

Prevent terrorists profiting from cross-border crime, urges UN Security Council

The United Nations Security-Council on Tuesday called on all countries as well as international organizations to do more to stop terrorists enriching themselves through cross-border organized crime.

In a statement read out by Joanna Wronecka – the Permanent Representative of Poland, which holds the Presidency this month – the Council urged UN Member States “to secure their borders against, investigate and prosecute terrorists and criminals working with them, including by strengthening national, regional and global systems to collect, analyse and exchange information.”

The Council also called on all Member States to use “all existing tools,” and the resources of the [UN Office on Drugs and Crime](#) (UNODC), the [International Civil Aviation Organization](#) (ICAO), [INTERPOL](#) and the [World Customs Organization](#) (WCO), to strengthen international cooperation.

But in adopting new counter terrorism measures, the Security Council reminded countries that they “must comply” with all their obligations under international law, including human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law.

“Respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are complementary and mutually reinforcing with effective counter-terrorism measures and are an essential part of a successful counter-terrorism effort,” stressed the 15-member Council.

Also in the statement, the Security Council called for better understanding of the links between terrorists and criminal groups which operate across borders, urging UNODC and the Counterterrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) – which was formed to coordinate the UN’s overall effort – to monitor ties closely.

New Ebola outbreak confirmed in DR Congo: UN health agency scales up response

Two new cases of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) have been confirmed in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by Government scientists there, prompting the UN health agency to immediately scale up its response.

The new Ebola cases were identified on Tuesday in a remote area of the country's north-west, near the town of Bikoro, near the Congo River.

In a [statement](#), the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), said the two positive samples, out of five tested overall, had come from the Iponge health facility, located close to Bikoro, and additional specimens were being collected for further testing.

[“Our top priority is to get to Bikoro](#) to work alongside the Government and partners to reduce the loss of life and suffering related to this new Ebola virus disease outbreak,” Peter Salama, the Deputy Director-General for Emergency Preparedness and Response at WHO, said in Tuesday news release.

“Working with partners and responding early and in a coordinated way will be vital to containing this deadly disease,” he added.

WHO is employing the model it [successfully deployed following a similar Ebola outbreak last year](#), which included a timely alert by local authorities of suspected cases, prompt testing, immediate notification of results, and a fast response by local and national authorities together with international partners.

Response thus far

A multidisciplinary team of experts from WHO, Médecins Sans Frontières and the Government has already been deployed to Bikoro to coordinate and strengthen the response.

Matshidiso Moeti, the Regional Director for Africa at WHO, underlined the importance of strong coordination from the outset, saying that a comprehensive response was vital.

“We will work closely with health authorities and partners to support the national response,” he said.

We will work closely with health authorities and partners to support the national response – *Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa*

WHO has also assigned dedicated staff and resources across the agency to tackling the outbreak, and released some \$1 million from its emergency contingency fund to support efforts over the next three months, and stop the disease spreading.

The situation on the ground in Bikoro, situated along Lake Tumba in Equateur Province is particularly challenging, given its distance from the capital and the limited availability of health services. Facilities in the town have had

to rely on international organizations for fresh medical supplies.

Ninth outbreak in the DRC since 1976

This is the ninth outbreak, since the discovery of the Ebola virus in the country in 1976.

The virus is endemic to DRC, and causes an acute, serious illness which is often fatal if untreated. The virus is transmitted to human through contact with wild animals and can then be passed from person to person. Ebola is fatal in about 50 per cent of cases.

An outbreak in West Africa which began in 2014 left more than 11,000 dead across six countries, and was not declared officially over by WHO until the beginning of 2016.

[First symptoms](#) generally include the sudden onset of fever, fatigue, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding.

In Cuba, UN chief stresses Latin America's courageous 'development vision'

The United Nations chief on Tuesday highlighted the central role he hopes Latin America and the Caribbean region will play in ensuring "fair globalization" that leaves no one behind.

Addressing a session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which opened in Cuba on Monday, [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said the forum "is central to supporting the countries of the region in the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)."

The meeting brings together representatives from ECLAC's 46 member States and 13 associate members to debate the main challenges for implementing the 2030 Agenda in the region.

Mr. Guterres noted that globalization has brought many benefits, but it has left too many behind.

Women are still far less likely to participate in the labour market – and the gender pay gap remains a global concern. Youth unemployment is alarmingly high in many countries across the world, he said.

The UN chief commended ECLAC for having been “a progressive and authoritative champion” for social justice in the global economy and “a pioneer” in integrating the economic, social and environmental development.

ECLAC has also “consistently and courageously put forward a development vision with equality as a driver of growth” he said, and focused on what he called the “deeper meaning” of equality: looking beyond income as a measure of well-being and the main litmus test for development cooperation.



ECLAC

UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the wreath-laying ceremony at the Jose Marti memorial.

“Seventy years after its founding, ECLAC continues to be where it has always been – on the frontlines pushing for a fair globalization by producing evidence-based policies, technical analysis and knowledge to help forge structural progressive economic transformation,” Mr. Guterres said.

A study, entitled [The Inefficiency of Inequality](#), was unveiled at the session, which emphasizes that pro-equality policies make positive contributions to social well-being and help create a fairer economic system, conducive to better learning and concern for the environment.

In it, ECLAC insists on the need to move toward a new development pattern that allows for achieving a virtuous circle between growth, equality and sustainability for present and future generations.



