

DR Congo: UN mission strongly condemns persistent violence in Kasai Provinces

11 February 2017 – The United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo today expressed its concern about the persistent conflict in the Kasai provinces where violent atrocities are being committed by the Kamuina Nsapu militia.

The militia is recruiting and using child soldiers while targeting symbols and institutions of State authority, according to a news release issued by the UN Stabilisation Mission in the African country (MONUSCO), which also cited the disproportionate use of force by Government security forces known as FARDC in their response to the situation.

Particularly, since 9 February 2017, there have been ongoing clashes between Kamuina Nsapu militia and Congolese security forces within the area of Tshimbulu (160 Kilometers South East of Kananga) with unconfirmed reports of 30 to 50 deaths resulting from these clashes.

The news release stated that the Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of MONUSCO, Maman S. Sidikou, strongly condemned the actions of the militia, and expressed his concern about repeated reports of the disproportionate use of force by the FARDC.

Mr. Sidikou expressed regret about the deaths and injuries suffered in these clashes and called upon the Congolese security forces to act in line with acceptable standards of national and international laws in their response to the situation. He offered the Mission's support to a credible investigation of this regrettable situation.

MONUSCO has deployed one of its mobile monitoring response team in the area covering Tshikapa, Dibaya, Bunkode, Tshimbulu and Luiza to possibly prevent, investigate and document human rights violations in line with its mandate.

MONUSCO redeployed most of its resources to the country's east in 2014. Given the improved security situation at the time, there was also a drastic reduction of military and civilian personnel affecting the Mission's presence in Kananga in central Kasai. However, since December 2016, MONUSCO has deployed a military company of soldiers in Kananga with the task of protecting the Mission's personnel and assets as well as protecting civilians.

In Turkey, UN chief Guterres discusses Syria, Iraq, Cyprus with President

11 February 2017 – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today met with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Istanbul to discuss the situations in Syria, Iraq and Cyprus.

Mr. Guterres is on his first major trip since taking the helm of the UN on 1 January, which will also take him to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Egypt as well as Germany.

According to a readout issued by the office of Mr. Guterres' spokesperson, the Secretary-General and the President discussed the Syrian conflict and the ongoing diplomatic efforts to end it.

The Secretary-General said he was grateful that the Astana conference was held in support of the Geneva process, the readout said.

The talks between the Syrian government and the opposition brokered by Russia and Turkey were held in Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, on 23-24 January. The United Nations-facilitated intra-Syrian talks are scheduled to resume in Geneva on 20 February.

The Secretary-General underscored the need to fight terrorism and extremists in Syria but that effort would not be successful without a political solution supported by the people of country, the readout added.

On Iraq, the Secretary-General expressed the need that the on-going operations to liberate Mosul and other areas from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) not exacerbate sectarianism but instead be a symbol of national reconciliation.

The Secretary-General commended Turkey for its outstanding generosity in hosting millions of refugees from Syria and Iraq.

The two leaders also discussed the latest developments in the peace process in Cyprus, the readout said.

Security Council strongly condemns continued fighting in South Sudan

11 February 2017 – The Security Council has strongly condemned continued

fighting across South Sudan, particularly incidents in the country's Equatoria and Upper Nile regions, and called on all parties to cease hostilities immediately.

In a Press Statement issued overnight, the Council also condemned in the strongest terms all attacks directed against civilians and expressed serious concern, once again, about reports of killing of civilians, sexual and gender-based violence, destruction of homes, ethnic violence, and looting of livestock and property.

The Council urged the Transitional Government of National Unity to take measures to ensure that those responsible for the attacks are held accountable, and expressed deep alarm that more than 84,000 individuals have fled South Sudan since the beginning of January and that many continue to be displaced internally.

The Council stressed that there is no military solution to the conflict, and in this regard, welcomed the continued and collective commitment in the search for lasting peace, security and stability expressed by the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the UN during the joint consultative meeting on South Sudan that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on January 29, 2017.

