

## [‘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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## **[On visit to Iraq, UN’s focal point for conflict-related sexual violent visits abused women](#)**

3 March 2017 – The United Nations focal point for ending conflict-related sexual violence is in Iraq where she today met with survivors of rape and other abuse by the Islamic State (ISIL).

Zainab Hawa Bangura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, visited the Girls and Women Support and Treatment Centre in Dohuk Governorate, northern Iraq. Accompanied by Gyorgy

Busztin, the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), she met with women and girls who had escaped from Mosul, where Iraqi forces launched an offensive two weeks ago to dislodge ISIL.

According to a press release, the Centre is a collaboration with the Dohuk Directorate General and in support from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is at the forefront of addressing the needs of the Yazidi sexual violence survivors, including medical and psychosocial support.

ISIL has systematically targeted the Yazidi community with rape and other sexual violence, including sexual slavery and forced marriage, according to the Office of Ms. Bangura whose legal and investigative teams have been working to aid survivors from the community.

Ms. Bangura has repeatedly called for a multipronged approach from the global to the local levels, to aid the survivors and their families and help them reclaim a role in their community.

As part of her visit to Iraq, Ms. Bangura has discussed the need for such support with Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Nechervan Barzani. In addition, she held discussions with Jassim Mohammed Al-Jaf of the Ministry of Migration and Displaced and with Faed Zaidan, the head of the High Judicial Council of Iraq.

She also met with Sunni religious leaders to discuss reintegration of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and to ensure that children born of rape are not ostracized by the community.

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## **UN urges Sri Lanka not to miss opportunity to advance justice and reconciliation**

3 March 2017 – The slow pace of transitional justice in Sri Lanka and the lack of a comprehensive strategy to address accountability for past crimes risk derailing the momentum towards lasting peace, reconciliation and stability, a United Nations report said today.

Seventeen months ago, when we published a detailed report on the grave human rights violations committed during the conflict in Sri Lanka, I urged the Government and all the people of Sri Lanka to ensure that this historic opportunity for truly fundamental change should not be squandered, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a news release on the report.

He noted that in many ways, Sri Lanka appears to be turning a corner on the

promotion and protection of human rights, but he stressed that hard-won gains could prove illusory if they are not tethered to a comprehensive, robust strategy.

“This critical opportunity in Sri Lankan history cannot be missed,” he said, urging the Government and people of Sri Lanka once again to prioritize justice alongside reconciliation to ensure that the horrors of the past are firmly dealt with, never to recur.

The report, issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), assesses progress made in tackling the legacy of grave violations in Sri Lanka between 2002 and 2011 and acknowledges that there have been positive advances on human rights and constitutional reform.

However, the report notes that the structures set up and measures taken until now have been inadequate, lacked coordination and a sense of urgency.

“Party politics, including the balancing of power between the different constituencies of the coalition in the run-up to constitutional reforms, have contributed to a reluctance to address difficult issues regarding accountability or to clearly articulate a unified position by all parts of Government,” the report states.

The report makes a number of concrete recommendations, including calling on the Government to embrace the report of the Consultation Task Force, to formulate a communications campaign to inform the public about details of the reconciliation agenda, to invite the UN human rights office to establish a presence in Sri Lanka, to give the highest priority to the restitution of all private land that has been occupied by the military, and to adopt legislation establishing a hybrid court.

The report also highlights a number of serious human rights violations that are reportedly continuing to occur in Sri Lanka, including the harassment or surveillance of human rights defenders and victims of violations, police abuse and excessive use of force, and the use of torture.

The High Commissioner will present the report to the Human Rights Council on 22 March in Geneva.

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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.