

In Turkey, UN chief Guterres spotlights collective responsibility for refugee protection

10 February 2017 – Underscoring the enormity of the plight of refugees, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today appealed for effective burden-sharing in supporting those who have been forced to flee their homes, as well as to those providing them refuge.

"This is a moment to launch an appeal when we see so many borders being closed and when we see so many escaping their responsibilities [...] for effective burden-sharing and to make sure that the integrity of the international refugee protection regime is maintained," Mr. Guterres said at a press encounter in Istanbul alongside Binali Yildirim, the Turkish Prime Minister.

"One area is [supporting] the countries of first asylum, support to the host communities, support to projects that can help [...] both refugee populations and the host communities," he explained.

"The second area of burden-sharing is the resettlement of refugees [...] because the protection of refugees is not only the responsibility of neighbouring States of a crisis; it is a collective responsibility of the international community," added Mr. Guterres.

The UN chief, on his first official visit to the region, also thanked the Turkish Government and people for their large humanitarian support to Syrian people as well as to those from other parts of the world.

In particular, he expressed his appreciation for the role of Turkey in convening and orienting the Astana conference on Syria and that it would lead to the Geneva talks in which the political solution dimension will be at the centre of the discussions.

"The role that Turkey has played has been, in our opinion, extremely positive and we are very grateful and very appreciative for that fact," he said.

Mr. Guterres also thanked Turkey for its role in convening of the Astana Conference and said: "It is now very important to have in Geneva discussions that go to the substance of the issues and allow for a political solution to start [being] built."

Recalling the country's contributions to the international multilateral system, he noted that Turkey is one of the guarantor powers in the UN-supported Conference for Cyprus for the unity of Cyprus, and expressed hope that the efforts of the two communities that go on meeting at the highest level and the efforts of the guarantor powers will allow for a breakthrough

in the near future.

A breakthrough able to fully respect the concerns of the Turkish Cypriot community about its security but, at the same time, compatible with the concerns of the Greek Cypriot community, added the Secretary-General, pledging the support of the UN to the two communities and the guarantor powers to support the search for a solution that is acceptable for all.

The UN chief also noted the importance of political solutions in which people feel duly represented at the political level for successfully fighting terrorism.

Secretary-General Guterres also said there is no plan B but for the two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and underscored: It is absolutely essential to avoid unilateral actions that undermine the possibility of that two-state solution.

He also noted that his discussions in Istanbul included the situation in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan as well as the on importance of rule of law and protection of human rights.

[Yemen: As food crisis worsens, UN agencies call for urgent assistance to avert catastrophe](#)

10 February 2017 – The number of food insecure people in Yemen has risen by three million in seven months, with an estimated 17.1 million people more than two-thirds of the entire population of 27.4 million now struggling to feed themselves, according to a joint assessment by three United Nations agencies.

The speed at which the situation is deteriorating and the huge jump in food insecure people is extremely worrying, said the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Representative in Yemen, Salah Hajj Hassan, in a news release.

Bearing in mind that agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the majority of the population, FAO is urgently calling for funds to scale up its agricultural livelihoods support to farmers, herders and fishing communities to improve their access to food in 2017 and prevent the dire food and livelihood security situation from deteriorating further, he added.

Of the 17.1 million food-insecure people, about 7.3 million are considered to be in need of emergency food assistance, according to the preliminary results

of the Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment, which attributed the rapid deterioration of the conditions to the ongoing conflict.

The UN and humanitarian partners has recently launched an international appeal for \$2.1 billion to provide life-saving assistance to 12 million people in Yemen in 2017 – the largest-ever humanitarian response plan for the war-torn country.

The joint assessment was conducted by FAO, the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in cooperation with the authorities in Yemen. It is the first national, household-level survey conducted in the country since the escalation of the conflict in mid-March 2015.

Rates of acute malnutrition were found to have passed the critical threshold in four governorates, while agricultural production is falling across the country.

Even if they survive, these children risk not fulfilling their developmental potentials

“We are witnessing some of the highest numbers of malnutrition amongst children in Yemen in recent times,” said UNICEF’s Country Representative, Meritxell Relano.

She warned that children who are severely and acutely malnourished are 11 times more at risk of death as compared to their healthy peers, if not treated on time.

“Even if they survive, these children risk not fulfilling their developmental potentials, posing a serious threat to an entire generation in Yemen and keeping the country mired in the vicious cycle of poverty and under development,” she said.

Stephen Anderson, WFP Country Director, also sounded the alarm. “The current level of hunger in Yemen is unprecedented, which is translating into severe hardship and negative humanitarian consequences for millions of Yemenis, particularly affecting vulnerable groups.”

“Tragically, we see more and more families skipping meals or going to bed hungry, while children and mothers are slipping away with little to sustain themselves,” he said.

WFP is urgently calling for support to provide food for the seven million people who are severely food insecure and may not survive this situation for much longer, he added.



Source: OCHA 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Yemen

Meanwhile, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

reported that fighting in the coastal districts of Al Mokha and Dhubab in the western governorate of Taizz is spreading to the inland districts of Al Wazi'iyah and Mawza.

A result is that more than 34,000 people have fled their homes, UNHCR spokesperson William Spindler told reporters in Geneva.

The UN refugee agency has mobilized assessment teams across displacement sites in Hudaydah, Ibb and the district of Maqbanah in Taizz, where recently displaced people are being hosted and began deliveries of emergency assistance, including basic relief items and emergency shelter.

