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Security Council adopts resolution endorsing Iran nuclear deal

20 July - The United Nations Security Council today unanimously adopted a resolution establishing a monitoring system for Iran’s nuclear programme and considering the “eventual removal” of all nuclear-related sanctions against the country.

By doing so, the Council endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which is described as the “culmination” of diplomatic efforts by the so-called E3+3 – China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – and Iran, “to reach a comprehensive, long-term and proper solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.”

Under that “historic” agreement, concluded in Vienna on 14 July, Iran reaffirmed “that it will under no circumstances ever seek, develop or acquire any nuclear weapons.” The Council’s adoption of the current resolution triggers the JCPOA coming into effect in 90 days.

Immediately after the resolution was adopted, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the measure, which, he said, “will ensure the enforcement of the JCPOA.” He added that it establishes procedures that will facilitate the action plan’s implementation, enabling all States to carry out their obligations contained in the Agreement.”

“The resolution provides for the eventual removal of all nuclear-related sanctions against Iran and guarantees that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will continue to verify Iran’s compliance with its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA,” Mr. Ban highlighted.

Urging full implementation on the timetable established in the JCPOA, the Security Council indeed called upon all Members States, regional organizations and international organizations to support the implementation of the JCPOA.
It also requests the Director General of the IAEA “to undertake the necessary verification and monitoring of Iran’s nuclear-related commitments for the full duration of those commitments under the JCPOA.” In that regard, according to the resolution, the Council will consider the termination of sanctions after it receives an IAEA report that verifies Iran has implemented a series of nuclear-related measures.

By the resolution, the Security Council also decided that “on the date ten years after the JCPOA Adoption Day,” as defined in the agreement, “all the provisions of this resolution shall be terminated,” and none of the previous resolutions “shall be applied.” The Security Council will have then concluded its consideration of the Iranian nuclear issue, reads the resolution.

Iraq: funding shortage forces UN to shut down critical water and sanitation responses

20 July - With more than 74,000 new people displaced by fighting on the move in Iraq, the United Nations humanitarian wing has warned that overall, some 40 per cent of critically needed life-saving water and sanitation programmes will be forced to shut down by the end of the month due to lack of funding.

“New displacements, dynamic numbers, ongoing population movements and insecurity make it difficult to deliver critically needed life-saving WASH [water, sanitation and hygiene] support to IDPs [internally displaced people] in hot spots,” reported the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) late last week.

The weekly Iraq crisis situation report said more than 74,000 people fled Falluja in Iraq’s Anbar Governorate since 8 July.

“Provision of an effective WASH response across the country remains severely constrained by lack of funding. 28 per cent of WASH programmes have already closed due to lack of funding,” the report said. “An additional 12 per cent will close by the end of July.”

“Their is critical need for funding and supplies to cover WASH service provision in new camps that are being established,” OCHA warned. “Of the $43.9 million requested under the Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan for WASH support, only $3.9 million has been received thus far.”

OCHA also reported limited funding for shelter and other non-food supplies, which to date, has received 6 per cent of the $95 million requested and warned that nearly 90 percent of all humanitarian health programs will be closed by October 2015 if additional funding is not secured.

“Limited funding continues to constrain and threaten the delivery of aid to people in need,” the report said.

Wide-scale violence and armed conflict erupted in Iraq in January 2014. Initially concentrated in Anbar Governorate, with the cities of Ramadi and Falluja particularly affected, the violence and its impact quickly grew, displacing over 500,000 individuals by May, according to OCHA.

In June 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), together with other armed groups, attacked and seized control of Mosul and large portions of northern Iraq, including areas of Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din governorates. This has led to ongoing armed conflict, massive internal displacement, serious and systematic violations of civilian protection and basic human rights, interrupted access to basic services, and severe strain on host communities.

As a result, Iraq is now contending with one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, with over 8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance as of July 2015.
Senior UN official on refugee protection urges more support to Myanmar’s Rakhine state

20 July - Wrapping up a five-day mission to Myanmar, Volker Türk, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection in the United Nations refugee agency called for more concerted support to resolve the plight of displaced people and those with undetermined citizenship in the country.

After visiting Yangon, as well as the capital of Nay Pyi Taw and Sittwe and Maungdaw in Rakhine state, Mr. Türk said “the future of the country depends on the future of all of its composite parts,” and he noted in a press release issued late last week that everyone should have the opportunity to benefit from the transformation currently under way.

