

Top UN official in South Sudan urges Security Council to advance 'common strategy' on political process

24 May 2017 – The head of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan today urged the Security Council to unite behind a common strategy for advancing the political process and peace in the crisis-torn country.

Addressing the Council in New York via video link, David Shearer, the Secretary-General's Special Representative in South Sudan and the head of the Mission, known as UNMISS, said that "unity of purpose will [send the best signal](#) to South Sudan's political leaders to focus first and foremost on the plight of their citizens."

He also called for a "coherent and unified regional position" to aid political developments in the country, noting that Governments in the region hold "significant influence" on political developments to end the three-year war but are not communicating the same message.

Today's briefing comes as President Salva Kiir again declared a unilateral ceasefire from Juba and pledged to review the cases of political prisoners.

Mr. Shearer said these announcements are "very welcome" but "the proof of the pudding, as they say, is in the eating." He noted that there will be close scrutiny on the number of prisoners released and whether the ceasefire monitoring group can perform its work.

The senior UN official also noted that President Kiir formally launched a National Dialogue this week meant to end the conflict begun in December 2013, but has excluded his political rival and former deputy, Riek Machar.