

Kabul terrorist attack ‘morally reprehensible and an outrage,’ underscores UN envoy

31 May 2017 – Condemning today’s terrorist attack in the Afghan capital, Kabul, the United Nations mission there called on all parties to the conflict to “strictly adhere” to their obligations under international humanitarian law and to take all feasible measures to protect civilians from harm.

“Beyond the [immeasurable human suffering](#) caused by today’s attack, the deliberate detonation of a massive truck bomb in a civilian area, particularly during the peaceful month of Ramadan, is morally reprehensible and an outrage,” Tadamichi Yamamoto, the head of the UN Assistance Mission, known as UNAMA, said in a news release.

Hundreds of people – mostly civilians – have been killed and more than 300 injured when a suicide attacker detonated a vehicle-borne explosive device in downtown Kabul’s Wazir Akhbar Khan area, which also houses a number of diplomatic missions, this morning (local time).

Casualty numbers are expected to rise.

In addition to the loss of lives and injuries, the explosion also resulted in considerable damage to the immediate and surrounding, with some embassies being seriously affected.

Further in the news release, Mr. Yamamoto, who is the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, underscored that today’s terrorist attack is a serious violation of humanitarian law.

“There can be no exceptions: the use of explosive weapons in civilian-populated areas must stop.”

UN Standing Police Capacity: 10 years of rapid assistance to peace operations

31 May 2017 – Ten years on, the United Nations Standing Police Capacity (SPC) continues to bolster peacekeeping operations by providing immediate start-up capability and strengthening police components with timely support, advice and assistance.

“The Standing Police Capacity [SPC] is a vital tool of UN peacekeeping across the entire spectrum from conflict prevention to peace sustainment,” said Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, calling current SPC staff members “to continue to invest in peace by deploying and developing the capacity of national police services each time you deploy.”

Established in 2007, the SPC filled a critical need in global peace operations by providing them with readily available police expertise. When deployed, the unit has made a positive contribution to missions’ police-related work and tasks, delivering a versatile range of products and services.

“The SPC was established to provide the United Nations with a small corps of senior police officers and managers prepared to undertake urgent mission assessments and to organize the start-up of police components of peace operations” said Walter Wolf, the first SPC Chief.

SPC has established police components in five peacekeeping operations, assisted 15 ongoing operations and supported five operations during reconfiguration, closures or transition.



A medical specialist within the Formed Police Unit serving in the UN Mission in Liberia provides free medical care to a local family. Photo: UNMIL/Christopher Herwig



In 2009, officers with the UN Police ([UNPOL](#)) and Chad’s Détachement intégré de sécurité (DIS) interview Sudanese refugees in their camp. Photo: UN Photo/Olivia Grey Pritchard



UNPOL’s Maria Silvia introduces safety to children of the Portuguese school in Timor-Leste. Photo: UNMIT/Martine Perret



First Lieutenant Sigit Jatmiko, of the Indonesian Formed Police Unit, interacts with children in Abu Shouk internally displaced persons camp during a morning patrol. Photo: UNAMID/Albert González Farran

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Haiti, Chad, Central African Republic, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan have been the major beneficiaries of the SPC, which has, in addition to integrating human rights into law enforcement and enhancing protection of civilians, worked in these countries to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, promote the role of women in peace and security and

build effective, efficient police institutions.

With 37 experts ready to rapidly deploy to police components of UN peacekeeping operations, special political missions, UN funds and programmes and other partners, SPC stands ready to assist.

SPC Chief Maria Appelblom, one of the most senior police women in the Organization, told UN News about some of the tasks performed by the UN's rapid response unit – from helping to start up missions to assisting with elections.

"The Standing Police Capacity was with the team to start up the mission in Mali in 2013," she said from Brindisi, Italy, where the unit is based. "And then one year later we started in Central African Republic. We were responsible in MINUSCA [UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic] for the planning of the visit of the Pope, but we were also working with UNDP and UN country teams."

"We have been involved in Sierra Leone," she continued. "We have assisted in establishing community policing and this is now a concept that is going to be replicated in several districts in Sierra Leone. Right now, we are assisting in preparation for their elections next year, with all of the security arrangements around that."

