

Smugglers throw 300 African migrants off boats headed to Yemen – UN agency

10 August 2017 – A total of 300 migrants have reportedly been forced from boats over the past two days by smugglers off the coast of Yemen – many feared dead or missing, the United Nations migration agency has reported.

“The survivors told our colleagues on the beach that the smuggler [pushed them into the sea](#) when he saw some ‘authority types’ near the coast,” said Laurent de Boeck, the Yemen Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)).

“They also told us that the smuggler has already returned to Somalia to continue his business and pick up more migrants to bring to Yemen on the same route. This is shocking and inhumane. The suffering of migrants on this migration route is enormous. Too many young people pay smugglers with the false hope of a better future,” Mr. de Boeck added.

According to IOM, up to 180 migrants were reportedly thrown into the sea from a boat today by the smugglers. Five bodies have been recovered so far, and around 50 are reported missing.

This latest incident comes barely 24 hours after smugglers forced more than 120 Somali and Ethiopian migrants into the sea as they approached the coast of Shabwa, a Yemeni Governorate along the Arabian Sea, resulting in the drowning of around 50 migrants. The migrants had been hoping to reach countries in the Gulf via war-torn Yemen.

Shortly after yesterday’s tragedy, IOM staff found the shallow graves of 29 migrants on a beach in Shabwa, during a routine patrol. The dead had been quickly buried by those who survived the smuggler’s deadly actions. The approximate average age of the passengers on the boat was 16.

Since January of this year, IOM estimates that around 55,000 migrants left the Horn of Africa to come to Yemen, most with the aim of trying to find better opportunities in the Gulf countries. More than 30,000 of those migrants are under the age of 18 from Somalia and Ethiopia, while a third are estimated to be female.

This journey is especially hazardous during the current windy season in the Indian Ocean. Smugglers are active in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, offering fake promises to vulnerable migrants. IOM and its partners operate across the region to support these migrants and provide lifesaving assistance to those who find themselves abused or stranded along the route.

UN agency begins moving hunger-relief assistance to Nigeria's troubled northeast

10 August 2017 – The United Nations humanitarian agency fighting hunger has begun transporting food assistance to Nigeria's crisis-hit northeast, where people are displaced by Boko Haram violence and the fight against it face the threat of famine.

The World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) has already begun moving the first batch of rice donated by the Government of Nigeria, which contributed 5,000 metric tons of rice and pledged a further 2,000 metric tons of millet.

This donation once again testifies to the quality of relations between WFP and Nigeria, [said](#) Ronald Sibanda, WFP's interim Country Director, in a news release, noting that the assistance will help feed nearly half-a-million internally displaced people in the country's conflict-ravaged northeast.

The United States will cover the associated costs of getting the donated rice to those displaced in the hardest-hit states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, as part of its \$100 million contribution to WFP's Nigeria response.

Nigeria's crisis has spilled over borders, leaving millions in the broader Lake Chad Basin region uncertain of where their meal is coming from. Experts have warned that without sufficient and timely humanitarian assistance, northeast Nigeria risks tipping into famine.

Since launching operations last year, WFP has rapidly expanded its offer of food, nutrition and cash to reach more than a million people a month. Having overcome a funding challenge, it has set its target at 1.36 million people during the current pre-harvest lean season, the hungriest time of the year.

Expert concludes review of new information on death of former UN chief Dag Hammarskjöld

9 August 2017 – The United Nations today received an expert report that summarizes the new information made available by Member States and other sources and assesses whether and to what degree that information helps to establish the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic deaths of

former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and 15 others traveling with him.

Mr. Hammarskjöld served as the top UN official from April 1953 until his death at the age of 56 in a plane crash in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, along with 15 others in September 1961.

According to an information [note](#) issued by the Office of the UN Spokesperson, the report, presented by Mohamed Chande Othman, former Chief Justice of Tanzania, to [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, sets out findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Mr. Othman was appointed by Mr. Guterres in February 2017 and is familiar with this matter from his role as Chair of the 2015 Independent Panel of Experts, which concluded, among other things, that there was significant new information with sufficient probative value to further pursue aerial attack or other interference as a hypothesis of the possible cause of the crash.