As of 1 February 2017, UNHCR had received only \$738,303 of the \$99.6 million needed for the refugee agency's operational response in Yemen this year.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said that extremely worrying reports have emerged about the impact on civilians of the fighting over the past two weeks, in the southwestern port of Al Mokha in Taizz Governorate. Credible reports indicate that Houthi-affiliated snipers shot at families attempting to flee their homes in Houthi-controlled areas suggesting the use of civilians as human shields.

Civilians were trapped and targeted during the Al Mokha fighting. There are real fears that the situation will repeat itself in the port of Al Hudaidah, to the north of Al Mokha, where air strikes are already intensifying, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a news release.

[UN calls for 50 per cent increase in funding for mine action in 2017](#)

9 February 2017 – The United Nations has launched a \$511 million international appeal for humanitarian mine action in conflict and post-conflict settings for 2017, a 50 per cent increase from last year's \$347 million consolidated appeal.

Across the world, the conflicts tearing countries, communities and lives apart cause a tragic increase in the number of casualties due to landmines and other explosive hazards, said the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Agnès Marcaillou, in a press release issued earlier this week.

There is an absolute necessity for a humanitarian mine action response. The knowledge and willingness to help are there it is adequate funding that is missing, added Ms. Marcaillou, who also chairs the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action.

According to the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2017, an online resource for information on such projects, there is a sharp increase in the need for humanitarian mine action, including landmine clearance, risk education and victim assistance.

The Portfolio covers over 200 projects and presents a consolidated picture of the needs and strategies of 22 countries and territories contaminated with landmines and other explosive hazards such as unexploded cluster munitions, rockets and improvised explosive devices across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and South America.

Needs are the greatest in active conflict zones, with Afghanistan requiring \$124 million; Iraq \$75 million; Syria \$52 million; and Yemen \$17 million. In addition, countries which have extensive residual contamination also need substantial support, with Cambodia requiring \$23 million and the Lao People's Democratic Republic \$26 million, according to UNMAS.

[UN and international partners express support for working with new Somali president](#)

9 February 2017 – The United Nations and its international partners in Somalia today said that they were eager to partner with President Mohamed Abdullahi 'Farmajo', his new Government and the people of Somalia to avert another famine in the country and to assist with improving security for all Somalis.

The comments were made in a congratulatory statement on behalf of the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ethiopia, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

“The international partners urge all political forces in Somalia to work together in support of President Farmajo and the incoming government,” the statement read.

Distributed by the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the statement also noted the need for reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of a number of local conflicts, as well as the resumption of the constitutional review process.

The Somali Parliament selected the new president yesterday in two rounds of vote. A one-person, one-vote election is expected in 2020.

The international community welcomed the election results and commended

outgoing Federal President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed and his Government for their many achievements over the past four years.

They also thanked him for a gracious concession speech that facilitated a peaceful and orderly transfer of power in decades.

Yesterday's orderly and peaceful transfer of power is a major achievement for Somalia and should boost confidence in the country's future both at home and abroad, said Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia and head of UNSOM.

He added Hambalyo Somalia in Somali, which translates to Congratulations Somalia.

Fighting reaches 'worrying proportions' in South Sudan's north-east – UN mission

9 February 2017 – The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) today voiced concern about an escalation in the fighting between Government and opposition forces in the west bank of the River Nile in the African country's north.

Fighting has reached what the head of UNMISS, David Shearer, described as worrying proportions, according to a statement issued by the Office of Spokesperson for the UN peacekeeping operation.

What began with an exchange of fire between SPLA [the Sudan People's Liberation Army] and Aguelek opposition forces, has expanded geographically, the statement said, noting that military resupplies have since been observed arriving in the area.

Military operations on the west bank of the Nile River are taking place in an area where people, predominantly from the Shilluk ethnic group live, forcing people out of their homes. The town of Wau Shilluk is now reported to be deserted. Humanitarian workers have been evacuated and aid is not being provided, the statement added.

On Wednesday, UNMISS received reports of hostilities between the two sides in Owachi and Tonga, Panyinkang County.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shearer today returned to the South Sudanese capital, Juba, from a two-day field visit to Bentiu and Leer, two towns which have been among the most affected by the country's conflict, according to a separate statement issued today by the spokesperson's office.

In Bentiu, Mr. Shearer met state government officials, as well as internally displaced people who are living in the largest protection of civilians site in the country. In Leer, he visited the mission's temporary operating base to assess UNMISS' success in mounting robust patrols which push the mission's presence deep into the field.

He held discussions with local officials and also took the opportunity to travel to an opposition-controlled area to meet with pro-Machar representatives so he could hear all shades of opinion on how to facilitate humanitarian assistance and advance the peace process, the statement said.

The local opposition told Mr. Shearer that they support the current localized cessation of hostilities and remain in a defensive position which they hope will encourage the return of humanitarian agencies to Leer.

Both the local authorities and the opposition praised the UN for its efforts to facilitate communications between them. Mr. Shearer heard that they both recognize that an inclusive national dialogue will assist the peace process, the statement added.

South Sudan has faced ongoing challenges since a political face-off between President Salva Kiir and his then former Vice-President Riek Machar erupted into full blown conflict between forces loyal to each in December 2013. The crisis has produced one of the world's worst displacement situations with immense suffering for civilians.

Despite the August 2015 peace agreement that formally ended the war, conflict and instability have also spread to previously unaffected areas.