Do not stand silent while Syrian parties use starvation, fear as 'methods of war,' urges UN aid chief

30 May 2017 – Though there are significantly fewer reports of violence in some parts of Syria, the consequences of the conflict continue to devastate lives, the top United Nations relief official said today, calling for ending attacks and obstacles that prevent humanitarian workers from reaching the hundreds of thousands of civilians still trapped in the war-torn country.

"We must not lose sight of the fact that – all over Syria – millions of people, in locations inside and outside the four de-escalation areas, continue to suffer because they lack the most basic elements to sustain their lives," [said](#) Stephen O'Brien, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, briefing the Security Council.

"We must not stand silent while violence flares up elsewhere in the country and parties continue to use starvation, fear tactics and the denial of food, water, medical supplies, and other forms of aid as methods of war," he stated.

The war in Syria, now into its seventh year, has extracted the worst toll on the country's children. Tens of thousands have been killed and many have been forcibly detained, tortured, subjected to sexual violence, forcibly recruited and in some cases executed.

Just last week, 30 children and women were injured in an attack by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) on besieged neighbourhoods in Deir ez-Zor as they were lining up to collect water.

Furthermore, in recent weeks, more than a hundred civilians, many of them women and children, have fallen victim to escalating counter-ISIL airstrikes, particularly in the north-eastern governorates of Al-Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor.

According to estimates, nearly seven million children are living in poverty and some 1.75 million are out of schools with another 1.35 million at the risk of dropping out. Almost one in three schools have been damaged, destroyed, or otherwise made inaccessible.

"And even if the schools were intact, many would be unable to open, with almost one quarter of the country's teaching personnel no longer at their posts," said Mr. O'Brien.

The situation of those outside of the country, living as refugees, remains equally uncertain with many rendered "stateless".

In his remarks, Mr. O'Brien, also the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the head of the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) recalled the memorandum, agreed to during the recent meetings in Astana, between the three guarantors – Iran, Russia and Turkey – on the creation of four de-escalation areas and that stipulates that fighting must significantly decrease and unhindered humanitarian access be enabled to these four areas.

He also stressed the need to ensure that all obstacles, including bureaucratic ones, are put to an end, once and for all, and the UN and its humanitarian partners can sustainably reach those who are trapped behind the current front lines.

He also underscored that in many other parts of Syria, humanitarian and protection space continues to shrink, primarily due to increasingly strict limitations by local authorities, non-State armed groups, as well as terrorist organizations.

Speaking particularly on the north-eastern parts of the country, Mr. O'Brien called on all with influence over the parties involved to act now, "further delays or restrictions will only result in the continued suffering and the death of civilians."

"With some 100,000 people displaced due to fighting around Raqqa since April, access is needed now through every possible modality," he said, calling on the Security Council "to take all necessary steps to see that the will to place humanitarian aid delivery in its rightful position – outside of any military or political calculations and totally impartially – is restored."

UN atomic energy agency looks to boost ongoing contribution to sustainable development

30 May 2017 – Nuclear science and technology are essential in helping countries address the twin challenges of ensuring reliable energy supplies while curbing greenhouse gas emissions, the head of the United Nations atomic agency told some 1200 participants at the opening of an international conference today in Vienna.

The Conference on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) [Technical Cooperation Programme](#), which runs from 30 May to 1 June in the Austrian capital, will highlight the Agency's role in providing development assistance, discuss future partnership opportunities and examine the way forward on the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

After [welcoming](#) member States and other partners, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said: "Science and technology are critical for development. Transferring nuclear technology to developing countries is core IAEA business. Partnerships are an essential element of our work."

"The technical cooperation programme has improved the health and prosperity of millions of people," Mr. Amano said. "I have seen for myself in visits to developing countries all over the world that technical cooperation projects deliver huge benefits to individuals, families and entire communities."

Partnerships key to sharing nuclear science and technology

In 2016 alone, the IAEA technical cooperation programme delivered support to 146 countries and territories, including 37 least developed countries.

