



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



Security Council highlights role of UN peace missions in global AIDS response



UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé (right) converses with Amb. Vitaly Churkin of Russia at the Security Council

7 June 2011 –

The Security Council today underlined the continuing need for urgent and coordinated global action to curb the impact of HIV and AIDS in conflict and post-conflict situations, while recognizing the important role United Nations peacekeeping operations can play in responding to the epidemic.

Meeting on the eve of the three-day high-level event on AIDS set to begin at UN Headquarters tomorrow, the Council recognized that HIV poses “one of the most formidable challenges” to the development, progress and stability of societies and requires an “exceptional and comprehensive” global response.

In the 30 years since the beginning of the HIV epidemic, more than 60 million people have been infected, at least 25 million people have died and more than 16 million children have been orphaned by AIDS.

Today’s [meeting](#) marks the second time that the 15-member body has discussed HIV and AIDS in the Council. In January 2000, the Council adopted resolution 1308 in which it recognized the potential of the epidemic, if unchecked, to pose a risk to stability and security. It also focused on the potential of HIV/AIDS to affect the health of UN peacekeeping personnel.

In a resolution adopted unanimously during today's meeting on the impact of HIV/AIDS on international peace and security, the Council recognized that UN peacekeeping operations can be important contributors to an integrated response to HIV and AIDS.

"Whenever AIDS is part of the equation, the United Nations is working to be part of the solution," [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon said in his [remarks](#) to the meeting, which was convened by President Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon, which holds the Council's rotating presidency this month.

Mr. Ban noted that before resolution 1308 was adopted, uniformed personnel were viewed in terms of the risk they might pose to civilians. "Now we understand that UN troops and police are part of prevention, treatment and care."

For UN personnel, pre-deployment HIV training is standard, he noted, adding that more than 1,500 peacekeepers have been trained as peer counsellors. Meanwhile, the number of blue helmets seeking voluntary counselling and testing increased from fewer than 2,000 to more than 14,000 in just five years.

The Secretary-General also urged all Member States to link efforts to combat HIV and AIDS with the campaigns against sexual violence and for the rights of women. This means addressing the dangerous interaction between AIDS, the international drug trade, sex trafficking and the abuse of women.

"We also need action after the ink dries on agreements and the guns fall silent. We need to help shattered societies prevent the spread of HIV. And we must provide treatment to everyone who needs it," said Mr. Ban.

Today's meeting also featured an address by Michel Sidibé, the Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)), who said that he continues to be deeply concerned by the ways in which AIDS still intersects with conflict.

"HIV impacts peacekeepers and others in uniform. But it also affects the populations with whom they interact. And it is for this reason that this new resolution is so important for us," he stated.

"The risk HIV poses to peace and security is far more nuanced than we thought in 2000," he continued. "The nature of conflict and the epidemic itself have evolved. We are convinced that fresh political commitments around this resolution will enable the United Nations effectively to contribute to the efforts of Member States to address the impact of AIDS on peace and security."

Last month UNAIDS and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) published a report outlining the progress made and the obstacles encountered in implementing resolution 1308.

The report noted that significant progress has been made in providing access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for all sections of society, including peacekeepers and other uniformed personnel.

“Nevertheless, during the past 10 years, the evolving landscape of crises and conflicts throughout the world has reshaped these challenges and underscored the need for a new response to AIDS in the context of United Nations actions to help prevent conflict, ensure security and build peace,” UNAIDS said.

This week’s high-level meeting of the General Assembly provides an opportunity for Member States – 30 years into the epidemic and 10 years since the General Assembly’s Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2001 – to review progress and to chart the future course of the global AIDS response.

“This is a monumental opportunity to reshape and renew our commitments before the eyes of the world,” Joseph Deiss, President of the 192-member Assembly, told a news conference. “I urge Member States to make bold commitments to help us reach our shared goal of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.”

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN makes progress on AIDS education for thousands of peacekeeping personnel](#)