

## [‘Once lost , hearing doesn’t come back’: World Health Organization warns on World Hearing Day](#)

Worldwide, some 466 million people have disabling hearing loss, and the WHO estimates that by 2050 that figure will almost double, affecting one in 10 people. The cost of unaddressed hearing loss is believed to be around US\$ 750 billion.

To mark World Hearing Day 2019, WHO has launched a new mobile and web-based app called “[hearWHO](#),” which allows people to check their hearing regularly, and intervene early in case of hearing loss. It can also be used by health workers to screen people in the community, and refer them for diagnostic testing if they fail the screening.

Users are asked to concentrate, listen and enter a series of three numbers when prompted. These numbers have been recorded against varying levels of background sound, simulating listening conditions in everyday life. The app displays the user’s score, and its meaning, and stores the outcome of the test so that the user can monitor hearing status over time.

Symptoms indicating the onset of hearing loss include a ringing sensation in the ear, known as tinnitus; frequently missing parts of a conversation; or a tendency to increase the volume of television, radio or audio devices.

The app is of particular benefit to people who are often exposed to high levels of sound, such as those who listen to loud music or work in noisy places; people who use medicines that are harmful to hearing; and people aged above 60 years.

In a statement released by WHO, Dr. Shelly Chadha, Technical Officer of the organization, said that “once lost, hearing does not come back. Through World Hearing Day, and with the support of this app, we encourage people to [‘Check your hearing!’](#) in order to help preserve this valuable gift that helps us to enjoy life.”

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## [Children still dying in Yemen war, despite partial ceasefire, says UNICEF chief](#)

In a [statement](#) released on Saturday, Ms. Ford said that “In Yemen, children

can no longer safely do the things that all children love to do – like go to school or spend time with their friends outside. The war can reach them wherever they are, even in their own homes.”

The warring parties in the country signed a UN-led partial [ceasefire agreement](#) last December, but this did not spare the five children from being killed in an attack on the Tahita District, to the south of Hudaydah, which is a crucial gateway for the entry of aid, desperately needed to save millions in Yemen from starvation.

“Each day, eight children are killed or injured across 31 active conflict zones in the country,” continued Ms. Ford, “ talks and conferences have so far done little to change the reality for children on the ground. Only a comprehensive peace agreement can give Yemeni children the reprieve from violence and war that they need and deserve.”

Last Monday, Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, said that the “mind-boggling violence” in Yemen “has not spared a single child.” His comments came the day before a high-level pledging event for Yemen, held in Geneva, which raised \$26 billion to support Yemenis facing a crisis described by UN chief [António Guterres](#) as an “overwhelming humanitarian calamity.”

Mr. Cappelaere also noted that generosity and aid will not, on their own, bring an end to children’s suffering in Yemen, and called on warring parties to “put an end to violence in hotspots and across all of Yemen, protect civilians, keep children out of harm’s way and allow humanitarian deliveries to children and their families wherever they are in the country.”

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## [Ocean life faces ‘onslaught of threats’ from human activity, but tools exist to save it](#)

This is the first time that World Wildlife Day has focused on life below water, the crucial importance of marine species to human development, and how we can continue to save marine biodiversity for future generations.

Marine wildlife has sustained human civilizations for thousands of years, providing food; materials for construction; and enriching lives culturally, spiritually and recreationally. Today, some three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods.

But human activity is posing major problems, both for the planet’s oceans and for human lives, particularly in coastal communities. These problems include the over-exploitation of marine species, pollution, the loss of coastal

habitats and climate change. Around one-third of fish stocks are being consumed at unsustainable levels, and up to half the world's coral reefs have been lost due to factors such as warming sea temperatures, ocean acidification and a range of land-based activities.

However, international frameworks to halt or reverse these negative trends have existed for some time. For example, the targets of the internationally agreed [Sustainable Development Goal 14](#) – for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources – call for restrictions on the trade of marine species; the [Clean Seas](#) campaign, the world's largest global alliance for combatting marine plastic pollution, with commitments covering more than 60 per cent of the world's coastlines, is supported by 57 countries; whilst some 143 states back the [Regional Seas Programme](#) to promote the sustainable management and use of marine and coastal environments.

This year, UN Environment's [Wild for Life](#) campaign, which aims to conserve wildlife on land and oceans, has ramped up its awareness-raising efforts, with the addition of new advocates, including actor Adrian Grenier, best known for playing Vincent Chase in the TV series *Entourage*, who was designated a [UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador](#) in 2018 in recognition of his long-standing environmental activism.