Highlighting two key partnerships which help the IAEA to deliver assistance, he said: "Together with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), the IAEA deploys nuclear techniques to help increase food production, manage pollution, reverse land degradation and restore soils. We work with the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) to help improve the availability of radiotherapy and nuclear medicine."

Nuclear technology contributing to development

Lifting people out of poverty to support sustainable development was also the central topic in the opening speech of the conference.

"Energy is indispensable for development," he told the audience, stressing that "huge increases in energy supply will be required in the coming decades to support economic development and lift some 2.6 billion people out of

energy poverty.”

He went on to say that many member States believe nuclear power can help them to address the twin challenges of ensuring reliable energy supplies, while curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

“Nuclear power is one of the lowest-carbon technologies available to generate electricity” Mr. Amano pointed out. “Nuclear power plants produce virtually no greenhouse gas emissions or air pollutants during their operation, and only very low emissions over their entire life cycle.”

The use of nuclear power can also help member States to alleviate concerns about volatile fuel prices and security of supply, he said.

He stated that some 30 countries are already using nuclear power and another 30 are considering building their first nuclear power plants, or have started doing so.

Climate action ‘a necessity and an opportunity,’ says UN chief, urging world to rally behind Paris accord

30 May 2017 – Highlighting the seriousness of the impact of climate change on the planet and its inhabitants, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today called for sustained action to meet the global challenge and to ensure a peaceful and sustainable future for all.

“The effects of climate change are dangerous and they are accelerating,” Secretary-General Guterres told a gathering of students, business leaders and academics at the New York University Stern School of Business.

“It is absolutely essential that the world implements the [Paris Agreement](#) [on climate change] – and that we fulfil that duty with increased ambition,” he underscored, recalling the ground breaking agreement that [entered into force](#) last November.

The Agreement calls on countries to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future, and to adapt to the increasing impacts of climate change.

It also aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change and calls for scaled up financial flows, a new technology framework and an enhanced capacity-building framework to support action by developing countries and the most vulnerable countries in line with their own national objectives.

Science 'is beyond doubt'

Underlining that science behind climate change "is beyond doubt," Mr. Guterres said:

"As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change put it: 'Human influence on the climate system is clear. The more we disrupt our climate, the more we risk severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts,'" he said, recalling that global temperatures have been rising, year after year, and that that last year was the hottest on record.

Furthermore, there are fears that the melt of sea ice and glaciers due to rising temperatures will have deep and far reaching impact: droughts and dry spells will last longer, while natural disasters like floods and hurricanes will be even more destructive.

Impacts of these catastrophic events, Mr. Guterres noted, would be felt in all corners of the world and in all sectors of the economy.

Informing of his intention to convene a dedicated climate summit in 2019 to reach the critical first review of implementation of the Paris Agreement, the UN chief called on all, including those who might hold divergent perspectives on climate change to engage with him on the way forward.

Green business is good business

He also pointed to the opportunities that climate action can provide, such as through the creation of jobs and increased economic growth. It is thus, not surprising, that many private corporations, including major oil and gas companies have adopted climate action.

"They know that green business is good business. It is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do," he highlighted.

Five-point action plan

Laying out a five-point action plan to mobilize the world for climate action, the UN chief underscored that he will intensify political engagement with countries to increase efforts to limit temperature rise to well below 2 degree-Celsius and as close as possible to 1.5 degree-Celsius, the first point.

He also said that he would engage more with Governments and major actors, including the coal, oil and gas industries, to accelerate the global transition to sustainable energy, and committed stronger support by the entire UN development system to Governments as they strive to meet climate commitments and achieve the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), especially at the country level.

"That is where true change will be achieved," he said.

The UN chief also said that he will work with UN Member States mobilize national and international resources for adaptation, resilience, and the

implementation of national climate action plans, and called for new and strengthened partnerships, including with the private sector and through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

Further in his remarks, the Secretary-General cautioned that failure to act on combatting climate change would in turn harm the countries themselves for their inaction.

“Those who fail to bet on the green economy will be living in a grey future [but] those who embrace green technologies will set the gold standard for economic leadership in the twenty-first century.”