The Council expressed deep concern that the Transitional Government of National Unity is hindering the ability of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to carry out its mandate to protect civilians and create conditions conducive to delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The Council reminded the transitional government of its commitment in the September 4, 2016, Joint Communique to permit freedom of movement of UNMISS.

The Council reiterated that targeting civilians may constitute war crimes and those involved could be subject to sanctions under resolution 2206 (2015).

INTERVIEW: 'It's time to work with young people, not just for young people,' – outgoing UN Youth Envoy

10 February 2017 – In his second term in office, former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, subsequently appointing Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi of Jordan as his first-ever Envoy on Youth – the youngest senior official in the history of the Organization.

"I think with my appointment, the United Nations sent an important message

that it's time to work with young people, and not just for young people," says Mr. Alhendawi, whose tenure as UN Envoy on Youth ends on 13 February 2017.

Mr. Alhendawi, who assumed his position on 17 January 2013, echoes the vision of former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who, in establishing the Youth Envoy's office, had identified working with and for young people as one of his top priorities.

The Envoy on Youth – who also acts as the adviser to and the representative of the Secretary-General on youth-related matters – was given the mandate to harmonize the UN system efforts on youth development, enhance the UN response to youth needs, advocate for addressing the development needs and rights of young people, as well as to bring the work of the United Nations with and for youth closer to them.

In an interview with UN News – recorded days before the end of his tenure as UN Envoy on Youth – Mr. Alhendawi says, "We cannot really achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or bring peace and prosperity to our world without engaging young people."

We believe young people are an opportunity, and they are an asset for development, peace and prosperity to their countries

"Whether we are looking at development issues, peace and security, tackling Climate Change, on all these fronts we need to engage young people because they are capable, ready and very much able to do the heavy-lifting in implementing the SDGs," adds the UN Envoy on Youth.

The following is the full transcript of the interview:

UN News: You've been Youth Envoy since 2013. You were the first-ever UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. Looking back at the last four years, how do you evaluate your work with the largest generation of youth?

Ahmad Alhendawi: I think, with my appointment, the United Nations sent an important message that it's time to work with young people, and not just for young people. When I was appointed as Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth I was only 27 years old. And at that time I was probably the youngest in the history of the UN to serve in a senior position at that age, and many people were skeptical about whether that was a good or bad move – some may have thought I was too young to lead or to take care of this important portfolio. But I think what we found out, is that the power of young people – and empowering them in leadership positions – will always pay off. And the UN sends that message to all member states around the world, that it's time to work with young people, by bringing young people in, and allowing them to craft decisions, and to also support their implementation. Looking back, I'm very proud of all the accomplishments we have made, particularly in engaging in drafting the SDGs and convening this amazing [recently concluded] Youth Forum at the United Nations for all member states and youth to come and debate development issues. Many around the world still think of youth as a

problem; as a liability, and we don't share that view. We believe young people are an opportunity, and they are an asset for development, peace and prosperity to their countries. I think we are seeing that shift in paradigm where we see important normative gains happening within the human rights field, or issues related to employment, and some significant initiatives supporting youth on different fronts.

So my message to young people is: believe in our shared destiny, because this planet is at risk, and the challenges we are facing today cannot be tackled anymore within the border of one country, no matter what that country is

What's important to remember here is that some of these gains didn't always translate to improvements in young people's lives at the national level. We still have many challenges facing young people. Youth unemployment is still high – some 74 million young persons are still unemployed. Many young people around the world are challenged by what we see today from the increase of hate speech, absence of peace and security, and young people are still struggling to access opportunities. There are some places where there's systematic discrimination against young people. I'm very proud of the important progress we have made, but at the same time I'm very mindful that much more needs to be done, and this largest generation of young people cannot be left behind. I keep reminding everyone that nobody should be allowed to gamble with their future of this generation of young people, and the future generations as well. That's why the world has to unite for youth, and that's the model we adopted in our work from Day One: that we have to unite for youth and to bring the world together. We have to remember that what's at stake today is the future of this generation of young people, and the future of our planet and the future generations.

UN News: So what's your message to the youth around the world?

