

[Nigeria: UNICEF welcomes release of 80 Chibok schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram](#)



After more than two years of being held hostage by Boko Haram, in northeast Nigeria, one of the Chibok girls recounts the horrific conditions they experienced. Photo: UNICEF Nigeria

7 May 2017 – The United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) today welcomed yesterday’s release of more than 80 of the Chibok schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram insurgents over three years ago.

It is heartening to know that the girls will be returning to their families who have been waiting for this day

It is heartening to know that the girls will be returning to their families who have been waiting for this day. They will face a long and difficult process to rebuild their lives after the indescribable horror and trauma they have suffered at the hands of Boko Haram, [said](#) UNICEF Nigeria Acting Representative Pernille Ironside in a statement.

She said UNICEF is on standby to support the Nigerian authorities to provide the comprehensive psychosocial support, help reunite the girls with their families and make sure they can continue their education in a safe environment.

RELATED: [UN report details ‘grave violations’ against children by Boko Haram](#)

UNICEF calls on Boko Haram to end all grave violations against children, especially the abduction of children and the sexual abuse and forced marriage of girls, she said.

[South Sudan: UN deploys peacekeepers to enable aid delivery to Upper Nile’s Aburoc area](#)

7 May 2017 – The United Nations Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)) has urgently deployed peacekeeping troops to Aburoc in the Upper Nile region to help

enable the delivery of much needed humanitarian assistance to the 50,000 people displaced from home, the Mission said today.

The aim is to provide humanitarian groups with the confidence they need to resume the provision of urgent assistance to tens of thousands of people in Aburoc who are fleeing the ongoing violence, [said](#) the Head of UNMISS, David Shearer, in a press release.

Currently up to 50,000 people are sheltering in and around the town of Aburoc on the west bank of the River Nile after a series of clashes between Government and opposition forces. The most urgent need is drinking water as there is a risk of an outbreak of diarrhoea or even cholera which has the potential to kill thousands of vulnerable people, he said.

Mr. Shearer said the deployment is short-term and the peacekeepers' immediate task is to secure the base from where humanitarians are providing water and other assistance. The road between Kodok and Aburoc will be checked for old landmines by the UN Mine Action Service and cleared as necessary. Protection may also be provided for water trucks using the road if that is required to enable people to move freely.

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement, South Sudan slipped back into conflict due to renewed clashes between rival forces the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) loyal to President Salva Kiir and the SPLA in Opposition backing former First Vice-President Riek Machar.

I also note that the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has acknowledged UNMISS' intention to help facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of the Upper Nile, Mr. Shearer said.

[Baku Forum: Time to find 'magic formula' for peaceful coexistence, says UNESCO chief](#)

6 May 2017 – It is time to find that "magic formula" that will encourage people to live together in peace, the head of the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization ([UNESCO](#)) urged earlier today at the end of a UN-backed conference on intercultural dialogue in Baku, Azerbaijan.

In her closing remarks at end of the event, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova expressed hope and optimism that the world is "on the right path" towards building "inclusive and resilient" societies.

Hundreds of delegates, experts, academics, business and civil society leaders from 120 countries took part in this year's [4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue](#), which aimed at further promoting and sustaining understanding and dialogue within and between cultures.

The UN-backed intercultural dialogue ended on a high note with the UNESCO chief calling on participants to act now to stamp out extremism and "build peace in the minds of men and women," echoing the UN agency's own timeless message about the need to make the most of the opportunities to bolster peaceful coexistence provided by our globalized world of increasing interconnections and diversity.

I think we all feel a certain sense of urgency, that we have to act [...]the world is very fragile, and peace is very fragile

The past three days were a flurry of debates, panel discussions, exhibits and concerts held by renowned artists working to bring people of different walks of life closer together, what UNESCO has called "a rapprochement of cultures."

Preventing terrorism in cyberspace, educating girls to combat violent extremism, and changing people's negative perception of migrants in cities were some of the topics broached at the Forum. The agenda also included such topics as the role of faith, religions, human security, sport, education, art, sustainable development, preventing violent extremism, and business in building trust and cooperation among cultures and civilizations.

Ms. Bokova urged the participants to try and establish an intercultural dialogue in their respective countries.

"I think it's a moment of commitment, of engagement, I think we all feel a certain sense of urgency, that we have to act [...] but outside this beautiful country [...] the world out there is very fragile, and peace is very fragile," she said, emphasizing that: "How to sustain peace, how to build these inclusive, resilient societies, and how to prevent, in certain cases this extremism, and find this magic formula of living together [...] deserves all our efforts and all our commitments."

