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At G8 summit, UN chief stresses need to act with unity on Middle East, North Africa



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (left) and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France at the G8 Summit in Deauville

27 May 2011 –

The international community must act with unity and in a consistent and coordinated manner in response to events in the Middle East and North Africa, [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasized](#) today to world leaders gathered in Deauville, France, for the annual summit of the Group of Eight (G8) leading industrialized nations.

The unfolding events in the Middle East and North Africa were among several issues the United Nations chief raised in his closed-door discussions with G8 leaders, who met against the backdrop of the so-called “Arab spring” – the wave of pro-democracy movements that have already toppled long-standing regimes in Egypt and Tunisia and led to open conflict in Libya.

Mr. Ban urged increased support for humanitarian assistance, both for affected populations in Libya and in neighbouring countries, according to a readout provided by his spokesperson.

He stressed that job growth and education opportunities for young people and women are paramount, and that a sustainable transition to democratic and accountable governments in the broader region will also need concrete support for large-scale infrastructure.

In his meeting yesterday with the Prime Minister of Egypt, Essam Sharaf, Mr. Ban reiterated the UN's readiness to assist the country with its political transition, including upcoming elections. He and the Tunisian Prime Minister, Caid Essebsi, also discussed upcoming elections, with the Secretary-General commending the Government for the decisive measures it has taken to hold free and fair polls.

In his remarks to G8 leaders today, the Secretary-General also urged the international community act urgently together to push the Middle East peace process forward, and asked the parties to "seize the moment and take risks for peace."

Mr. Ban's discussions also centred on African regional crises, specifically on the need for stabilizing domestic security in Côte d'Ivoire, following the recent post-election crisis. In particular, he highlighted the need to disarm militias, rebuild police and military capacity and secure the West African nation's borders.

The need to support peace and anti-piracy efforts in Somalia, concern over the increasing tensions in the disputed Sudanese region of Abyei and the Darfur peace talks were also raised, as were numerous development issues, including women's and children's health, climate change and energy, food and nutrition security, and sustainable development.

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[Arab spring, African crises and global health on UN chief's agenda at G8 summit](#)