

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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REMARKS TO THE PRESS

NEW YORK, 23 DECEMBER 2013

12:20

Good afternoon.

I have just returned from a visit to the Philippines.

In Tacloban, I saw the damage caused by Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda. I was deeply moved by the plight of the area's people – and impressed by their resilience.

The United Nations is doing everything possible to support the relief effort.

More than 4 million people are getting food and hundreds of thousands are receiving life-saving supplies. But we have less than a third of the funding we need for our \$791 million appeal. I call on countries to contribute urgently.

Lt. Gen.

While I was in the Philippines, I received continuous updates about the deteriorating situation in South Sudan.

Earlier this morning, I convened a crisis management meeting, attended by my senior advisers.

Ms. Hilde Johnson, my Special Representative for South Sudan,
joined by video conference.

and Heile Menkeros,
SRSG for AU

The situation is of mounting urgency. I am especially worried
by reports of ethnically targeted killings.

Tens of thousands of people are displaced, including
some 45,000 seeking protection at the bases of our Mission,
UNMISS.

I am determined to ensure that UNMISS has the means to carry out its central task of protecting civilians.

I will be spending most of today calling regional leaders and others to bolster military support for UNMISS as well as political backing for efforts to defuse the crisis.

Also today, I will be sending a letter to the Security Council containing my recommendations for boosting the protection capacity of UNMISS with additional troops, police and logistical assets.

We are already approaching countries to help meet the new requirements. We are also looking at other peacekeeping missions, while taking care not to reduce their capacity to respond to threats where they operate.

UNMISS is protecting civilians at its bases, supporting humanitarian deliveries, monitoring the human rights situation and investigating reports of abuses. We have lost two peacekeepers in the past week and one was wounded. I commend our brave peacekeepers as well as the mission's staff and leaders.

Let me be absolutely clear. The world is watching all sides in South Sudan. Attacks on civilians and the UN peacekeepers deployed to protect them must cease immediately.

The United Nations will investigate reports of grave human rights violations and crimes against humanity. Those responsible at the senior level will be held personally accountable and face the consequences – even if they claim they had no knowledge of the attacks.

I have consistently called on President Kiir and opposition political leaders to come to the table and find a political way out of this crisis.

Whatever their differences, they cannot justify the violence that has engulfed their young nation. They must do everything in their power to immediately ensure that their followers hear the message – loud and clear – that continued violence, ethnic and otherwise, is completely unacceptable. Now is the time for South Sudan's leaders to show their people and the world that they are, above all, committed to preserving the unity of the nation that was born out of their long struggle for independence.

Let me also stress the need for South Sudan's neighbours to act constructively and refrain from actions that could spark further divisions.

public
I would also like to address a message directly to the people of South Sudan:

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The United Nations stood with you on your road to independence. We will stay with you now.

I know that the current situation is causing great and growing fear. You are seeing people leave the country amid increasing chaos.

The United Nations will stay with you. We will do our utmost to protect you, to provide the humanitarian assistance you need, and most of all to help the country re-gain the path to peace.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me now say a few words about Syria.

We are doing everything we can to help ease the suffering. We have been working hard to convene the International Conference on Syria. After the meetings held Friday in Geneva, we are on track to convene the Conference on 22 January.

I am in close contact with Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi. As he announced on Friday, the invitation list is near complete. I hope the question of Iran's participation is resolved soon. As I have said before, Iran needs to contribute to peace in Syria along with others in the region.

We expect the Syrian Government and opposition to focus hard in the coming days on making their delegations as strong and representative as possible.

Negotiations will be difficult, but without them, there is only bloodshed and despair on the horizon. I count on those with influence to encourage the Syrian parties to come to the Conference with the serious intention to end the war and agree on a peaceful transition.

Meanwhile, I call on the sides to free detainees, end sieges and allow greater humanitarian access. I appeal to them to reduce the horrific violence. I utterly condemn the recent use of so-called “barrel bombs”, which has added yet another appalling dimension to the fighting.

All involved in this conflict should signal their intention to open the way for a new future.

I count on all members of the international community to continue to generously support the people in Syria and the neighbouring states who need help.

I am doing everything possible to generate broad participation at next month's pledging conference in Kuwait.

Thank you.