

# 'Durable solutions' needed for durable peace in Darfur, UN envoy tells Security Council

The overall security situation in Sudan's Darfur region "remains calm", despite continuing low-level skirmishes, a top United Nations envoy said on Thursday; updating the Security Council on the UN mission's work on the ground.

"The general security situation in Darfur remains calm, except for sporadic clashes between the Sudan Liberation Army of Mr. Abdul Wahid, Government forces and nomads in the Jebel Marra," said Jeremiah Mamabolo, Head of the African Union-UN Mission in Darfur ([UNAMID](#)), speaking via video-link.

The mission is in the process of reconfiguring its forces, including the construction of a new Temporary Operating Base at Golo, on land provided by the government in Jebel Marra. The reconfiguration has involved withdrawal from some areas previously controlled by UNAMID.

While it was too early to make a final assessment, Mr. Mamabolo said there had been no "adverse impact" so far.

While the Government is expected to establish its authority in these areas, he added, "we continue to monitor the situation within the framework of our protection of civilians' mandate."

Mr. Mamabolo saw what he called "a glimpse of hope" in the stalled peace process with parties expressing a desire "for continued engagement" at a meeting in Berlin last month.

"I am, therefore, in contact with all the parties to bridge their differences so that they can agree on and sign a pre-negotiation framework as soon as possible" to pave the way for a "cessation of hostilities agreement and direct negotiations," he said.

For Darfur to be guaranteed of durable peace and development,  
durable solutions will have to be found for the plight of IDPs –  
*Jeremiah Mamabolo*

Turning to the humanitarian situation, revised figures reveal that some 1.76 million displaced people are registered in approximately 66 camps.

With no systematic registration of those displaced outside the camps however, estimates vary considerably for those unregistered and living in rural settlements and urban areas.

UN humanitarian agencies and partners estimate that an additional 500,000 displaced people live in some 108 host communities and settlements in Darfur.

Mr. Mamabolo indicated that from UNAMID's interactions, they would like to return to their places of origin, provided they have security and basic services.

Meanwhile, others say they are willing to settle where they are – with assurances that they retain their traditional land rights in their original homes.

For Darfur to be guaranteed “durable peace and development, durable solutions will have to be found for the plight of IDPs,” he stressed.

“It is imperative that concerted efforts be exerted towards mobilization of financial resources to consolidate and sustain the prevailing peace and stability in the region,” he concluded.

The Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur can be found here: [S/2018/389](#).

---

## [Avoid ‘new conflagration’ urges UN chief, in wake of military escalation in Golan](#)

The United Nations chief has called for an immediate halt to all hostile acts and provocative actions to “avoid a new conflagration” in the Middle East, following reported exchanges of artillery fire over the Golan Heights.

According to media reports, the Israeli military attacked Iranian military installations in neighbouring Syria in retaliation for an Iranian-instigated rocket barrage on Israeli positions in the Golan.

UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) “followed, [with utmost concern](#), reports overnight of missile launches from Syria targeting Israeli positions and retaliatory strikes by the Israel Defense Forces,” said his Spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, in a statement issued on Thursday.

Mr. Guterres “notes, with relief, today’s partial normalization of the situation,” and “urges for an immediate halt to all hostile acts and any provocative actions to avoid a new conflagration in the region already embroiled in terrible conflicts with immense suffering of civilians,” added the statement.

The Golan was captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, and in 1974, a

UN observer force was set up to monitor the ceasefire reached that year by Israel and Syria.

Mr. Dujarric noted that the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has maintained contact with forces of both sides during the latest hostilities and urged them to exercise “maximum restraint” and abide by their obligations under the 1974 agreement.

---

## [UN rights expert welcomes return of detainees from DPRK, urges release of others](#)

The release of three United States nationals by North Korea is “another important building block” towards peace, said a United Nations human rights expert on Thursday, while urging the release of six South Korean nationals who are still being held.

In a statement reacting to the release of the US citizens, Tomás Ojea Quintana, the UN expert on human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) said that he had “consistently advocated for the release of these foreign detainees, who were reportedly under arbitrary detention and prevented from enjoying their basic freedoms.”

“I welcome this important decision of the DPRK Government,” the Special Rapporteur continued, “which I hope will offer an opportunity to further address human rights and humanitarian concerns,” he added.

Kim Sang-duk, known as “Tony Kim”, Kim Hak Song and Kim Dong-chul were among several foreign nationals arrested in recent years in the country.

Mr. Ojea Quintana urged the north to also release six South Koreans who remain in detention, including three pastors.

“I remain concerned by reports that the foreign detainees have not received due legal process and may be held in inhumane conditions without consular access,” he said.

“Moreover,” continued the Special Rapporteur, “as peace talks progress, a comprehensive assessment of the overall penitentiary system in North Korea will become unavoidable.”

During the first week of July, Mr. Ojea Quintana will visit the south, and in October present his next report to the UN General Assembly.□

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based

UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

---

## [UN chief applauds Malaysians for 'strong commitment' to democracy](#)

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres congratulated the people of Malaysia on Thursday, following the peaceful holding of national and provincial elections, and praised voters for their “strong commitment” to the democratic process.

In a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson, the UN chief welcomed the formation of a new Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and paid tribute to outgoing Prime Minister Najib Razak.

The UN chief added that he was looking forward to working closely with Malaysia on issues of mutual interest.

The new Prime Minister is no stranger to the job, having led the country for much of the 1980s and 1990s, and at 92 he has become the world’s oldest elected leader.

The coalition of parties which he led to victory, secured 113 of the 222 seats being contested.

The elections, held on 9 May, saw a voter turnout of 76 per cent, according to media reports.

---

## [Afghanistan: Violence at voter registration sites 'assault on democracy,' UN envoy warns](#)

Afghanistan has suffered “a disturbing pattern” of attacks on voter registration facilities since the process began last month, which add up to an “assault on democracy”, the United Nations mission there said Thursday.

According to a [new report](#) from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), 23 election-related security incidents have already been recorded since voter registration began on 14 April, ahead of parliamentary elections due to take place in October, resulting in 271 civilian deaths and injuries.

UNAMA said these incidents include the 22 April suicide attack on a crowd gathered outside a national identity card distribution centre, in the capital Kabul, which killed and injured a total of 198 civilians.

“These attacks at election facilities are nothing less than [an assault on democracy](#),” said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan.

He stressed that Afghans who were turning up to register were “exercising their constitutional right and putting hope for Afghanistan’s future above concerns about their personal safety.”

The report details how some 75 per cent of the security incidents have taken place at schools or mosques, which are doubling-up as election-related facilities, and describes allegations of intimidation of staff there and those seeking to take part in the vote.

“Elections-related violence should remind everyone that efforts toward peace in Afghanistan cannot be set aside,” said Mr. Yamamoto, urging the Taliban to take up President Ashraf Ghani’s peace offer, participate in the elections, and start direct talks with the government to put an end to the suffering of the Afghan people.

The report also urged anti-government and terrorist groups to stop violence at election-related sites and called on the government to do more to protect voters.