ECLAC

UN chief António Guterres getting a tour of Old Havana during a visit to Cuba in May 2018.

While in the Cuban capital, Havana, the Secretary-General toured the historic centre of Old Havana, and met the newly-appointed Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel as well as his predecessor, former President Raúl Castro, who stepped down last month.

Upon arrival at Havana airport on Monday, Mr. Guterres said he had last visited Cuba almost 20 years ago, when he was Prime Minister of Portugal to attend an Ibero-American summit.

Smugglers see thousands of migrants in Yemen as 'a commodity', UN agency warns

With an estimated 7,000 migrants entering Yemen each month, most of them seeking to reach Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, the United Nations migration agency on Tuesday called for greater efforts to protect them from smugglers and other criminals.

"I met [teenagers in utter distress](#) from what they had experienced already in their young lives," said Mohammed Abdiker, Director of Operations and Emergencies at the [International Organization for Migration](#) (IOM), following

a visit to Yemen this past week.

“They are just [a commodity to smugglers](#),” he added, “something to make quick and easy money from and, if they die, the smugglers do not care as there are thousands of other people willing to pay for their services and risk their lives to simply build their parents a house, put their brother through school, or for any opportunity at all.”

The total number of migrants currently in Yemen is unknown, but nearly 100,000 arrived in 2017.

Migrants often leave their homes on foot and walk through Djibouti. From there, they take boats across the Gulf of Aden to the Aden, Lahj, Shabwah, and Hadramout Governorates in Yemen and then attempt to head north to the border with Saudi Arabia.

Yemen is experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world; it is obviously not a safe route for migrants – UN migration agency

Some take irregular work in Yemen to make money to fund the rest of their journey while others get caught up in the on-going conflict between the Saudi-led coalition and Houthi rebels, sustaining injuries – or dying in crossfire.

Some also end up in detention centres.

At various stages of their journey, these migrants face the risk of being exploited by ruthless smugglers and other criminals, including enduring physical and sexual abuse; torture for ransom; arbitrary detention for long periods of time; or grueling forced labour, without wages.

Last August, scores of Ethiopian and Somali teenagers dreaming of a better life were forced into the sea by smugglers off the coast of Yemen and drowned.

Mr. Abdiker believes without prosecuting those criminals, any humanitarian assistance would be just “a Band Aid.”

In 2017, IOM helped some 2,900 migrants and refugees return home from Yemen: 73 per cent of them were Somalis, 25 per cent Ethiopians, and 2 per cent other nationalities.

This year so far, IOM has helped 197 Ethiopians – together with 939 Somali migrants and refugees – return home voluntarily.

“Yemen is experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world; it is obviously not a safe route for migrants, nor is it safe for Yemenis themselves in many areas,” said Mr. Abdiker.

He said that more and more Yemenis who have fled, are returning from Saudi Arabia due to tightening regulations there.

Both migrants coming to Yemen, and Yemenis returning home, are in desperate need of greater support from the international community, and “neither group should feel forced to transit through or return to a conflict zone,” he added.

Dangers persist for nearly a million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh: WHO

Renewed efforts are underway in Bangladesh to protect nearly one million Myanmar refugees from cholera, amid a warning from the UN health agency on Tuesday that “we’re not out of the woods yet”.

Dr. Richard Brennan, Director of Emergency Operations at the [World Health Organization](#), (WHO), issued the warning in Geneva, citing risks from other diseases, natural hazards and a serious funding shortage. “We’re not out of the woods yet,” he told journalists, adding that the majority of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh live in “overcrowded...unsanitary camps”.

“We are looking down the barrel of the monsoon season with the inherent risk of flooding, landslides, as well as the cyclone season,” he added.

The refugee crisis started at the end of August last year when more than 670,000 people fled a military campaign in Myanmar’s Rakhine State over the ensuing months, seeking shelter in neighbouring Bangladesh.

There are now nearly 900,000 displaced individuals living in a dozen camps in and around the border town of Cox’s Bazar, and WHO’s Dr. Brennan said it was a “major achievement” that mortality rates had remained low.

The cholera vaccination campaign is a vital follow-up to an earlier inoculation drive in October and November last year.

The disease causes acute watery diarrhoea which can be fatal if left untreated.

Despite the threat, however, cholera is “only one health concern among a number of priorities”, the WHO official said, stressing the need to focus on water and sanitation facilities as the most effective guarantee against other water-borne diseases.

“We are looking down the barrel of the monsoon season with the inherent risk of flooding, landslides, as well as the cyclone season,” *Dr. Richard Brennan (WHO)*

The senior WHO medic also cited serious funding shortages which risked undermining efforts to protect already vulnerable Rohingya communities who had fled Myanmar with nothing, and suffered a litany of reported human rights abuses.

Some \$950 million is required to help the refugees, Dr. Brennan said, but only around 16 per cent of this amount has been provided.

Resources are even more scarce when it comes to healthcare, with only 6.3 per cent of funding needs met.

As refugees continue to arrive in Bangladesh from Myanmar, the WHO official repeated the core UN demand that any future return of mainly-Muslim Rohingya communities would have to be “safe, voluntary and dignified”.

Concerns remain about the poor state of health services in Myanmar’s Rakhine State where the UN health agency has limited access providing disease surveillance, training, mobile clinics and medical supplies.