

UN chief stresses need to denuclearize Korean Peninsula, avoid 'sleepwalking into war'

14 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres wrapped up a short visit to Tokyo on Thursday with an appeal to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and other countries to implement relevant Security Council resolutions to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

"I think we all want to avoid that things get out of control and that misperceptions and mishandling of situations make us [sleepwalk into a war](#) that will have devastating consequences," Mr. Guterres told a press conference held at Japan National Press Club, stressing the need for the implementation of all Council resolutions, first by the DPRK and then all the other countries that have such obligations.

"The objective is the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and it is extremely important to preserve the unity of the Security Council," he added.

Mr. Guterres is set to brief the Security Council on the DPRK, tomorrow, Friday, 15 November.

Asked about the outcome of a recent visit to Pyongyang by UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, Mr. Guterres said that "in diplomacy and especially in discreet diplomacy, it is difficult to measure an immediate result of any initiative" but "the message was conveyed."

He said that the message was that not only that Security Council resolutions must be implemented, but there must be a sense of urgency in creating the conditions for a meaningful dialogue to achieve the denuclearization of the Peninsula.

On questions about a possible military strike against the DPRK by the United States, he refused to comment on "things that have not happened" but said he is "a believer that a military solution would have dramatic negative consequences and that we need to be able to achieve the goal to denuclearize the Korean peninsula and to achieve it through diplomatic engagement."

Asked what the UN can do in a concrete manner about the situation, he said that the Security Council has taken the right decisions, and the Secretariat has to explore all ways to convey the messages that are necessary for those decisions to be implemented peacefully.

"We are not miracle makers. We are people committed to a cause, and that cause is the cause of peace and security in line with international law," he said.

To a question about a possible visit to the DPRK by himself, the Secretary-General said he would go anywhere at any time when it is useful.

“But I am not aiming at a protagonism just to appear in the cameras of the televisions,” he said. “We are available, but we can only mediate when both parties accept our mediation.”

The main purpose of the Secretary-General trip to Japan was to address the global Universal Health Coverage Forum 2017 held in Tokyo.