Ahmad Alhendawi: My message to youth in 2017 is that this is an important moment for them not to lose hope, and to stay determined that we could be the generation that could reverse Climate Change, and eradicate extreme poverty; that's the vision of Agenda 2030. My vision to young people is to unite around the shared platform offered to us. It's a very exciting thing for our generation now; young people in this generation are fans of using shared platforms. It's all about shared platforms, whether it's a shared economic platform, where you access opportunities by sharing platforms, and I often think of the United Nations as a shared value platform, that's available to all of us to share this important value system – the universal values like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Charter – that brings all nations together.



In March 2016 the UN Youth Envoy Ahmad Alhendawi discussed youth participation in the implementation of the SDGs with young leaders in Zambia. He also congratulated the Government of Zambia for the successful hosting of

the 3rd Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. The Envoy on Youth called on the Government of Zambia to expand on existing spaces for meaningful youth engagement in the implementation of the SDGs. He also discussed the urgency for more investments and empowerment of adolescent girls, where 42% of girls are married before the age of 18, pledging the UN Country Team to work with the Government to address this critical issue. Photo: UN Youth Envoy Flickr/ Jason J Mulikita



Young Leaders and Fellows meet at United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) where UN Youth Envoy Ahmad Alhendawi opened day-long workshops discussing the youth dimension in implementing the SDGs. The Population Fund engages young people in its work, and advocates for youth engagement in the work of others. The fund also provides support to adolescents and youth to build networks and organizations to advocate for their human rights. Photo: UN Youth Envoy Flickr



UN Youth Envoy Ahmad Alhendawi meets Libyan and Tunisian youth to motivate them to participate in the resolution of conflict and building social peace. According to the UN Support Mission in Libya, Ahmad Alhendawi discusses the importance of youth participation in finding solutions to the conflict in Libya, including Security Council Resolution 2250. The UN Youth Envoy said Mr. Martin Kobler, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Libya, had stressed the need to further promote the active participation of youth in the ongoing national dialogue and in the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). Photo: UN Youth Envoy Flickr



In August 2016, the UN Youth Envoy made an official visit to Nigeria to discuss youth development and youth issues. Photographed here, Ahmad Alhendawi inspects exhibits mounted by youth beneficiaries of enterprise empowerment. Young people meeting with the Envoy emphasized the need for further support in facilitating their participation in Nigeria's public life, as well as tackling health issues, HIV/AIDS and youth unemployment. Photo: UN Youth Envoy Flickr



Ahmad Alhendawi and a delegation of UN youth experts concluded a five-day visit to China in the spring of 2016. Mr. Alhendawi met with several youth-led and youth-focused organizations, as well as city government officials encouraging stronger policies and programming for education, health, youth participation and employment. China has the second largest youth population in the world with 272 million young people aged 10-24.



In his visit to Uganda UN Youth Envoy underscored the importance of expediting the adoption of the country's national youth policy. UN Resident

Coordinator, Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie, expressed the UN country team's interest in joining the Envoy's initiatives by establishing a youth advisory board for the UN country team. Photo: UN Youth Envoy Flickr



During the UN Youth Envoy's visit to Italy in October 2016, he talked about the issue of drug use among young people, noting "it is a real issue, and the way San Patrignano Recovery Community is tackling it, shows that when young people are given an opportunity, they can empower themselves and contribute to their communities." The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime World Drug Report – which provides a global overview as well as regional trends in drug use – shows, for example, that 17.9 per cent among the youth population, aged 12-17 years, reported using illicit substances in 2012. Out of the general population, aged 15-64, the corresponding figure was 5.2 per cent, and drug use was reported to be the highest among those in their late teens or twenties. Photo: UN Youth Envoy Flickr



During a Social Good Summit in New York, September 2016, the UN Youth Envoy Ahmad Alhendawi announced the launch of 'Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals'. "Today I am pleased to join in welcoming the inaugural class of UN Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a statement delivered by Mr. Alhendawi. "These 17 young change-makers are a testament to the ingenuity of youth and I congratulate them for their exceptional leadership and demonstrated commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals." Photo: Mashable