Rakhine state is one of the least developed areas of the country. It is home to internally displaced people (IDPs) along with an estimated one million others of undetermined citizenship. Living in the state's northern townships, the predominantly Rohingya populations is affected by restrictions on freedom of movement, and access to livelihoods and services, such as health and education.

Travelling to a small village an hour's drive from Maungdaw, Mr. Türk said he had seen first-hand the impact of restrictions on the Rohingya population and the damage caused by their lack of citizenship. "Local orders” in place prevent them from moving easily from one village to another, severely limiting their livelihoods.

They are also deprived higher educational opportunities. Since June 2012, Rohingya students have been prohibited from attending Sittwe University – the only university in the state.

Mr. Türk spoke directly with the affected populations in Rakhine state, where 140,000 people are still internally displaced after the outbreak of inter-communal violence three years ago.

In a positive development, when breaking the Ramadan fast together with Rakhine and Rohingya community leaders in Maungdaw, he was told that while challenges remain in building trust, the communities have a long history of co-existence.

“We have been living together since before Maungdaw town existed,” said one Rohingya leader. His comment was then affirmed by a Rakhine representative.

Traveling to Nay Pyi Taw, he held discussions with U Khin Yi, Minister for Immigration and Population, and other government officials and parliamentarians.

Following up on the issues raised in Bangkok in late May during a regional meeting on irregular migration in the Indian Ocean, Mr. Türk noted that the recent “boat crisis” in the region and the long-term situation in Rakhine state. He reiterated UNHCR's readiness to assist all governments in the region, including Myanmar, to address the movements of people from Bangladesh and Myanmar.

At the end of his visit, the Assistant High Commissioner shared his findings at a briefing with diplomats and representatives of international organisations in Yangon. Describing the regional dimension of the maritime movements in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea, he emphasized that the key to finding solutions is to work with all of the communities and the authorities to promote peaceful co-existence in the Rakhine state.
UN agency calls for $20 million to halt spread of ‘highly virulent’ avian flu in West Africa

20 July - The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) today warned that without timely intervention “to stop it in its tracks,” outbreaks of the highly virulent avian flu virus H5N1, which has already spread to five West African countries in six months, will spread across the region and beyond.

“Based on what we do know, there is a real risk of further virus spread,” FAO quoted Juan Lubroth, chief of the agency’s Animal Health Service Division as saying in a press release. “Urgent action is needed to strengthen veterinary investigation and reporting systems in the region and tackle the disease at the root, before there is a spillover to humans.”

Outbreaks of the virus have been reported in poultry farms, markets and family holdings in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger, Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana.

FAO said the outbreak comes as countries across West Africa, home to 330 million people, are still recovering from, and in some cases still battling, Ebola, which has mainly affected Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Previous strains of the virus – known to be highly virulent to poultry and capable of causing illness and fatalities in humans – have been circulating in Asia since the early 2000s and in Egypt for almost 10 years. The H5N1 strain has caused the death of tens of millions of poultry and losses of tens of billions of dollars.

Avian flu in West Africa could trigger a mass “die-off” of chicken – a nutritious and inexpensive source of food for many people – with detrimental impacts on diets and on the economy of the region, exacerbating an already difficult situation, the agency said.

“We’re looking at a disease – H5N1 – that has already spread to five countries in six months. We have to make a concerted effort to stop it in its tracks and we have to do it now,” Mr. Lubroth said.

FAO is appealing for $20 million for prevention and response to bolster weak veterinary systems, improve the capabilities of local laboratories and putting FAO specialists on the ground in affected and at-risk countries.

Because the disease can be transmitted to humans and is considered highly lethal, FAO said it is working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) on country assessments, contingency plans, offering technical assistance and investigating potential flu cases and the source of infection.
UN Mission condemns surge in armed attacks on main supply route in Central African Republic

**20 July** - The United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic (CAR) today condemned a recent series of armed attacks perpetrated by rebel elements.

“The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) strongly condemns the marked increase of armed attacks on the Main Supply Road 1 (MSR1) attributable to members of the rebel group Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC),” said a press release issued today.

The latest incident took place over the weekend when gun shots were fired against a convoy with World Food Programme (WFP) supplies, escorted by MINUSCA peacekeepers, in the North-Western part of the country.

The driver was fatally wounded after being shot by three times in the chest and his truck shoved on the side, causing serious injuries to other passengers.

“This violence goes against the current momentum aimed at peace and national reconciliation following the conclusions and recommendations of the Bangui Forum and of the agreement signed between the government and armed groups on the cessation of hostilities and on disarmament,” underlines the Mission.