Since Mr. Othman's appointment, the UN chief has urged Member States to disclose, declassify or allow access to information that they may have regarding the tragic 1961 plane crash.

Mr. Othman's new mandate was to review potential new information, assess its probative value and determine the scope that any further investigation should take. The mandate also allows him, if possible, to draw conclusions from the investigations already conducted, including by the 2015 Independent Panel of Experts and the 2013 Hammarskjöld Commission.

The Secretary-General will transmit Mr. Othman's report to the General Assembly before the end of its seventy-first session and report on progress made.

Protecting indigenous peoples' rights 'is protecting everyone's rights' – UN

9 August 2017 – Ten years after the adoption of the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), progress in several countries has been made in formally recognizing indigenous peoples, but overwhelmingly they continue to face discrimination, marginalization and major challenges in enjoying their basic rights.

While indigenous peoples have made significant advancements in advocating for their rights in international and regional fora, implementation of the Declaration is impeded by [persisting vulnerability and exclusion](#), and exclusion, particularly among indigenous women, children, youth and persons with disabilities,” said 40 UN system entities and other international organizations in a joint UN statement, issued on the

occasion of the [International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples](#), marked annually on 9 August.

The Declaration, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007, establishes a universal framework of minimum survival standards for the dignity and well-being of the world's indigenous peoples. It is the most comprehensive international instrument on indigenous peoples' collective rights, including the rights to self-determination, traditional lands and culture.

Declaration on indigenous rights stands as a beacon of progress

The Declaration, which took more than twenty years to negotiate, stands today as a beacon of progress, a framework for reconciliation and a benchmark of rights, underscored Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Mariam Waleed Aboubakrine, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in a joint statement on the Day.

VIDEO: In Bolivia, with an increased demand for labour, indigenous women are joining the construction industry, but are vulnerable to discrimination.
Credit: UN News

But a decade on, we need to acknowledge the vast challenges that remain. In too many cases, indigenous peoples are now facing even greater struggles and rights violations than they did ten years ago, they added.

Protecting the rights and dignity of indigenous peoples is protecting everyone's rights UNESCO chief, Irina Bokova

Although some countries have taken constitutional and legislative measures to recognize their rights and identities, exclusion, marginalization and violence continue to be widespread.

With this in mind, Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) said that as [custodians and practitioners](#) of unique cultures and relationships with the natural environment, indigenous peoples embody a wide range of linguistic and cultural diversity at the heart of our shared humanity.

Protecting their rights and dignity is protecting everyone's rights and respecting humanity's soul, past and future, she said, noting that UNESCO's [latest Global Education Monitoring Report](#) provides concrete guidance and policy advice for the advancement of indigenous peoples' rights. The agency also launched the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme in 2002 to support governments in creating synergies between scientific and indigenous peoples' knowledge.



There are an estimated 370 million indigenous people in the world, living across 90 countries. The Shavante Indian in Brazil is preparing his son for the “oio,” a ceremonial club fight young boys participate in to show their passage from boyhood to manhood. UN Photo/Joseane Daher



Indigenous peoples make up less than five per cent of the world's population, but account for 15 per cent of the poorest. Above, a member of the Dogons tribe in southern Mali uses indigenous irrigation techniques to grow vegetables and millet. UN Photo/John Isaac



An overwhelming majority of the world's estimated 7,000 languages are spoken by indigenous peoples, who also represent 5,000 different cultures. Pictured here are indigenous Inuit women in the Uummannaq community of Greenland. UN Photo/Mark Garten



Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. Forced displacement, including from armed conflict as was the case with the Embera children from Colombia (above), can sometimes lead to the total collapse of traditional authority and cultural patterns. UN Photo/Mark Garten



Indigenous peoples retain cultural, economic and political characteristics distinct from the dominant societies in which they live. A baby from the indigenous Kadazandusun ethnic group sleeps in a traditional cloth cradle in Malaysia, where UNICEF supports programmes for indigenous and other marginalized children. UNICEF/Giacomo Pirozzi



