has a window of opportunity to implement reforms necessary to bring the Caribbean country onto a path of stability and development, the United Nations Security Council President said today.

Recounting the Council’s recent visit to Haiti, Ambassador Sacha Sergio

Llorentty Soliz of Bolivia, which holds the presidency for the month of June, pointed to opportunities to cement positive change in the country.

“Haiti is at a [political crossroads](#). The window of opportunity is open to promote the reforms the country needs to respond to challenges,” he said. These include strengthening the rule of law, reforming the security sector, providing basic services, and creating jobs.

Mr. Llorentty led the Security Council mission to Haiti from 22 to 24 June, to get a first-hand look at how the UN could best contribute to stability and development in the country.

“The mission of the Security Council to Haiti was successful because of the large amount of information we obtained in face-to-face meetings, and the better understanding of concerns and expectations that Haitians have about the drawdown of MINUSTAH and the transition to the new mission,” Mr. Llorentty said, using the acronym for the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

In April, the Council extended MINUSTAH’s mandate for a final six months, deciding to transition it into a smaller follow-up mission, known as the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), which would assist the Haitian Government to strengthen rule-of-law institutions, its security sector and human rights monitoring.

“The information gathered will be useful when defining the nature of implementation of the new mission,” said Mr. Llorentty.

During the visit, the Council members met with President Jovenel Moïse, members of his cabinet, parliamentarians, national police, judicial officials and civil society and private sector representatives.

The main issue which came up at every meeting, and which requires the Council’s attention, Mr. Llorentty said, was cholera. Concerns over cholera were vital to all aspects of Haiti’s future, from water and sanitation concerns to its development and stability, he noted.

In December 2016, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon put forth a New Approach to Cholera in Haiti, which demonstrated the Organization’s commitment to eliminating the disease in the country.

[Colombia: With arms laid down, focus now on reintegration, UN envoy tells Security Council](#)

especially the completion of the laying down of arms by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), the United Nations envoy for the country has called for shifting the momentum to other aspects of the historic peace deal.

In his briefing to the UN Security Council today, Jean Arnault, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia, recalled the conviction expressed by President Juan Manuel Santos and Timoleon Jimenez, the head of the FARC-EP Secretariat, at a ceremony for the final laying down of weapons – that the half-century-long armed conflict was over.

“I cannot but quote President Santos when he said that ‘reaching that day, living that day had made it worthwhile to be President of Colombia’,” said Mr. Arnault.

Attention should now shift to other aspects of the peace agreement, including the reintegration of FARC-EP combatants and militias, “among whom a deep sense of uncertainty prevails as to their physical security following disarmament and their socio-economic future,” he noted.

“No effort can be spared in the prompt implementation of that agenda,” he added.

He also highlighted that in addition to the reintegration of combatants, the peace process must also respond to the needs and expectations of the more vulnerable sectors of Colombian society and recalled the priority areas identified by the Colombian Government: rule of law and increased security; providing access to goods and services to areas that did not have access to it; and prompt delivery of justice to victims of the conflict.

“We welcome the fact that together with reintegration these were precisely the priorities indicated by the Government to the [UN] Peacebuilding Fund, and we call upon the international community to support the achievement of these goals,” said Mr. Arnault.

In this context, Mr. Arnault, who is also the head of the UN Mission in Colombia, expressed that it was an honour to be requested by the Government and the FARC-EP to establish a second verification mission focused on reintegration and wider security guarantees, and to begin as soon as possible.

“Like the first mission, the second one will be as much about fostering cooperation and building confidence as it will be about verification as such,” he said, noting that the Mission believes that the trust that has been established between it, the two parties, state institutions and civil society can be brought to bear on the success of the second mandate.

The UN envoy also informed the Council of the impact of the Tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism as an effective tool to maintain and strengthen confidence between the parties.

“Its presence at the local level will help ensure that incidents that may occur in the coming weeks and months can continue to be dealt with

cooperatively.”

As to the steps after the laying down of arms, Mr. Arnault also informed the Council that the UN Mission and the FARC-EP, with the support of the armed forces and the police, will now focus on the disposal of hundreds of arms caches, the collection of weapons in them, and the destruction of explosives and unstable armament.

“The disposal of arms caches is undoubtedly a difficult process, but we are encouraged by the willingness of FARC-EP and the armed forces to move forward, and we are confident that if not all, at least a high percentage of the caches can be dealt with [within set timeframes],” he stated.

[Venezuela bans Attorney General from leaving country; UN rights office voices concern](#)

30 June 2017 – Amid the ongoing violence in Venezuela, the United Nations human rights office today expressed concern about a decision by the Supreme Court to null the appointment of the Attorney General, freeze her assets and ban her from leaving the country.

“We are [concerned](#) that the Supreme Court’s decisions appear to seek to strip her Office of its mandate and responsibilities as enshrined in the Venezuelan Constitution, and undermine the Office’s independence,” said Rupert Colville, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)), addressing journalists in Geneva.

The Venezuelan Supreme Court on 28 June decided to begin removal proceedings against Attorney General Luisa Ortega, freeze her assets and ban her from leaving the country. It also transferred some of the Attorney General’s, until now, exclusive functions to the Ombudsperson.

Mr. Colville said that the dismissal of judicial officials should be subject to strict criteria “that do not undermine the independent and impartial performance of their functions.”

UN Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors stipulate that governments should ensure that prosecutors can do their jobs without intimidation, harassment or improper interference, among other things.

OHCHR noted that since March, the Attorney General has taken “important steps to defend human rights, documenting deaths during the wave of demonstrations, insisting on the need for due process and the importance of the separation of powers, and calling for people who have been arbitrarily detained to be

immediately released.”

According to the Attorney General’s Office, 75 have been killed and some 1,419 injured so far in the two months of protests.

Mr. Colville urged “all powers of the Venezuelan State to respect the Constitution and the rule of law,” and called on the Government to ensure that the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of opinion and expression are guaranteed.

“We also call on all people in Venezuela to only use peaceful means to make themselves heard and urge all parties to renounce violence and harassment of opponents,” he continued.