

In Juba, UN peacekeeping chief urges political solution for South Sudanese crisis

21 March 2017 – The security situation in South Sudan is “very worrisome,” the head of United Nations peacekeeping operations today said, warning that the number of people fleeing the country showing no signs of slowing, and calling for a political solution to the hostilities.

“You cannot hope that a solution will come by the use of weapons, the solution has to be political,” said outgoing Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous in a press conference in Juba, alongside Jean-Pierre Lacroix, who will take up the position in April.

Mr. Ladsous underscored the importance of the 2015 peace agreement signed by President Salva Kiir and opposition groups, but noted that there are concerns about implementing an agreement which will shortly be two-years old.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Ladsous said he spoke with President Kiir in what he described as a “good” meeting. Among the topics discussed were the challenges to humanitarian action, including impediments to getting clearances, as well as instances of aid workers killed or injured while on the job.

Meanwhile, the needs in the country are greater than ever with two counties in Unity state – Mayendit and Leer – formally declared famines.

Mr. Ladsous warned that the situation is “man-made” after several years of fighting and “is not going to improve” because it is now crop planting season and all farmers are displaced or seeking refuge in neighbouring countries.

Speaking to journalists, Mr. Ladsous also noted that the first vanguard of the UN Security Council-mandated Regional Protection Force should be deployed to Juba “in the next few weeks.” The units will be comprised of Bangladeshi, Nepalese, and Rwandan troops, followed by Ethiopian forces and troops from other countries.

The senior UN official added that he will meet tomorrow in New York with Member States who are contributing troops to discuss the deployments.

Once deployed to Juba, the Force will free a number of UNMISS units to “the countryside to better protect the civilians,” he said.

Mr. Ladsous noted, however, that the main responsibility for protection is with the Government of South Sudan: “We cannot have one blue helmet behind every single South Sudanese citizen. The responsibility to protect its own citizens is that of the Government. And we are here to support, to facilitate, to help the Government of the sovereign country of South Sudan.”

[Greener energy for a third of the world bodes well for all, says UN on International Forest Day](#)

21 March 2017 – Cautioning the impact of human activity such as practices use of woodfuel on world's forests, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) today called for better wood-energy conversions technologies and more sustainable management of forests so that everyone benefits.

"This is an area where we can make a real difference," said Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

"Sustainably managed forests are productive and resilient ecosystems, providing people with livelihoods and renewable energy, along with timber, food, shelter, clean air, water and climate benefits," he added.

At the same time, fuel wood – the primary source of energy for nearly a third of the world's population and a product derived from forests – is also an important part of the energy equation.

However, current fuel production practices (such as production of charcoal) are not only contributing to degradation of forests and soils, they are estimated to cause up to seven per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans.

Most of the emissions is largely due to unsustainable forest management and inefficient charcoal manufacture and fuelwood combustion, FAO said in the report, *The Charcoal Transition*, which was launched coinciding with the International Day of Forests .

"This is especially important for poor people in rural areas of developing countries, where wood is often the only energy source available [and its] conversion to charcoal is often done using rudimentary and polluting methods," noted FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva announcing the report at a ceremony marking the International Day in Rome.

Forests, energy, climate change and sustainable development

Forests and energy are also linked to sustainable development and can help combatting climate change.

According to estimates, about a third of the world's population (about 2.4 billion people) still rely on the traditional use of woodfuel for cooking, and many small enterprises use fuelwood and charcoal as the main energy carriers for various purposes such as baking, tea processing and brickmaking.



Efficient charcoal manufacture and use can help mitigate climate change. A man arranging bags of charcoal to a temporary holding area in Ntendesi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: FAO/Giulio Napolitano

Of all the wood used as fuel worldwide, about 17 per cent is converted to charcoal, however the production often relies on inefficient technologies and unsustainable resources and in some cases the emission of greenhouse gas can be as high as nine kilograms of carbon dioxide-equivalent per kilogram of charcoal produced.

“Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [and it is] fundamental for addressing the impacts of climate change and eliminating extreme poverty and hunger,” explained the head of FAO.

“We need, for instance, to adopt improved technologies for energy conversion,” he noted, referring to the UN agency’s programmes to deliver fuel-efficient stoves, especially for poor people in Latin America and Africa.

Greening the charcoal value chain and applying sustainable forest management practices can, therefore, mitigate climate change and further efficiencies can be gained by reducing charcoal waste, for example, by transforming charcoal dust into briquettes, adding a new iteration to the energy cycle.

Economic benefits and environmental improvements

The FAO report also argues that although the transition from unsustainable to sustainable sourcing could impose costs on the charcoal value chain, a greener charcoal sector would have an overall positive economic impact.

For instance, a cost-benefit analysis in Kenya estimated that a transition to efficient charcoal production would require an investment of \$15.6 million per year excluding upfront costs. However, it would generate \$20.7 million in benefits.

At the same time, demand for sustainable charcoal production can provide opportunities for afforestation and reforestation. And providing local people with greater tenure security can increase their willingness and ability to invest in sustainable approaches.

Furthermore, fostering an enabling political environment and an attractive investment climate for transition to a greener charcoal sector can also help increase government revenue collection and investments in sustainable forest management and efficient wood conversion technologies.

A win-win for all concerned, including for the forests.