MINUSCA added that it will reinforce the “robust measures” aimed at raising the level of security on this vital route that supplies the Central African Republic.

More than two years of civil war and sectarian violence have displaced thousands of people in CAR amid ongoing clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka alliance and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian. The UN estimates that some 450,000 people remain displaced inside the country while thousands of others have sought asylum across the borders.

War crimes trial for former Chadian leader ‘a milestone for justice in Africa’ – UN rights chief

**20 July** - The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, welcomed the opening today of the trial of Hissène Habré, the former President of Chad – who is accused of crimes against humanity – before a special court in Senegal, calling it “a milestone for justice in Africa.”

Mr. Zeid said in a press release that the trial, before the Extraordinary African Chambers, was of tremendous significance in a number of ways.

“It was the victims’ remarkable and tireless quest for justice and accountability for the gross human rights violations committed during Habré’s eight-year rule which made it possible for this trial to take place, more than 25 years after he left office and found refuge in Senegal.”

On 22 August 2012, Senegal and the African Union (AU) signed an agreement establishing the Extraordinary African Chambers in the Senegalese justice system to try alleged perpetrators of international crimes committed in Chad between 1982 and 1990 – including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture.

The UN human rights chief praised the unprecedented agreement as “a historic example of regional leadership and willingness to fight against impunity for international crimes.”
“This shows that leaders accused of serious crimes should not assume they can evade justice forever,” he underscored. “Nowadays, there is a good chance their crimes will eventually catch up with them.”

The High Commissioner noted that his Office, which over the past few years has actively supported accountability efforts in Senegal and Chad, will also closely monitor the trial’s progress.

Mr. Zeid also welcomed the ongoing outreach efforts deployed by the special court in Chad as “fundamentally important” in establishing “a clear two-way communication between the special court in Senegal and the Chadian population,” to ensure that the conduct of the trial “breeds a real sense of ownership and justice within Chad itself.”

**Amid surging violence in surrounding Northern Mali, Timbuktu heritage sites rebuilt – UN**

20 July - The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) praised the people of Timbuktu for reconstructing cultural heritage sites destroyed by armed groups, saying “those who wanted to erase the legacy of the past have failed,” even as the UN refugee agency reported a surge of fighting in northern Mali that has forced hundreds of people across the border into Mauritania.

In a press release, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees quoted Aminata, one of the new arrivals in Mauritania as saying: “Fear led us to leave.” She explained: “We travelled to Fassala – which is the official entry point for Malian refugees into Mauritania – in a small truck with other families from the area.”

Almost 400 people fleeing a renewed outbreak of fighting in northern Mali have sought refuge in Mauritania over the last few months, the agency said.

The new arrivals joined nearly 50,000 other Malian refugees at Mbera camp located 50 kilometres inside Mauritania, where daytime temperatures routinely hit 45 degrees Celsius.

Much of the territory of northern Mali is claimed by different rebel groups, but it is under the de facto control of the MNLA (National Movement for Liberation of the Azawad). Lately, the area has seen a new upsurge in fighting, according to UNHCR.

Timbuktu, which has come under attack during the conflict, was the site of the inauguration of the newly-reconstructed mausoleums over the weekend.

“Those who wanted to erase the legacy of the past have failed,” said Arnauld Antoine Akodjènou Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali known as MINUSMA. “The reconstruction bears witness to the cultural vibrancy of Mali.”

According to UNESCO, extremists inflicted significant damage to Timbuktu’s cultural heritage in 2012 and 2013, including the destruction 14 out of the 16 mausoleums that had been given World Heritage status.

The mausoleums of Timbuktu had long been places of pilgrimage for the people of Mali and neighbouring West African countries.

UNESCO’s Director-General Irina Bokova paid tribute to the inhabitants and masons of Timbuktu whose mobilization and skills played a crucial part in the reconstruction of the buildings.

She praised their work as “a lesson in tolerance, dialogue and peace,” and “an answer to all extremists whose echo can be heard well beyond the borders of Mali.”
Ban condemns deadly terrorist attack in Turkey

20 July - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today condemned the deadly terrorist attack that took place in the Turkish town of Suruc, which has reportedly claimed the lives of at least 28 people and injured more than a hundred.

“The Secretary-General hopes the perpetrators of this act will be swiftly identified and brought to justice,” said a statement issued by a UN spokesperson in New York, which added that “no cause or grievance ever justifies the targeting of civilians.”