Reflecting on the outcome of the Baku Forum, Maher Nasser, Acting UN Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, said it is too early to "cry victory" or dismiss the event as a failure because that can only be determined by what will follow.

Baku Forum spotlights importance of culture as a way to connect societies

"The discussions that I have seen bring back the importance of dialogue and using culture as a way to connect and to connect societies sometimes within the same country. How culture bring us together as humans. We may see things differently, but there are also, sometimes, things that can bring us together. Culture and art are important elements of that," he explained.

Speaking to *UN News*, Mr. Nasser also highlighted the important connection between tourism and culture. "Tourism today is one of the top employers around the world," he said. "Tourism depends on stability. No one wants to go to a region in conflict, unless you are a war reporter. So tourism has a vested interest in promoting peace."

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is one of the organizing partners of the Baku Forum, along with UNESCO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Council of Europe, the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

Mr. Nasser concluded by saying that the conference was "timely" and that he was optimistic moving forward.

The UNESCO Director-General praised the Government of Azerbaijan for hosting the World Forum for the fourth time, praising the country as an example of a nation where people of different faiths and cultures can live in peace.

[Security Council condemns attack against UN Mission in South Sudan](#)

6 May 2017 – Strongly condemning the attack against the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) on 3 May, the Security Council has called on all parties to immediately adhere to the permanent ceasefire called for in an August 2015 peace agreement.

Between 11pm and midnight on 3 May, the Mission's temporary operating base in Leer town in the former Unity State came under small-arms attack from the direction of the nearby Government-held town. According to the Mission, peacekeepers' quick [defensive action](#) secured the safety of all of the internally displaced people who had sought UN protection adjacent to the base.

"The members of the Security Council recalled that individuals who, directly or indirectly, engage in attacks against United Nations missions, international security presence, or other peacekeeping operations, or humanitarian personnel, may be designated for targeted sanctions," [said](#) a statement issued overnight by the 15-member body.

Further in the statement, the Council members expressed appreciation for the actions taken by UNMISS peacekeepers to repel the 3 May attack, further condemned the continued violence committed by all parties, including the ongoing military offensives, and called for removal of all obstacles to the delivery of lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

Earlier this week, the UN human rights chief urged the Government of South Sudan to halt any further military offensives towards Aburoc in the Upper Nile region.

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement, South Sudan slipped back into conflict due to renewed clashes between rival forces – the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) loyal to President Salva Kiir and the SPLA in Opposition backing former First Vice-President Riek Machar.

Violence has caused [a spike](#) in the number of displaced people.

[In Colombia's central Meta region, Security Council witnesses first-hand progress on peace deal](#)

5 May 2017 – While touring the Amazon region of Colombia where one of the monitoring mechanism facilities was set up under a historic peace agreement, a delegation from the United Nations Security Council met today with members of La Reforma community, as well as Government representatives and FARC-EP members.

The purpose [field visit](#) is to witness first-hand implementation of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), and to observe the progress as well as the challenges of carrying out the aims of a hard-won peace deal.

This monitoring mechanism facility in Colombia's Meta Department is one of the designated locations where the Government of Colombia as well as FARC-EP continues to work together paving the path towards peace.

While addressing all parties present in the transitional zone, Ambassador Elbio Rosselli, of Uruguay, which holds the Council's presidency of the month of May, highlighted the trust between Government and FARC-EP representatives.

He said he was struck to see, on one hand people with the UN (blue) jackets and on the other, Government representatives as well as guerrilla component using the same brown colour, adding that this –further affirms the absolute confidence, certainty, that this process goes forward and has no return.–

The members of the Council are accompanied by the head of the [UN Mission in Colombia](#), Jean Arnault, senior Colombian Government officials and FARC-EP leaders.

The Colombian Government's High Commissioner for Peace recalled that Meta was

one of the areas most affected by violence. "We know what peace means for this community and we hope they can talk to the people immersed in the conflict," Sergio Jaramillo told the members of the Security Council.

Also present was FARC-EP leader, Iván Márquez. He expressed a "sincere, deep thanks" to the Security Council.

Upon departure from New York earlier this week, Mr. Rosselli stressed that the presence of the Security Council would carry a message to Colombia that the UN was committed to the special political mission established there, and would provide additional support, as requested.

After finishing the visit to Colombia, the Members of the Security Council will return to New York, where they will hold an informative session about their visit later in May.