[News story: Additional hand luggage restrictions on some flights to the UK](#)

On Tuesday 21 March the government announced [new aviation security measures](#) on all inbound direct flights to the UK from the following countries:

- Turkey
- Lebanon
- Jordan
- Egypt
- Tunisia
- Saudi Arabia

Under the new arrangements, passengers boarding flights from these countries to the UK will not be allowed to take phones, laptops and tablets which are larger than:

- length: 16.0cm
- width: 9.3cm
- depth: 1.5cm

into the cabin of the plane. Passengers with these devices should check with their airlines for more details on transporting these items.

The additional security measures may cause some disruption for passengers and flights, and we understand the frustration that will cause, but our top priority will always be to maintain the safety of British nationals.

Direct flights to the UK from these destinations can continue to operate to the UK subject to these new measures being in place. Travellers are advised to keep up-to-date with the latest [FCO travel advice](#) and to check online with their chosen carrier for further information.

Which devices are not allowed in the cabin?

- large phones
- all laptops
- all tablets and e-readers

Which flights and routes will this apply to?

These new measures will apply on all inbound direct flights travelling to the UK from the following countries:

- Turkey

- Lebanon
- Jordan
- Egypt
- Tunisia
- Saudi Arabia

Passengers travelling on these flights should check online with their carrier if they require further information.

Should I cancel my trip? Is it still safe to go to these countries?

These new measures are concerned with flights into the UK. The UK is not stopping direct flights to and from those countries. Those with imminent travel should contact their airline for further information. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also publishes [travel advice](#).

What's a 'normal sized mobile phone'?

Most smart phones will be allowed in the cabin, including many common popular handsets such as:

- iPhone 7 Plus
- Samsung Galaxy 7 Edge
- Samsung Galaxy Note 3
- LG G3
- Sony Xperia Z2

The new UK measures will mean that phones, laptops and tablets larger than:

- length: 16.0cm
- width: 9.3cm
- depth: 1.5cm

will not be allowed in the cabin.

Can I take items purchased from duty free on board?

Any phones, laptops or tablets larger than the above dimensions will not be allowed in the cabin, regardless of whether they were purchased in duty free.

Why are these measures not in place for flights travelling from the UK?

This applies to inbound flights. The UK has some of the most robust aviation security measures in the world but we keep this under constant review based on assessment of risk.

More about [hand luggage restrictions on electronic devices and items at UK airports](#).

**What about any costs incurred as a result of this?
And what if I want to cancel my flight can I get
compensation?**

This is matter for the airlines. We encourage them to take a customer focused approach.

How long will these measures be in place?

The UK has some of the most robust aviation security measures in the world and we will continue to take all the steps we believe are necessary to put in place security measures we believe will be effective and proportionate. We keep our aviation security measures under constant review.

Is this in response to a specific threat?

It is long standing government policy not to comment on intelligence matters.

**Why isn't the UK following the US and banning all
personal electronic devices from the cabin, why
only phones, laptops and tablets?**

We are confident these measures are proportionate and effective.

**What happens to passengers travelling from
countries unaffected by the measures who are
transferring to an affected flight?**

Transfer passengers who board a flight on a route affected will be subject to the measures.

**[Green MEP challenges government to
eradicate money laundering following
'laundromat' revelations](#)**



21 March 2017

Green economist and MEP, Molly Scott Cato, has said that revelations of the Eastern European 'laundromat' operating through the City of London emphasize

the importance of current revisions to the EU anti-money-laundering directive. She was responding to an investigation into fictitious companies registered in London that had processed millions of pounds worth of laundered money from operations run by Russian criminals with links to the Russian government [1]. She says the revelations show the need for national governments to assume their responsibility in eradicating existing money laundering routes. Molly Scott Cato said:

“The European Parliament has been clear in its proposal to change the rules governing financial transactions and crack down on such blatant money laundering. The proposals are currently being negotiated between the Parliament, the Commission and the Council and we must ensure that the Parliament’s proposal to create a public register of beneficial ownership in each member state is not watered down by national governments in the Council. Our proposal would force banks to make additional checks for suspicious clients and would have helped to prevent the ‘global laundromat’.

“We see again just how important binding rules are for all sectors. This kind of corrupt activity is only made possible by the existence of shell companies and phantom firms. The public register we are proposing would make it impossible for the clients of these companies to stay anonymous. They are the ultimate beneficial owner and their identity must be made public.”

The UK government has so far resisted public registers of trusts, arguing that individuals and companies deserve to have personal or confidential privacy. Dr Scott Cato concluded:

“The fact that the money laundering was focused on London should ring alarm bells in the context of threats from the Chancellor that Brexit may lead to a race to the bottom on tax standards. Arguments about privacy cannot be used to defend the laundering of money by criminals and we must ensure that the UK meets the highest EU standards following its exit from the bloc.”

Notes

[1]

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/20/british-banks-handled-vast-sums-of-laundered-russian-money?>

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Green Party: Galloway's a burnt out Brexiteer – only Greens offer real alternative in Gorton



21 March 2017

The Green Party has responded to news George Galloway will stand in the Manchester Gorton by-election saying he offers the constituency nothing but an “overinflated ego”.

Jonathan Bartley, whose party placed second in Gorton in the 2015 General Election [1], said only the Greens give Gorton “a real alternative to the status quo”.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“George Galloway is a burnt out Brexiteer who offers nothing but an overinflated ego to the people of Manchester Gorton. Of course people want a real alternative to the status quo – that’s why the Green Party polled second in Gorton last time and why we got more than five times more votes than him in the London Mayoral election.

“We are the only party who can deliver a real alternative for Gorton and we will fight to make sure this constituency is not left behind or overlooked.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2016/london/results>

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