Through the statement, Mr. Ban sent his deepest condolences to the victims and their families, as well as to the Government and people of Turkey, and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

According to the media, an apparent suicide bombing occurred at midday at the Amara Cultural Park in Suruc, a town bordering Syria.

UN-backed initiative announces deal to sharply lower price of HIV early infant diagnosis

20 July - A dramatic 35 percent reduction in the price for HIV early infant diagnostic technologies today has been announced by the United Nations-backed Diagnostics Access Initiative, in partnership with Roche Diagnostics.

“This agreement with Roche Diagnostics is a powerful step towards ending the unconscionable failure of the world to meet the treatment needs of children living with HIV,” said Michel Sidibé, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) Executive Director, in a press release.

“We now need to use this agreement to rapidly scale up diagnostic and treatment services for all children living with HIV, in line with the 90-90-90 target.”

The new access price is US$ 9.40 per test. Bringing together global and regional partners, the Diagnostics Access Initiative calls for improving laboratory capacity to ensure that all people living with HIV can be linked to effective, high-quality HIV treatment services. The Initiative was launched by UNAIDS in July 2014.

Partners involved in the negotiation of this particular reduced access price include the Clinton Health Access Initiative Inc., the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and UNITAID.

With peak mortality among children living with HIV occurring at 6-8 weeks, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all children exposed to HIV receive early infant diagnostic screening within the first two months of life.

However, only around half of them receive early infant diagnostic screening, in part because costs have limited the number of testing platforms currently used in low and middle-income countries.

This has contributed to a major gap in HIV treatment access, as in 2014, only 32% of children living with HIV received antiretroviral therapy compared with 41% of adults. Without knowing the HIV status of a child it is impossible to access life-saving treatment. And without treatment, half of all children born with HIV will die by the age of two and the majority will die by the age of five.
UNAIDS set up a target called "90-90-90", that provides that by 2020, 90 per cent of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status; 90 per cent of all people with an HIV diagnosis will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy; and 90 per cent of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will achieve viral suppression.

“As the leader in HIV diagnostics, Roche is proud to support the UNAIDS 90:90:90 goal by expanding access to quality HIV testing for early infant diagnosis in resource limited settings,” stated Roland Diggelmann, Chief Operating Officer of Roche Diagnostics.

“Increased access to early infant diagnosis can provide an impactful contribution for mother and child and contribute to achieving UNAIDS' goals for controlling and eradicating the HIV/AIDS epidemic,” he added.

This is the second major pricing agreement that partners in the Diagnostics Access Initiative have forged with Roche Diagnostics. In 2014, these partners, joined by the Government of South Africa, announced a 40% reduction in the global price of the leading platform for HIV viral load testing. The new cost for early infant diagnosis is the same as the one negotiated for viral load testing for adults.

“This agreement builds on and supports other efforts of a strong partnership to make the market for viral load testing more competitive and transparent, and that better serves children affected by HIV,” said Mark Dybul, Executive Director of the Global Fund.

**Afghanistan: UN Mission welcomes establishment of electoral system reform commission**

19 July - The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) today welcomed the establishment by the National Unity Government of an Electoral System Reform Commission in the country.

“This is an important step,” said Nicholas Haysom, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. “We look forward to a credible, inclusive and transparent electoral reform process. UNAMA encourages the Afghan authorities to make the necessary decisions on the electoral calendar for the next parliamentary and other polls.”

UNAMA also acknowledged the nomination of Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan, to the Commission. Mr. Yamamoto is the United Nations' focal point for electoral support to the country and will coordinate international assistance to the Electoral System Reform Commission.

The UN will not be a voting-member of the Commission, which will conduct its work under the chairmanship of Sultan Shah Akefi. The Organization's role will be to provide advice and technical expertise based on international best practices, while respecting the sovereign right of Afghanistan to make the final decisions on electoral reforms.

“Electoral reforms are essential to restoring the faith of the Afghan people in the democratic process and will lead to greater political stability,” said Mr. Yamamoto.
Iraq: UN Secretary-General condemns 'devastating' bomb attack, which killed over 100 civilians

18 July - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today condemned in the strongest terms the devastating bomb attack perpetrated on 17 July in Khan Bani Saad, an Iraqi town north of the capital Baghdad.

“The attack, which comes at a time when the Iraqi people are celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan, reportedly left over 100 civilians killed and many more injured, including children,” said the UN Spokesperson in a statement issued this afternoon.

Hoping that the perpetrators of this “heinous crime” will be swiftly brought to justice, Mr. Ban stands in solidarity with the people and Government of Iraq, adds the statement.

“The Secretary-General’s thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families.”