Despite their cultural differences, indigenous peoples from around the world share common problems. Students in Peru, pictured here, walk home from school. UNICEF asserts that, in the Andean nation, classes taught in Spanish challenge those who speak only the native Quechua – often leading to students dropping out. UNICEF/NYHQ2011-1606/LeMoyne



On 13 September 2007, the General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – a milestone for the cooperation and solidarity between indigenous peoples and Member States. Bolivian Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca Céspedes (left) speaks to journalists after the adoption in New York. UN Photo/Jenny Rockett



Although major progress has been made in implementing the Declaration, gaps continue to leave indigenous peoples facing exclusion, marginalization and challenges in enjoying their basic rights. For example, deforestation poses risks for the livelihoods of forest-dwelling indigenous peoples, such as those seen here in the Republic of Congo. Photo: UNFPA



The 2017 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, observed on 8 August, marks the tenth anniversary of the Declaration and offers a push for nations to demonstrate political will, and financial commitment, for its implementation. Bright colours and bold patterns adorn the house of the Ndebele tribeswoman above in South Africa. UN Photo/P Mugubane

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Voice and empowerment of indigenous women “more important than ever”

For its part, the UN labour agency said the international community must also renew its commitment to promote the empowerment and voice of indigenous women, according to a

While commending the tenth anniversary of the Declaration, along with its own [Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 \(No. 169\)](#) as instruments guiding public policy and empowering “indigenous communities to pursue their own development priorities,” the International Labour Organization's ([ILO](#)) underscored that the situation is far from acceptable.

“Indigenous peoples constitute a disproportionate 15 per cent of the world's poor whereas they are an estimated five per cent of the world's population. [Indigenous women are commonly the poorest of the poor](#), discriminated against because they are indigenous and because they are women,” ILO stressed in a statement.

The statement pointed out that their marginalization and social exclusion must be addressed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) of the UN [2030 Agenda](#).

“Our combined efforts – governments, employers' and workers' organizations, indigenous peoples and their organizations, UN partners and others – can go a long way in ensuring that indigenous peoples are not left behind,” concluded the ILO statement.

AUDIO: Indigenous still face 'harsh conditions' despite UN Declaration say UN human rights experts. Credit: UN News

Marking the International Day

As Indigenous experts from Canada, Republic of the Congo, Ecuador and Namibia will celebrate the Day at a special event at UN Headquarters in New York, UN

offices globally are also holding events and activities, including in Australia, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico.

The UN partnered with Twitter to create a special emoji for the Day, which, with the hashtags #WeAreIndigenous and #IndigenousDay, will be live from 8 August to 15 September as a new way to engage broader audiences in promoting indigenous peoples' rights.

With devastating impact on civilians, conflict is 'major cause of famine' – UN Security Council

9 August 2017 – Expressing its grave concern about the threat of famine facing some 20 million people in conflict-affected Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria, the United Nations Security Council today requested the Secretary-General to provide early warning when a conflict could lead to famine.

Through the adoption of a Presidential Statement, the 15-member body also requested the Secretary-General to provide an oral briefing in October 2017 on impediments to an effective response to the [risk of famine in these countries](#), and make specific recommendations on how to address country-specific impediments in order to enable a more robust short- and long-term response.

The Council emphasized, with deep concern, that ongoing conflicts and violence are a major cause of famine as they have devastating humanitarian consequences and hinder an effective humanitarian response in the short, medium and long term.

Deploping that in these four countries, certain parties have failed to ensure unfettered and sustained access for deliveries of vital food assistance as well as other forms of humanitarian aid, the Council reiterated its calls on all parties to allow the safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to all areas and to facilitate access for essential imports of food, fuel and medical supplies into each country, and their distribution throughout.

The Council further urged all parties to protect civilian infrastructure which is critical to the delivery of humanitarian aid in the affected countries.

The Council expressed its readiness to continue to support the Secretary-General's call to action to avert famine in conflict-affected countries and commits to engage constructively on his specific recommendations.