

Security Council welcomes commitment of Colombian Government and FARC-EP to carry out peace process

11 May 2017 – The opposition in Colombia has begun to lay down arms, a move welcomed today by the United Nations Security Council which recently visited the country to see the peace efforts first-hand.

In a statement to the press, the 15-member Council today welcomed “the [peaceful arrival](#) of almost 7,000 members of the FARC-EP [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army] in the agreed zones and points.” The Council welcomed also the “continued commitment of the parties to work together to enable FARC to lay down their individual weapons” by 29 May, which marks 180 days after the final peace agreement came into force.

Observers from the [UN Mission in Colombia](#), are actively involved in the process of laying down arms by registering and identifying all the weapons present in FARC-EP camps within all 26 war zones, storing and then neutralizing and extracting the arms. The weapons include munition, mines and explosives.

The Council visited Colombia from 3 to 5 May, to witness first-hand implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and FARC-EP, and to observe the progress as well as the challenges to the agreement that ended the 50-year old conflict.

The visit included meetings with President Juan Manuel Santos and senior representatives from the Government, as well as leaders of the FARC-EP and members of various representatives in Congress.

The Council Members, led by Ambassador Elbio Rosselli of Uruguay – which holds the Council’s presidency during the month of May – also met with members of civil society and local communities.

In today’s press statement, the Council also paid tribute to the courage of Colombians who have embarked on “the path of peace.” They noted that violence is at its lowest level in over 40 years and underlined the significant benefits that a lasting peace could bring to the entire country.

Colombia’s peace process has the potential “to be a positive example to the rest of the world,” the Council said.

In early October 2016, Colombian voters narrowly rejected the historic peace accord between the FARC-EP. That deal was the culmination of four years of talks hosted in Havana, Cuba, between the parties, and which led to a cessation of hostilities and agreements on key issues such as political participation, land rights, illicit drugs and victims’ rights and transitional justice. The two sides signed a new agreement in late November

2016.

[The 'cycle of revenge' in South Sudan will hurt everyone – UN envoy](#)

11 May 2017 – Deteriorating security in parts of South Sudan coupled with increased displacement could worsen the humanitarian suffering in the country through outbreaks of diseases such as diarrhoea and even cholera, the United Nations envoy for the country has warned.

The situation in Bor-Pibor area is particularly concerning with fears of violent clashes between youths from the Dinka Bor and Murle communities, David Shearer, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for South Sudan, [told](#) journalists at a press conference today.

“We are worried that might spark more widespread fighting between those two communities [and] hence the reason we are providing support to the peace efforts on the ground,” he added, noting also the work that is being done with the Government to ease the situation.

“The important thing is that we de-escalate tensions and provide an opportunity to talk rather than to fight because fighting only will result in a greater cycle of revenge [that] will be of no benefit to [anyone].”

In his remarks, Mr. Shearer, also the head of the UN Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)), spoke of violence in various regions of the country, including attacks on peacekeepers and relief personnel, which have severely constricted the humanitarian operating space, and underscored the Mission’s resolve to do everything it can to ensure that assistance reaches those in need.

“The attacks have a direct consequence on humanitarian activities and the assistance that can be provided to people who desperately need it,” he said, terming such violence as an “extraordinarily selfish thing to do”.

SEE ALSO: [UN appalled at killing of aid workers in South Sudan](#)

The senior UN official also praised the work of journalists in the country as well as humanitarian actors on the ground who, despite considerable challenges, are reaching thousands across the country with much needed assistance.

“I think we owe them a real debt of gratitude,” he expressed.

UN releases new funding to support critical aid operations in Central African Republic

11 May 2017 – Against the backdrop of a continually complex humanitarian scenario in the Central African Republic (CAR) – marked by multiplication of hotspots, increased displacement and growing needs – the head of United Nations humanitarian operations in the country today released \$9 million for the most urgent and critical relief operations.

However, even with this new funding, overall resources in the country remains a mere 14 per cent, said the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) in a [news release](#) today.

“An adequate level of funding of humanitarian activities remains an absolute priority, otherwise, CAR risks relapsing into an acute crisis,” warned the UN humanitarian wing.

In the news release, Najat Rochdi, the Humanitarian Coordinator for the country, who released the funds thanked the donors who have supported response and reiterated her call for increased resources.

“It is the peace process consolidation which is at stake,” she noted.

The latest tranche will support efforts in Basse Kotto, Mbomou, Nana Gribizi, Ouaka and Ouham-Pendé provinces, where between September 2016 and March 2017, flare-ups in the situation have resulted in massive displacements and severe challenges, including for protection of civilians.

The projects targeted in the latest release include responses in the education, protection, health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene sectors as well logistics, shelter and non-food items, coordination and site management.

In the Humanitarian Response Plan for CAR, UN and relief partners had appealed for nearly \$400 million to support more than half the country’s population who are dependent on humanitarian assistance for their survival.

According to UN figures, between February and March this year, the African nation has seen a nearly 6 per cent increase in the number of newly displaced people from 401,072 to 426,100.

The security situation in the country too has seen a rapid deterioration. On 8 May, eight peacekeepers from the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission, known by its French acronym [MINUSCA](#), were killed when their convoy was attacked by suspected anti-Balaka elements near Bangassou, about 474 kilometres east of the nation’s capital, Bangui.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka

militia, which are mostly Christian, plunged the country of 4.5 million people into civil conflict in 2013.

[International support for Somalia must focus on rebuilding security, averting famine – UN chief](#)

11 May 2017 – Opening a major conference on Somalia, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today urged the international community to support security efforts in the country battling Al-Shabaab and aid the more than six million Somalis affected by the violence and a deadly drought.

“We are here to [listen to Somalia’s leadership](#) – and to agree on a framework for cooperation,” Secretary-General António Guterres told the heads of State and Government from across East Africa and other key partners at the London Somalia Conference 2017.

Mr. Guterres noted that [Somalia](#) is at a moment which is both “tragic and hopeful” and “can be in the near future the kind of good news that we badly need” in the world.

A legitimate Federal Government was established in 2012 in Somalia, and Al-Shabaab was pushed out of several key cities by the UN Security Council-mandated African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

Fighting continues to devastate the country, however, with violations of human rights and international humanitarian law occurring with impunity, Mr. Guterres noted.

He highlighted the need for predictable funding for AMISOM, and suggested the possibility of assessed contributions. The AU force was created 2012 and began fighting before it had helicopters, night vision systems or armoured vehicles.