According to the media, the attack happened on a busy market, where explosives hidden inside a ice truck detonated.

On Mandela Day, UN joins call to promote community service and inspire change

18 July - The 70th anniversary of the United Nations’ founding provides the perfect opportunity to reflect on the life and work of Nelson Mandela with a call to action for helping others, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon affirmed today as he joined the world gathers in marking Nelson Mandela International Day.

“Nelson Mandela International Day is an annual call to action for people around the world to make a difference in the communities where they live and work by taking time to serve others,” the Secretary-General stated in his message for the Day.

“Nelson Mandela gave 67 years of his life to the struggle for human rights and social justice,” Mr. Ban continued. “The United Nations joins the Mandela Foundation in asking people around the world to devote at least 67 minutes of their time on 18 July – Madiba's birthday – to a community service activity.”

The UN General Assembly declared 18 July 'Nelson Mandela International Day' in 2009 in recognition of the former South African President's contribution to democracy, justice and reconciliation and to mark his birthday. Mr. Mandela passed away in December 2013 in Johannesburg at the age of 95.

The overall campaign slogan – Take Action, Inspire Change – seeks to inspire people around the world to take 67 minutes of time devoted to helping others and, in so doing, empower entire communities and build a global movement for good.

In the past, volunteers have helped to rebuild homes destroyed by hurricane Sandy in the New York, offered school supplies to children, prepared meals for the elderly, helped out in orphanages, cleaned up parks, and delivered computer literacy workshops.

This year's commemoration comes a week before the UN is set to bestow its first-ever Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize to two individuals – a man and a woman – for their service to humanity.

Dr. Helena Ndume, of Namibia, and Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio, of Portugal, will receive the award at a ceremony to take place on 24 July 2015, at UN Headquarters in New York.
One year after tragedy, Ban pays tribute to victims of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17

17 July - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon paid today tribute to the victims who lost their lives a year ago aboard the "tragic" Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, which crashed in eastern Ukraine.

“As the international community marks this sombre anniversary, the Secretary-General's thoughts are with the families of those who lost their loved ones. While the pain caused by this tragedy cannot be erased, the victims must be honoured by a collective effort to ascertain the truth about the incident and ensure that any persons determined responsible will be held to account,” says the UN Spokesperson in a statement.

The Secretary-General welcomes the progress made by the independent international investigation in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2166, adds the statement.

“This anniversary is another stark reminder of the continuing dire situation in eastern Ukraine and the need to bring an urgent end to this conflict.”

UN chief condemns terrorist attacks that killed 60 people in northeast Nigeria

17 July - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today condemned the terrorist attacks that killed over 60 people in the towns of Gombe and Damaturu, in northeast Nigeria over the last two days.

“These heinous crimes came as the victims, along with Nigerians nationwide, were conducting Eid prayers, a sacred time for families and communities to come together. As such, the attacks constitute an assault on the beliefs of all people,” said the UN Spokesperson in a statement issued this afternoon.

Mr. Ban offered his condolences to the families and loved ones of the deceased, wishing a speedy recovery to the injured.

“The Secretary-General renews his solidarity with the people of Nigeria and reiterates the UN's support for the Nigerian Government in its fight against terrorism, while upholding human rights,” adds the statement.

According to the media, explosive devices were detonated today outside two sites where Muslims worshippers were gathering for prayers in the town of Damaturu. At least 12 people were killed in the blasts. Yesterday, two simultaneous bombings hit a market in the city of Gombe, killing at least 48 people and injuring many others.
South Sudan: UN official cites will of the people to achieve peace despite 'bleak' situation

17 July - The outlook for South Sudan is not completely bleak, a senior United Nations has said in Juba, noting that travelling throughout the country, he has repeatedly heard the phrase: “we want peace now.”

“It is important for us to use this time now to make this phrase a reality,” the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for South Sudan, Moustapha Soumaré, told a press conference in Juba, where he also decried continuing fighting that had resulted in increased numbers of internally displaced persons.

Speaking to reporters, he said he had repeatedly heard in different meetings, at all levels, and during extensive travels in the different states of the country, since he arrived four months ago, the phrase “we want peace now”.

Noting concerns that warring parties were yet to sign a peace agreement, he noted some recent positive steps, including the return of some former political detainees and continuing efforts by the international community to support peace negotiations.

“The message is how we can move forward, as the President Salva Kiir said in his speech during independence celebrations,” he stressed. “We hope that the next step will come soon.”