Soon the Youth Envoy will join the World Organization of the Scouts' Movement as their new Secretary-General. Alhendawi still is the youngest senior official in the history of the organization. He assumed his position on 17 January 2013 with a mandate to harmonize the UN system efforts on youth development, enhance the UN response to youth needs, advocate for addressing the development needs and rights of young people, as well as to bring the work of the United Nations with and for youth closer to them. Photo: UN Youth Envoy Flickr

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My message to young people, as we use different platforms in all spheres of life, is for us to renew our faith and resolve to continue empowering and investing in this shared value system that has basically offered humanity this opportunity to come together for the first time in its history, so that we have something called universal values and international law, and UN agencies; this amazing system that links us together. Of course there are many people out there who will say "that doesn't always work" – and I know it doesn't always work – but we have to make it work, and we have to invest more. So my message to young people is: believe in our shared destiny,

because this planet is at risk, and the challenges we are facing today cannot be tackled anymore within the border of one country, no matter what that country is. So we need to bridge the gaps, to connect people, and we need young people to believe in this message.

UN News: Your journey with youth will not end with the UN; you'll certainly continue working with the youth and to advance youth issues, won't you?

Ahmad Alhendawi: I'm moving from my position as Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth – it was a tremendous honour and privilege to serve in this position – to continue serving young people, as you rightly said, and I will be joining the World Organization of the Scouts' Movement as the new Secretary-General. And from that position, I look forward to working with a peaceful army of 40 million scouts around the world, who are also very much excited to work in tandem with the United Nations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Scout Movement is a very unique movement that has been offering generation after generation of young, committed individuals that have been supporting their countries and supporting themselves. So it's a very exciting time to be able to transition to another place of service, where I will continue working with young people, but this time also working directly in getting the commitments we made in 2015 on Climate Change and Sustainable Development Goals translated, and continue to offer opportunities to young people. There is nothing parallel to my belief in this generation of young people, and I think we will be able to unlock their potential to truly be the generation that will get the job done. As I always say, I don't want 14 years from now, to stand and pass on regrets to another generation. I think [with the SDGs] we do have a bold vision for the future, and we have absolutely no excuse to delay the implementation and to spare no efforts in implementing this vision.

UN News: How about your relationship with the UN?

Ahmad Alhendawi: It was interesting actually, when I went to the Secretary-General to inform him about my wish to take up this position of Secretary-General of the Scout Movement, he said – a very nice line – that “maybe the UN will lose one, but we will win 40 million (members of the Scout Movement around the world) to work with the United Nations.” I think the Scouts have always been there, and I am very committed – and once again I have always been telling young people that the United Nations is not only about carrying the UN badge or the UN passport. I think it is about subscribing to the values and commitments and the goals of the United Nations, and my commitment to those values and ideals will continue to be there. I very much look forward to working in tandem with the United Nations, because I am a big believer in this multi-lateral system, and I think, despite all the deficiencies that you might see, the only solution for us is to invest more in making this system work.

Senior UN officials call for close cooperation to address migrant, refugee flows in Libya

10 February 2017 – The heads of the United Nations agencies for human rights, migrants, and refugees, and the UN envoy for Libya, today met in Geneva calling for international solidarity to address the flows of migrants and refugees in the North African country.

The senior UN officials stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to address the situation of migrants and refugees in Libya as well as to assist the hundreds of thousands of Libyans displaced and impacted by the crisis, according to a press release.

The meeting was between the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), William Lacy Swing; the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi; the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein; and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Libya, Martin Kobler.

They called for close cooperation at the regional and international levels, and highlighted the need to protect and rights of migrants and refugees.

Along with many Libyans, migrants and refugees are heavily impacted by ongoing conflicts and the breakdown in law and order in Libya, the four senior UN officials said.

They noted that untold numbers of people particularly those smuggled or trafficked, and those in detention outside of any legal process face grave human rights abuses and violations.

Migrants and refugees are also exposed to malnutrition, extortion, torture, sexual violence and other abuses, according to the joint press release.