

Police arrest over 30 drug suspects in SW China

Police in southwest China's Guizhou Province have seized a large amount of equipment and 900 kilograms of raw materials for drug production and arrested more than 30 suspects, police said Thursday.

In July 2015, police in Guizhou's provincial capital Guiyang began to investigate the activities of a drug gang headed by a suspect surnamed Li. The gang operated a drug lab in a remote village in north China's Hebei Province.

In October 2016, police raided the lab and arrested Li and five other suspects. They also confiscated over 900 kilograms of raw materials and equipment. A major member of the gang, surnamed Zhang, however, evaded capture and fled the scene.

On Feb. 1 this year, the police were tipped off that Zhang had resurfaced in Guiyang and was in the process of setting up another lab. Zhang had also secured sales with drug dealers in Malaysia.

Zhang and 30 other suspects were arrested in Guiyang on Feb. 7.

Fighting reaches 'worrying proportions' in South Sudan's north-east – UN mission

9 February 2017 – The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) today voiced concern about an escalation in the fighting between Government and opposition forces in the west bank of the River Nile in the African country's north.

Fighting has reached what the head of UNMISS, David Shearer, described as "worrying proportions," according to a statement issued by the Office of Spokesperson for the UN peacekeeping operation.

"What began with an exchange of fire between SPLA [the Sudan People's Liberation Army] and Aguelek opposition forces, has expanded geographically," the statement said, noting that military resupplies have since been observed arriving in the area.

Military operations on the west bank of the Nile River are taking place in an

area where people, predominantly from the Shilluk ethnic group live, forcing people out of their homes. The town of Wau Shilluk is now reported to be deserted. Humanitarian workers have been evacuated and aid is not being provided, the statement added.

On Wednesday, UNMISS received reports of hostilities between the two sides in Owachi and Tonga, Panyinkang County.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shearer today returned to the South Sudanese capital, Juba, from a two-day field visit to Bentiu and Leer, two towns which have been among the most affected by the country's conflict, according to a separate statement issued today by the spokesperson's office.

In Bentiu, Mr. Shearer met state government officials, as well as internally displaced people who are living in the largest protection of civilians site in the country. In Leer, he visited the mission's temporary operating base to assess UNMISS' success in mounting robust patrols which push the mission's presence deep into the field.

He held discussions with local officials and also took the opportunity to travel to an opposition-controlled area to meet with pro-Machar representatives so he could hear all shades of opinion on how to facilitate humanitarian assistance and advance the peace process, the statement said.

The local opposition told Mr. Shearer that they support the current localized cessation of hostilities and remain in a defensive position which they hope will encourage the return of humanitarian agencies to Leer.

Both the local authorities and the opposition praised the UN for its efforts to facilitate communications between them. Mr. Shearer heard that they both recognize that an inclusive national dialogue will assist the peace process, the statement added.

South Sudan has faced ongoing challenges since a political face-off between President Salva Kiir and his then former Vice-President Riek Machar erupted into full blown conflict between forces loyal to each in December 2013. The crisis has produced one of the world's worst displacement situations with immense suffering for civilians.

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement that formally ended the war, conflict and instability have also spread to previously unaffected areas.

[UN calls for 50 per cent increase in funding for mine action in 2017](#)

9 February 2017 – The United Nations has launched a \$511 million

international appeal for humanitarian mine action in conflict and post-conflict settings for 2017, a 50 per cent increase from last year's \$347 million consolidated appeal.

“Across the world, the conflicts tearing countries, communities and lives apart cause a tragic increase in the number of casualties due to landmines and other explosive hazards,” said the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Agnès Marcaillou, in a press release issued earlier this week.

“There is an absolute necessity for a humanitarian mine action response. The knowledge and willingness to help are there – it is adequate funding that is missing,” added Ms. Marcaillou, who also chairs the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action.

According to the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2017, an online resource for information on such projects, there is a sharp increase in the need for humanitarian mine action, including landmine clearance, risk education and victim assistance.

The Portfolio covers over 200 projects and presents a consolidated picture of the needs and strategies of 22 countries and territories contaminated with landmines and other explosive hazards such as unexploded cluster munitions, rockets and improvised explosive devices across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and South America.

Needs are the greatest in active conflict zones, with Afghanistan requiring \$124 million; Iraq \$75 million; Syria \$52 million; and Yemen \$17 million. In addition, countries which have extensive residual contamination also need substantial support, with Cambodia requiring \$23 million and the Lao People's Democratic Republic \$26 million, according to UNMAS.

Central African Republic: Senior UN official condemns armed, forceful entry into hospital

9 February 2017 – Denouncing forceful entry by armed individuals into a hospital in the Central African Republic's restive PK5 neighbourhood with the intention to kill some of the patients, a senior United Nations humanitarian official has emphasized that such incidents are in violation of the international humanitarian law.

This is the second such incident at the health facility, situated in the capital, Bangui, in the last five days.

It is unacceptable that armed elements come to a hospital, with arms to kill patients," stressed Michel Yao, the Acting Humanitarian Coordinator and the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) office in the Central African Republic (CAR), in a news release.

The UN official also underlined that that respect for health facilities and their civilian character must be ensured, and that free and unhindered access to patients and medical staff must be safeguarded.

International humanitarian law expressly forbids attacks on or targeting of medical facilities and personnel.

"I call on all parties including national authorities to enhance the protection of civilians and peaceful cohabitation of communities," the Acting Humanitarian Coordinator added.

At least three killed in the restive neighbourhood

According to the news release, at least 26 individuals – both civilians and combatants – were injured and at least three killed in the violence in Bangui's PK5 neighbourhood that has witnessed violent flare-ups in the past.

Several houses, a school and a church were also destroyed.

Protection of civilians continues to be a major concern in CAR where, according to estimates, 400,000 people remain displaced due to conflict and 2.2 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance.

In January, the UN together with the Government and relief organizations launched a \$400 million appeal for humanitarian response until 2019. Funding, however, remains a major challenge.

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. Despite significant progress and successful elections, CAR has remained in the grip of instability and sporadic unrest.

UN and international partners express support for working with new Somali president

9 February 2017 – The United Nations and its international partners in Somalia today said that they were eager to partner with President Mohamed

Abdullahi 'Farmajo', his new Government and the people of Somalia to avert another famine in the country and to assist with improving security for all Somalis.

The comments were made in a congratulatory statement on behalf of the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ethiopia, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The international partners urge all political forces in Somalia to work together in support of President Farmajo and the incoming government, the statement read.

Distributed by the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the statement also noted the need for reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of a number of local conflicts, as well as the resumption of the constitutional review process.

The Somali Parliament selected the new president yesterday in two rounds of vote. A one-person, one-vote election is expected in 2020.

The international community welcomed the election results and commended outgoing Federal President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed and his Government for their many achievements over the past four years.

They also thanked him for a gracious concession speech that facilitated a peaceful and orderly transfer of power in decades.

Yesterday's orderly and peaceful transfer of power is a major achievement for Somalia and should boost confidence in the country's future both at home and abroad, said Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia and head of UNSOM.

He added "Hambalyo Somalia" in Somali, which translates to "Congratulations Somalia."