Mr. Soumaré also emphasized that the crisis could only be solved by South Sudanese themselves, although the international community would continue to provide support.

“It is clear that the humanitarian situation is still dire,” he said. The more fighting there is, the more displacement. For that to stop, the fighting has to stop and there has to be a peace accord.”

The Deputy Special representative explained that the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is not directly involved in negotiations, but would have a role to play in implementing a peace agreement, if one was signed.

Currently, the Mission's mandate is still limited to protecting civilians, monitoring and investigating human rights, creating conditions for delivery of humanitarian assistance and supporting implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, he explained.

“What is really important to remember is that UNMISS is really engaging the Government to ensure that we can implement our mandate effectively,” he said. “Although we have more than 160,000 displaced persons, we have to engage the Government to create conditions where they…can voluntarily return to their homes.”

Mr. Soumaré listed some challenges the Mission faces in carrying out its work, such as restriction of patrols and lack of flight safety assurance.

“Protection of civilians is not just for those living on UNMISS sites, but also in places outside,” he noted. Yet, at times, the ability to do this in such places is impeded by restrictions.

Nonetheless, he reiterated the Mission's willingness to continue to work with the Government.

“We might not always have the same views, but we have to sit, discuss, agree and work on the things on which we disagree,” he said. “Political dialogue with the Government is key.”
In that regard, Mr. Soumaré noted the revocation of a decision to expel the UNMISS Unity state Coordinator May Cummins from the state as a “very encouraging” measure and an “example of a positive outcome of engaging government both at the local and national levels.”

The security situation in South Sudan has deteriorated steadily over the past year since political in-fighting between President Salva Kiir and his former Vice-President, Riek Machar, and their respective factions erupted in December 2013. The hostilities subsequently turned into a full-fledged conflict, resulting in reported atrocities and possible war crimes.

According to the latest estimates released by the UN refugee agency, more than 730,000 people have fled into neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan, which has seen the highest arrival rate this year. Meanwhile, another 1.5 million remain internally displaced, often relocated to increasingly overcrowded ‘protection-of-civilians’ sites run by UNMISS.

**UNESCO calls for investigation into death of Indian journalist**

**17 July** - The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Irina Bokova, today called on the Indian authorities to investigate thoroughly the death of reporter Akshay Singh in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh on 4 July.

“I express my condolences to Akshay Singh's family, friends and colleagues and urge the authorities to investigate his death,” the Director-General said.

“It is essential for rule of law and for society's right to be kept informed, that the authorities do all they can to clarify the cause of Mr. Singh's death. Reporters must be able to carry out their professional duties in a safe environment and crimes against them must not go unpunished”, Ms. Bokova added.

Akshay Singh, a local TV journalist for the private Hindi news channel Aaj Tak, was investigating corruption in the north central state of Madhya Pradesh when he died from what doctors in a local hospital said was a heart attack. Media reports have raised doubts about the cause of Mr. Singh’s death.

The Director-General of UNESCO issues statements on the killing of media workers in line with Resolution 29 adopted by UNESCO Member States at the Organization's General Conference of 1997 entitled “Condemnation of Violence against Journalists.” These statements are posted on a dedicated webpage; UNESCO condemns the killing of journalists.

**Ban condemns deadly car bomb attack in Saudi Arabia**

**17 July** - United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has condemned the car bomb attack perpetrated at a police checkpoint yesterday in Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia.

The driver of the vehicle was killed and the explosion injured two law enforcement officers. According to the media, the blast went off when police manning the checkpoint on Al-Hair Road stopped the car for a routine check.

Particularly “saddened and angered” by the fact that this attack comes ahead of the Eid al-Fitr holiday. “Mr. Ban calls for the persons responsible for the attack to be brought to justice,” according a statement issued by a UN spokesperson.

The Secretary-General wished speedy recovery to the officers injured and expressed his sympathies to the Government and people of Saudi Arabia.
South Ossetia: Ban calls on all parties to refrain from any steps that could be seen as 'provocative'

17 July - Concerned by the recent events at the line of control of South Ossetia, in Georgia, the top United Nations Secretary-General has expressed his concerns regarding activities that may negatively impact the freedom of movement and livelihood of the local population.

"[The Secretary-General] calls on all parties to refrain from any steps that could be seen as provocative and detrimental to ongoing efforts to promote regional peace and stability," according to a statement issued by Mr. Ban's spokesperson yesterday.

The Secretary-General, adds the statement, urges all parties to use established mechanisms such as the Geneva International Discussions (GID) and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) to address issues of concern and to diffuse tensions.