

In Tokyo, UN chief expresses full support for US-Japan dialogue with North Korea

At a joint press conference in Tokyo on Wednesday with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, [UN Secretary-General](#) António Guterres welcomed the ongoing talks between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as well as Japan's renewed initiative of dialogue with the country.

"As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I am obviously totally committed to the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions on North Korea," he told reporters, adding that he fully supported the negotiations taking place "with the objective that we all share, to see a total denuclearization that is verifiable, that is irreversible, to make sure that North Korea can be a normal member of the international community in this region."

In mid-June, US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un held a historic summit in Singapore, signing a joint statement which included a pledge to end DPRK's nuclear weapons programme. Days after conducting its sixth nuclear test last September, a North Korean ballistic missile flew over mainland Japan, drawing condemnation from the Security Council, which had just ratcheted up sanctions.

Standing alongside the Japanese leader, Mr. Guterres went on to express his support for Japan's willingness to hold fresh talks with the North Korean leadership, following Prime Minister Abe's offer of a high-level summit with the country.

The UN chief hailed these developments as timely, coming in the wake of a United Nation's disarmament initiative, launched in May of this year. The new agenda, "[Securing Our Common Future](#)", sets out his bold new vision for a world without nuclear arsenals and other deadly weapons. It focuses on three priorities – weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons and new battlefield technologies.

He declared that "the North Korea and the Iran situations are two central aspects of our concerns to make sure that we preserve non-proliferation, but also recognizing that non-proliferation needs to be accompanied by effective disarmament, progressive disarmament measures in the nuclear dimension. And, at the same time, the full implementation of the ban on chemical weapons and biological weapons."

He added that the agenda represented "disarmament to save lives", taking into account the "devastating impact" of conventional weapons on civilian populations in urban centres and "disarmament for the future generations, namely to make sure that we do not develop arms, systems of arms, that fully

escape the control of human beings and responsibility of human beings”.

The Secretary-General travelled to Nagasaki later on Wednesday, where he was due to meet Mayor Tomihisa Taue, and other local officials, as well as with some *hibakusha*, or survivors of the atomic bombs.

On Thursday, he visits the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and the Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims, before taking part in the 73rd Nagasaki Peace Ceremony.

[‘Well-being of two million’ in Gaza at stake as emergency fuel runs dry: UN humanitarian coordinator](#)

To avert hospital closures and raw sewage overflowing onto the streets of Gaza, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator on Wednesday called on Israeli authorities to allow UN-purchased emergency fuel back across the border of the Palestinian enclave.

“Restricting the entry of emergency fuel to Gaza is a [dangerous practice](#), with grave consequences on the rights of people in Gaza,” Jamie McGoldrick, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Palestine said in a statement.

“The well-being of 2 million people, half of whom are children, is at stake. It is unacceptable that Palestinians in Gaza are repeatedly deprived of the most basic elements of a dignified life,” he added.

In the context of tightened import and export restrictions, Israel has prohibited fuel into the Gaza Strip since 2 August – following an earlier restriction that lasted from 16–24 July. According to the Israeli authorities, the intensified measures were in response to the continuing launch of incendiary kites launched from Gaza into Israel, which have sparked multiple fires.

Meanwhile, the fuel, which is being held up at the Israeli border, is urgently needed to power back-up generators which are in huge demand due to Gaza’s chronic energy crisis.

To ensure that hospitals, water and sanitation services function properly over the next four days, the respective humanitarian partners have indicated that at least 60,000 litres of emergency fuel must be delivered as soon as possible, to some 46 facilities across the strip.



OCHA

Garbage accumulated in the Ash Sheikh Radwan area in Gaza City, 2 March 2018.

According to the UN [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#), around 40 of Gaza's 132 water and sanitation facilities have enough fuel for between one and two days – leaving 1.2 million Palestinians at imminent risk of sewage overflow.

To avoid sewage flooding into populated areas, Gaza City has reportedly had to direct the equivalent of four Olympic-sized swimming pools of sewage each day towards a storm water lagoon in the city's north, placing those surrounding communities at risk of overflow.

Gaza City sewage treatment has also reduced solid waste collection, leaving around 15,000 tons of garbage accumulating in the streets and increasing the risks of waterborne disease.

Hospitals and other health services are reducing operations, with five hospitals in danger of closing, placing more than 2,000 patients who rely on electrical devices at highest risk.

Moreover, medical services for over 1.6 million others may suffer at Gaza's main health facilities.

Compounding the situation, emergency fuel funding will run out for all critical facilities in mid-August, with \$4.5 million required to keep a minimum level of essential services running through the end of the year.

"Gaza desperately needs longer-term solutions so we can move past this cycle of repeated or worsening crises, including that Palestinian authorities prioritize provision of fuel for essential services," said Mr. McGoldrick.

"Until that happens, Israel must reverse the recent restrictions, including on the entry of emergency fuel, and donors must step in and fund emergency

fuel, in order to avoid a disease outbreak or other major public health concern," he concluded.

Let Nagasaki remain 'the last city' to suffer nuclear devastation says museum director as UN chief arrives

António Guterres was in Tokyo on Wednesday where he held talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, as well as meeting the city's Mayor and atomic bomb survivors, before traveling north to participate in the 73rd Nagasaki Peace Ceremony.

The number of survivors of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – or hibakusha as they are known in Japanese, is decreasing each year.

Japan's health ministry says that as of last March, only 155,000 survivors remain, with 90,000 having died over the past decade. Moreover, the number of survivors directly exposed to radiation in the cities and their surrounding areas, has dipped below 100,000 for the first time, with the average age being 82 years old.

Before the commemoration, Akitoshi Nakamura, Director of Atomic Bomb Museum spoke to *UN News*.

Having started working at the Museum 60 years after the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, just three days after Hiroshima, Mr. Nakamura enthusiastically shared the citizens "high hopes" as they "eagerly" await Mr. Guterres' arrival.

"We are, from the bottom of our hearts, welcoming the SG's visit here," he asserted.

Laying out plans for the Secretary-General's visit, Mr. Nakamura shared his hopes that the UN chief would join local children in making origami cranes, a symbol of peace, before touring the museum where highlights include a clock that stopped at 11:02 am, when the bomb was dropped; documents charting the catastrophe after the bombing; and the broken belfry dome of the Urakami Cathedral.

"We would like him to see those," said the curator. "But more than anything, we would like him to see the photos of hibakusha."

"What is most horrific is the effect of nuclear radiation, so we would like him to see the documents and panels that show the effects of nuclear radiation on health," Mr. Nakamura elaborated.

The museum traces the catastrophe that unfolded after the bomb.

“We want people to see what a horrific weapon an atomic bomb is, and the kind of devastation over 14,000 nuclear weapons around the world can bring,” Mr. Nakamura stressed, explaining the museum’s aim to eliminate stockpiles of nuclear weapons, by illustrating the horrors they inflict.

“The two atomic bomb museums, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are about something that happened in the past, but they also are important in the sense that they trigger an awareness of the danger that nuclear weapons may cause in the future,” he said.

After 73 years, Mr. Nakamura does not want the experiences of the dwindling number of survivors to be forgotten along with them.

Calling it “the most important thing,” he said that “the museums continue telling the story of what happened at the time, in order for it to not be forgotten.”

Hiroshima was the first city to be devastated by an atomic bomb, on 6 August, 1945, and for the time being at least, Nagasaki is the last. With that distinction, Mr. Nakamura spells out “it’s very important to prevent another exposure to an atomic bomb.”

“We, the citizens of Nagasaki, have been appealing to the world to make Nagasaki the last city devastated by an atomic bomb,” he said.

As hibakusha numbers decline, education that carries on their voices becomes ever more important.

[UN chief calls for ‘increased commitment’ to resolution on 10th anniversary of Georgia conflict](#)

Ten years after conflict involving Georgia, Russia and the South Ossetia region broke out, [United Nations chief, António Guterres](#) said on Tuesday that “increased commitment” is needed by “relevant actors” to advance the on-going reconciliation and peace process.

“The Secretary-General recalls that it is a reminder of the need to resolve this and other protracted conflicts in Europe,” said a statement issued by his Spokesperson. “This requires increased commitment by the relevant actors, backed by strong political will and a reinvigoration of mediation processes.”

Conflict erupted in August 2008, between Russian and Georgian forces over the

pro-Russian enclaves of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which led later in the year, to the launch of international talks to resolve the crisis, known as the Geneva International Discussions, or [GID](#). In 2009, the Incident Response and Prevention Mechanism grew out of the GID, providing a forum to discuss issues between the various regions and governments, relating to on-going concerns.

The GID is co-chaired by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, and the UN, bringing together the countries and regions, as well as the United States.

“The Secretary-General urges all the participants in the Geneva International Discussions to adopt a constructive, forward-looking approach that would allow this indispensable mechanism to fulfill its mandate”, said the statement.

All concerned should prioritize progress through appropriate dialogue and refrain from divisive policies and unilateral actions that may adversely impact regional peace and security,” continued the UN chief.

Mr. Guterres recalled that while the GID and Mechanism have “substantially contributed to strengthening stability in recent years, more should be done on key security and humanitarian issues, including those related to the plight of the many internally displaced persons and refugees.”

He said the UN would “continue to fully support this important mechanism and work with the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to achieve progress on all issues.”

[Bangladesh: Head of UN refugee agency calls on Asia-Pacific leaders to show ‘solidarity’ with Rohingya refugees](#)

The Head of the UN refugee agency ([UNHCR](#)), Filippo Grandi, on Tuesday [urged](#) government representatives and business leaders from the Asia-Pacific region to offer more support and protection for over 700,000 Rohingya refugees who have fled violence and discrimination in Myanmar’s Rakhine State over the past year.

“I urge you to consider what support your Governments could pledge in solidarity with Bangladesh until solutions are found for refugees,” he said, addressing ministers of 26 countries in Bali, Indonesia, at the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process. “We need also to work towards comprehensive solutions for the people of Rakhine State, so that they are not

forced to move in the first place,” he added.

The [Bali Process](#) is a forum made up of 48 Governments and four international organizations – including UNHCR, the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)) – which was set up to enable dialogue and discussion on issues relating to people-smuggling, human trafficking and related cross-border crime.



UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

In March 2016, the [Bali Declaration](#) was adopted, highlighting the need for a comprehensive collective approach to resolve statelessness, invest in inclusive development, and expand safe pathways so that refugees and migrants would have legal alternatives to putting their lives at risk while on the move.

Since late August 2017, widespread and systematic violence against Myanmar’s mainly Muslim minority Rohingya has forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes in Rakhine state for Bangladesh. Prior to that, well over 200,000 Rohingya refugees were sheltering in vast, makeshift camps in Bangladesh as a result of earlier displacements.

In his address on Tuesday, Mr. Grandi urged Governments to move “from consultation to action on the commitments they made” in the Declaration, asking them to consider how they could share Bangladesh’s refugee burden.

“Could your Government support, for example, construction of hospitals in Bangladesh,” he asked, “that will treat refugees but also improve the health care of local people? Can we conceive of development, trade, and migration-related measures to help the people and Government of Bangladesh shoulder the responsibility of hosting some 900,000 refugees, such as expanding guest worker quotas for Bangladeshis that would increase remittances, or reducing tariffs on garment exports from Bangladesh?”



UNICEF/Robert LeMoyne

The UNHCR chief also stressed that the “real solution” lies in Myanmar itself, and he appealed for regional support to address the root causes of displacement in Rakhine: for example, investing in infrastructure that connects communities instead of dividing them, and providing expertise on resolving statelessness and intercommunal conflict.

The High Commissioner also addressed business leaders of major corporations who attended the Conference as part of the Bali Process Government and Business Forum, a public-private partnership to expand legal labour migration and combat human trafficking.

“People forced to move can fall prey to modern slavery, adding the insult of exploitation to the injury of exile,” he said, adding that “there are now, more than ever, opportunities for refugees in this region to contribute to their host communities.”