In an exclusive interview with UN News, Mr. Grenier said that we can all make a contribution to improving the oceans and marine life: "Overfishing is a problem, so we want to reduce it as much as possible; consider where food comes from; and make sure it's organic, because a lot of the chemicals in pesticides sprayed on crops end up running off into rivers, and can poison the sea."

March 3 was proclaimed World Wildlife Day by the UN General Assembly in 2013, the day the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora ([CITES](#)) was signed, as a way to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants. It has become the most important global annual event dedicated to wildlife.

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## [UN chief urges Somalis not to be 'deterred' by latest deadly terror attack](#)

The [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said on Friday that he "strongly condemns the deadly terrorist attacks" that took place in the Somali capital Mogadishu late on Thursday local time, which reportedly killed more than 20 people, with scores injured.

According to news reports, all three gunmen from the al-Shabab extremist group, who fought for hours against Somali Government special forces, were killed, after taking over a building in the centre of the capital. Reports say it was the longest siege by the group since it was forced out of Mogadishu in 2011.

The terrorists set off two car bombs that killed more than 20 and injured around 80 others. One detonated by a hotel patronized by government officials and the other near the home of Appeals Court Chief Judge Abshir Omar, news reports said.

Mr. Guterres extends his condolences to the families and friends of the victims, wished “a swift recovery to those injured” and commended “the response of the Somali emergency services to the bombings.”

The Secretary-General trusts that “Somalis will not be deterred by such violence from pursuing a peaceful and prosperous future” and reiterated the UN’s support and solidarity with the people and Government of Somalia.

In a tweet, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) also strongly condemned “last night’s twin bomb explosions”, saying “no political agenda can be served by violent extremism”.

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## [20 years on from landmark Mine Ban Treaty, dangers on the rise to life and limb](#)

Twenty years after the Mine Ban Treaty was adopted, landmines continue to kill and injure on former battlefields, long after the guns have gone away. On Friday, the United Nations and partners commemorated the landmark treaty that has saved the lives of million and prevented millions more from suffering terrible injuries.

In welcoming its 20th anniversary, [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) stated that the [Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention](#) “has [saved countless lives](#), stopped mutilation and injury and enabled the revitalization of livelihoods”.

**UN Photo/Loey Felipe:** UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Emi Mahmoud recites one of her original poems at the event commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty’s entry into force.

But landmines continue to be used as tools of war, causing more and more

casualties, including the highest annual total of child victims recorded since 1999, according to the latest figures.

With the number of landmine victims rising, there is an urgent need for the international community to broaden the scope of prevention and mine risk education for vulnerable communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

Opening a commemorative event at UN Headquarters in New York, UN refugees Goodwill Ambassador Emi Mahmoud – herself a former refugee from Sudan, who fled to Yemen before settling in the United States – read her poem entitled “Head over Heels”.

Having served as an advisor to the Iraqi Governing Council after regime change in 2003 and the Iraqi Transitional Council in 2004, Mohammed Hussein Mohammed Bahr AlUloom, Iraq’s UN Ambassador explained that his country has faced “some of the most extensive and complex explosive hazard contamination in the world”, including “landmines left over from Da’esh” terrorist fighters.

“The presence of explosive hazards continues to impede a safe voluntary and dignified return of nearly 1.4 million back to their homes”, he said.

Speaking at the subsequent panel discussion, Sergiy Prokhorov a UNICEF mine specialist in Ukraine, said “landmines are easy to plan, but extremely difficult to get rid of.

The Cambodian Ambassador, Sovann Ke, called the Treaty “one of the most important treaties in our history that has saved millions of lives.”

“As one of the most heavily contaminated landmine and unexploded remnants of war countries in the world, and one of the State parties”, he said “Cambodia is determined to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines”.

“As of today, there are 931 civilian casualties, including 157 children”, he said, since the situation got “way worse” in April 2014, “when the conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine started.”

Zlatko Vezilic, the Interim Country Director of Norwegian People’s Aid in Cambodia, was a former Yugoslav army officer who lost his leg in Kosovo.

“I come from a country where I can see mine victims daily. Some of them are my close friends and neighbours. Not all of them have the opportunity to get sophisticated limbs, as I have” he sombrely told the room.

“Many struggle with regular life activities,” he continued explaining how they merely surviving with no hope for a better life. This often results in “family problems, PTSD [Post-traumatic stress disorder], stress and alcoholism.”

In the words of the Secretary-General: “The Treaty’s 20-year anniversary of entering into force provides an opportunity to renew attention to the weapons

that long outlive the conflict and continue to shred lives”.