

UN welcomes release of 26 Qatari abductees in Iraq

22 April 2017 – The United Nations has welcomed the release and return to their country of 26 Qatari nationals abducted in Muthanna governorate, Iraq, in December 2015.

We understand that the Qatari nationals were released unharmed. We are grateful to the Iraqi authorities and to all who contributed to the safe release of the abductees, said a [statement](#) issued yesterday evening by UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric.

According to media reports, the 26 Qatars were kidnapped from a desert camp in Iraq's southern Muthanna province in mid-December 2015.

Mother Earth Day: Environmental and climate literacy vital for building cleaner, greener planet, says UN

22 April 2017 – Environmental and climate literacy is the engine not only for creating green voters and advancing environmental and climate laws and policies but also for accelerating green technologies and jobs, the United Nations is emphasizing on Mother Earth Day.

International [Mother Earth Day](#), marked annually on 22 April, is celebrated to remind everyone that the Earth and its ecosystems provide us with life and sustenance.

It also recognizes a collective responsibility, as called for in the landmark 1992 [Rio Declaration](#) on Environment and Development, to promote harmony with nature and the Earth to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations of humanity.

The International Day provides an opportunity to raise public awareness around the world to the challenges regarding the well-being of the planet and all the life it supports, says the UN.

The theme for 2017 is 'Environmental and Climate Literacy.' Education is the foundation for progress. A global citizenry must be built that is fluent in the concepts of climate change and aware of its unprecedented threat to our planet. Everyone must be empowered with the knowledge to inspire action in defense of environmental protection, the world body stresses.

Recognizing that Mother Earth is a common expression for the planet Earth in a number of countries and regions, which reflects the interdependence that exists among human beings, other living species and the planet we all inhabit, and noting that Earth Day is observed each year in many countries, the UN General Assembly, through a resolution adopted in 2009, [decided to designate](#) 22 April as International Mother Earth Day.

It invites all Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, international, regional and subregional organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations and relevant stakeholders to observe and raise awareness of International Mother Earth Day, as appropriate.

Addressing ‘fragility’ of societies key to preventing conflicts, stresses UN chief

21 April 2017 – Noting that a key trigger common to nearly all conflicts is the element of fragility – fragility of States, of institutions, or of societies – United Nations Secretary General António Guterres has called for increasing investments in preventative measures that address the problem of fragility before it turns into conflict.

“This means strengthening States, strengthening institutions, strengthening civil societies [and] combining the peace and security approach with the inclusive and sustainable development approach and with human rights,” explained Mr. Guterres, speaking at a World Bank-European Union event in Washington DC, where the Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are holding their annual Spring Meetings.

In his remarks at the panel discussion on , the UN chief noted that the traditional forms of development aid are not enough and said that new approaches that create the conditions for investments in building resilience of communities and addressing fragility is needed.

He also praised the World Bank for the innovations it has already in place in countries like Jordan and Lebanon, to help them cope with the refugee crisis in the region.

“In my opinion, this is essential and, [given the scale of needs] should also include the private sector,” he said, adding that it is essential to find ways to divert the massive use of resources in managing crises to what is necessary to do to prevent them and to build the capacity of societies to solve their own problems.

Prior to attending the panel discussion, Secretary-General Guterres met with

top United States officials, including President Donald Trump and National Security Advisor General H.R. McMaster at the White House.

According to the UN chief's spokesperson, Mr. Guterres and Mr. Trump had constructive discussion on cooperation between the US and the UN and agreed to meet again in the near future.

UN food relief agency air-lifts food, medical supplies to 31,000 famine-stricken Somalis

21 April 2017 – As the drought intensifies in south and north-eastern Somalia, the United Nations emergency food relief agency today airlifted to Mogadishu enough high-energy biscuits to assist 31,000 people for three days.

The shipment, made on a Boeing 747 donated by the UPS Foundation from Dubai, also included medical assistance on behalf of the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

"A [rapid response](#) is crucial to support drought-affected families across Somalia," said WFP Representative and Director of Gulf Office Abdallah Alwardat. "This airlift is a great example of WFP and its partners coming together to reach those furthest behind with life-saving assistance."

The food is meant for the most vulnerable people – particularly children – who are displaced from their homes without access to food or cooking facilities, WFP said.

According to UN estimates, half of Somalia's population, including 330,000 acutely malnourished children, is in need of urgent assistance.

The high-energy biscuits are rich in minerals and vitamins and do not require preparation, the UN agency said. WFP will provide other types of life-saving food assistance for the following days.

UN envoy welcomes restored Internet service in Cameroon's English-speaking

regions

21 April 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa was relieved to learn that Cameroon President Paul Biya instructed that full internet services be restored in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon.

“I welcome this measure, which is in line with those recently announced by the Government to address the demands of English-Speaking teachers and lawyers,” said François Louncény Fall, who also heads the UN Regional Office for Central Africa ([UNOCA](#)), in a [press statement](#).

He noted that the decision, which took effect from 20 April, “will go a long way to help reduce tension and to create conditions conducive for the resolution of the crisis in the two regions.”

Mr. Fall said that he “counts on the Government of Cameroon to continue to promote appeasement and dialogue, and to take all other appropriate measures aimed at a speedy and lasting resolution of the crisis in order to strengthen unity, stability and prosperity in Cameroon.”

The Special Representative concluded by taking the opportunity “to express the wish that the Cameroonian people will maintain their spirit of patriotism and show restraint during this trying period, including by avoiding the use of the Internet to incite hatred or violence.”