



"We need to understand that the peace and security problems we face today are so serious and the level of threat is so high that it is much better to come together than to persist in the level of divisions that we are witnessing today", United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized in his speech during the opening ceremony of the [Munich Security Conference](#) today.

According to the Secretary-General, "for the first time since the cold war we are facing a nuclear threat. The central question is denuclearisation". He therefore urged the United States and North Korea to come together and engage in a meaningful discussion.

On Syria, he said that "we see a reigniting of the conflict with dramatic consequences. And we've also seen a defragmentation of the country. We're committed to reinitiate the Geneva dialogue. We'll do everything to reactivate and to energize the Geneva process".

Highlighting the absence of a consensus in the international community on how to regulate the "internet of things", the Secretary-General underlined that a multi-stakeholder approach would be adequate and necessary "to establish at least some basic protocols to allow for the web to be an effective instrument for the good". He further said that "the UN would be ready to be a

platform in which different actors can come together and discuss the way forward in order to find adequate approaches to make sure that we are able to deal with the problems of cybersecurity".

In his concluding remarks, the Secretary-General warned that the number of threats today encourage mistrust that puts into question the cohesion in societies and creates doubt about multilateralism. He issued a strong appeal "to overcome our differences and contradictions", saying that it is "naïve to think that divided we can survive facing the challenges we are facing in today's world".

Alongside the Conference, the Secretary-General today held bilateral meetings with several high level officials. Amongst them were the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. In meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, French Defense Minister Florence Parly and Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, he discussed the situation in the Middle East and Syria.

This year, the Conference agenda focuses in particular on the future role of the European Union as a global actor and its relations with Russia as well as the United States. Participants are also discussing the growing threat to the liberal international order, the numerous conflicts in the Middle East and political developments in the Sahel region. Moreover, arms control issues are a point of emphasis, in particular the tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg are among the over 500 participants attending the Conference. These also include more than a dozen heads of state and heads of government, amongst others the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Theresa May. The US Government is represented by Secretary of Defense General James Mattis and National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster.