

## **Iraq: 15,000 children flee west Mosul over past week as battle intensifies by the day, says UNICEF**

3 March 2017 – Some 15,000 children have over the previous week fled the western section of Iraq's Mosul city where fighting between the Government forces and terrorists is intensifying by the day, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has reported.

"UNICEF is responding to the immediate needs at the Hamam Al Alil camp, 20km from Mosul, where aid is provided to children upon their arrival," UNICEF Regional Emergency Advisor Bastien Vigneau said over the phone from Iraq during the regular press briefing held in the UN Office at Geneva.

He noted that the children were very scared of the sound of the bombs, which was one of the main reasons their parents had decided to flee. They fled with very little luggage and in most cases with a bare minimum of clothes. The children and their families arrived mostly by buses organized by the military.

The main priorities, other than the first emergency response, included health, to ensure that children were immunized, primarily against measles and polio, said Mr. Vigneau.

Matthew Sarmash, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said that a significant increase in displacement had been noticed in recent days and the Hamam Al Alil camp was close to reach its maximum capacity. At the moment, 150,000 places were occupied. He said construction under way to accommodate up to 250,000 people there.

UNICEF's Vigneau said that more than 100,000 children have been displaced from Mosul since the military operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) began on 17 October 2016.

He said that 874 unaccompanied or separated children have been identified since mid-October, with half of them reunified with their families or taken care of by extended families, and the others being provided dedicated assistance until they reunify with families.

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## **'Political leadership needs to support**

## [its own people,' urges UN mission chief in South Sudan](#)



A WFP helicopter arrives Thonyor, Leer County, South Sudan, with supplies of nutrition items and vegetable oil, as part of an inter-agency rapid response mission to provide assistance to people threatened by famine. Photo: WFP/George Fominyen

3 March 2017 – The top United Nations official in South Sudan is calling on the country's political leadership to support its own people in the wake of a famine affecting some 100,000 people, and calling for local authorities to provide humanitarian access to those most in need.

David Shearer, the recently arrived UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the country, today voiced alarm "at how little a response to the plight of these people has been heard from their leaders."

On 20 February, famine was declared in parts of Unity state. Since then, humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations evacuated the heart of the afflicted-area, a town called Mayendit, due to the threat of resumed fighting between the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) and the SPLA in Opposition.

"Those affected by the humanitarian crisis are still citizens of this young country, and they deserve protection," Mr. Shearer said in reference to the women and children most affected by the crisis. "But the constant fighting shows they are getting none. Instead, they are bearing the brunt."

Mr. Shearer, who is also the new head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), reiterated the UN's call for a complete cessation of hostilities between all those involved.

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## [Yemen: UN migration agency reports displacement spike in Taiz Governorate](#)

3 March 2017 – With nearly 274,000 people displaced, Yemen's Taiz is now among the crisis-torn country's top five hosting governorates for such populations, a United Nations report has found.

For nearly 20 months, Taiz has been the centre of intense ground clashes, military confrontations and aerial strikes between warring parties in Yemen.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has initiated a system to track displacement from the major port city of Al Mokha, as accurate data is essential to plan an effective, efficient and impactful humanitarian response.

So far, at least 25,000 individuals have been reported as displaced from Al Mokha, according to IOM.

“This much-needed data has enabled the entire humanitarian community in Yemen to increase the amount and accuracy of vital support and protection it provides to affected populations,” said IOM Yemen Chief of Mission Laurent de Boeck in a press release.

Since the start of the conflict in March 2015, IOM has tracked up to 426,672 internally displaced persons and 78,258 returnees in the governorate of Taiz.

Earlier this week, Stephen O’Brien, the UN Emergency Coordinator, who is currently undertaking a mission in Yemen said that in an around Ibb and Taiz, he had met with families to hear their horrific stories of displacement.

“Running from violence, bombings and shelling, these people from Taiz and Mocha had left with nothing. It is now ordinary Yemenis, host communities and humanitarian actors providing lifesaving assistance and protection,” he said in a news release, stressing that with so many people malnourished and sick, aid is not enough.

“One thing is clear, though: there are no military solutions to this terrible conflict. Only sustainable peace can bring about the solutions, hope and future of Yemenis. I call on all parties to the conflict to come together and make peace. That is the best humanitarian assistance,” he said.

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## [UN expert urges greater protection of people with albinism from witch doctors](#)

3 March 2017 – With hundreds of attacks in the last six years on people with albinism, a United Nations independent expert is calling for additional oversight of traditional healers who use body parts in witchcraft rituals and so-called medicines.

Presenting a report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by people with albinism, Ikponwosa Ero, said the demand for the body parts of people with albinism for the purposes of witchcraft rituals, or in traditional medicine known as *muti* or *juju*, has led to the existence of a clandestine market for body parts

operating at regional, national and international levels.

The issue is further complicated by the lack of effective oversight over the practice of traditional healers, the secrecy that often surrounds witchcraft rituals and the absence of clear national policies on the issue, Ms. Ero said.

She called for a twin-track approach that would urgently address the trafficking of body parts from people with albinism, while also demystifying the misbeliefs about albinism.

At least 600 attacks and violations of rights of people with albinism have been reported in 27 countries, the majority in the past six years, according to information from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Ms. Ero is the first Independent Expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council to monitor, report and advise on the situation of those worldwide who have albinism.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

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## [UN agencies supporting Kenyans in drought-hit areas](#)

3 March 2017 – Some 2.7 million people in parts of Kenya are in urgent need of water and sanitation following the onset of a severe drought, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) today announced, noting the UN's support for what the Government is calling a national disaster.

UNICEF is working in Kenya to support the Government's efforts, alongside the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and other partners, according to a press release.

Our efforts should not only alleviate the current suffering brought about by this emergency, but should also aim to build the resilience of families and the capacity of local governments to deal with future droughts and other calamities, the Representative of UNICEF in Kenya, Werner Schultink said.

In addition to the need for water and sanitation, some 1.1 million children are food insecure, the UN agency said.

UN efforts of support include dispatching 12,000 cartons of ready to use therapeutic foods for the severely-malnourished children, for example.

The President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, recently declared the drought a national disaster and has called for international support.