

UN South Sudan Press Conference

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Opening remarks

Good morning.

Thank you for joining this press briefing today. My first formal encounter with you since arriving in Juba two months ago.

I wish to give an update on three points: the humanitarian outlook, protection of civilians and the UNCT Cooperation Framework with South Sudan.

The humanitarian situation continues to be very difficult. In particular, food needs remain high.

On 6 November, the government and food security partners (including UN agencies and NGOs) released the latest data on food insecurity in South Sudan. Known as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), it revealed that at the start of the dry season (between October and December 2017) 4.8 million people are estimated to be severely food insecure. This is about half of the people in the country.

The number of people in need of food assistance is expected to grow in 2018. This will continue to be a major challenge for the country and the for all Humanitarian actors. A humanitarian response plan is currently being developed to support and guide humanitarian activities in 2018.

But to be effective, humanitarian actors need free and consistent access to the people in need.

On 10 November, therefore I welcomed President Kiir's order on free and unimpeded humanitarian access. Ensuring unhindered humanitarian access is essential I to save lives. I appreciate the step that President Kiir has taken to ensure the free movement of supplies and personnel, particularly at a time when food security continues to deteriorate and humanitarian organizations are expected to expand their response.

I hope that the order will have a positive impact in reducing the many constraints faced by humanitarian partners that delay or prevent the provision of urgently needed help and which too often place humanitarian staff at risk.

I look forward to seeing the order effectively implemented on the ground and throughout the entire country.

One of UNMISS' main mandate and priority is to protect civilians.

It is important to recognize that the protection of civilians remains the primary responsibility of the Government.

The Internal Displaced People (IDPs) who come to UNMISS managed Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites believe that they face a threat of physical violence and come to sites to seek protection.

Last week I visited Wau to see the living conditions of the approximately 50,000 displaced people living in the town. While most people we spoke with expressed hope to return home, they also expressed that the security conditions in their communities are not conducive for their safe returns.

Through a strategy called “Beyond Bentiu” in Bentiu and with a similar approach in Wau, UNMISS, UN agencies and other humanitarian actors are committed to provide support to communities outside of the PoCs. The aim is support IDPs' aspirations to return to their home provided that this is voluntary, dignified and safe.

One of my responsibilities as UN Resident Coordinator is to co-ordinate the work of the UN Country Team.

The UN Country Team, consists of 17 agencies, funds and programmes based here in Juba. We are currently preparing our next cooperation framework with South Sudan. Yesterday we met to start deliberations to define our priorities going forward.

One the key point that was consistently highlighted was the need for the UN agencies and cooperating partner to help build resilience at the local level to enhance people ability to cope in the face of crisis.

The UN Cooperation Framework in South Sudan will be finalized in the coming months, and will inform UN agencies' future cooperation programs in the South Sudan.

Thank again you for coming.