

Nuclear non-proliferation treaty an 'essential pillar' of international peace, says UN chief

On the 50th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres urged all State parties to ensure the Treaty's continued relevance in the years ahead.

In a statement by his spokesperson, [Secretary-General](#) Guterres said that the [NPT](#) is an "essential pillar" of international peace and security, and the "heart" of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

"[Its unique status](#) is based on its near universal membership, legally-binding obligations on disarmament, verifiable non-proliferation safeguards regime, and commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy," he highlighted.

In the statement, Mr. Guterres also welcomed the joint statement by the NPT's depositories – Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – including their recommitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons, a central priority of his agenda for disarmament, *Securing our Common Future*, which he [unveiled](#) in May.

The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.

It represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States. Since opening for signature on 1 July 1968, 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States. More countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement.

NPT entered into force in 1970 and in May 1995, it was extended indefinitely.

In 2020, the [review conference](#) of the Treaty will be held, during which the States parties will examine the implementation of its provisions.

UN chief applauds Bangladesh for 'opening borders' to Rohingya refugees in need

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has applauded Bangladesh for giving a safe haven to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees driven from their homes in Myanmar by systematic and widespread violence.

On mission in Bangladesh, the [Secretary-General](#) praised the country for keeping its borders open and receiving those in need of international protection.

“In a world where so many borders are closed, [the people and Government of Bangladesh] have opened their borders and received their brothers and sisters coming from Myanmar and from the terrible events there,” said Mr. Guterres in capital Dhaka on Sunday.

The UN chief also praised the World Bank for its recently announced multi-million-dollar [grant](#) for Bangladesh to support both refugees as well as communities hosting them.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General also noted the development progress made by Bangladesh since its independence and highlighted the country's integration of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its national planning frameworks as an “example that many others can follow.”

If one looks at the low areas, close to the sea, we understand how vulnerable Bangladesh is to the impact of climate change –
Secretary-General Guterres

Mr. Guterres also warned of the impacts of climate change, particularly for countries such as Bangladesh, where much of the land lies close to sea-level.

He called for greater political will to realize the commitments made under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and urged greater efforts as well as raised ambitions by all actors if global temperature rise is to be contained within the limits agreed there in.

In conclusion, the UN chief also underscored the importance of empowering women for achieving peaceful, inclusive and prosperous societies as well as the role that youth can play provided they are given sufficient opportunities and necessary skills.

The Secretary-General arrived in Bangladesh early on Sunday (local time) as

part of a joint trip with the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim.



K M Asad/UN

Secretary-General António Guterres (centre) and World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim (left) with Sheikh Hasina (right), the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, at the Prime Minister's office in Dhaka.

On Sunday, Mr. Guterres and Mr. Kim also met with Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, where they discussed collaboration between the two institutions under the leadership of the Government to address the [complex Rohingya crisis](#).

They also spoke about a double approach of creating conditions conducive for return in Myanmar of the Rohingyas while, at the same time, improving the conditions for the refugees.

“By hosting the Rohingya, Bangladesh has done a great service for the world. We will support this effort any way we can,” said Mr. Kim in a tweet after the meeting.

The Secretary-General and the World Bank Group President also visited the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum which was the house of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the first President of Bangladesh and father of the current Prime Minister.

It was in that house that Bangabandhu and other members of his family were assassinated in August 1975 by a group of soldiers.



K M Asad/UN

Secretary-General António Guterres (right) and World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim (left) at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The museum honours the legacy of the country's first President, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was assassinated in 1975.

Later in the evening, the Secretary-General and his delegation were hosted for an official dinner by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

On his mission, Mr. Guterres is also accompanied by number of senior UN officials, including the High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), Natalia Kanem.

On Monday, they are due to travel to Cox's Bazar in southern Bangladesh to visit Rohingya refugee communities and humanitarian workers, and advocate for increased donor support.

Since late August 2017, violence against Myanmar's mainly-Muslim minority Rohingya, forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes in Rakhine state and seek refuge across the country's border, in Bangladesh. Prior to that, well over 200,000 Rohingya refugees were sheltering in Bangladesh as a result of earlier displacements.

Even though the number of new arrivals has tapered off, and an agreement has been reached between the UN on the ground and the government, over establishing conditions in Myanmar to allow refugees' voluntary and safe return, UN agencies there have reported that such conditions have not yet materialized.

As of 24 May, there are an estimated 905,000 [refugees](#) in Cox's Bazar. To address the ongoing and increasing needs, the UN launched a [Joint Response Plan](#) in March, urging \$951 million to provide life-saving assistance the refugees and host communities. However, the appeal remains only 18 per cent [funded](#).

[Latest tragedy in the Mediterranean claims over 100 lives – UN refugee agency](#)

Expressing “deep sadness” over the deaths of more than 100 refugees and migrants when their boat sank in the Mediterranean Sea, the United Nations refugee agency has called for greater international efforts to avoid further tragedies.

“[We are] concerned about the increasing number of people dying on the central Mediterranean route and [are] calling for concerted international efforts to avoid further tragedies,” said the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) in a [news release](#) on Saturday.

According to the UN agency, about 123 individuals were on board the rubber boat – which survivors said was “unseaworthy and overcrowded” – when it sank off the coast of Tajoura in Libya on 29 June.

Only 16 people could be rescued by the Libyan coast guard.

“This is the hardest day of my life. I didn’t know whether to save myself, my children or my friends,” a survivor told UNHCR once safe.

Among those deceased are 70 men, 30 women and three babies. Over 80 bodies are said to remain at sea.

In the news release, UNHCR also said that on the same day, some 300 refugees and migrants were disembarked by the Libyan coast guard at the Tripoli Naval Base, including 15 children and 40 women.

UNHCR and its partners were present at both disembarkation points and provided urgent medical and humanitarian assistance to the survivors, before they were transferred to detention facilities by the authorities.

According to [estimates](#), in the first half of 2018, over 1,130 people have perished trying to make the perilous sea crossing from North Africa to Europe.

UN chief 'deeply alarmed' over military offensive in south-west Syria

Expressing “deep alarm” over increased hostilities in southwestern Syria and its “devastating” toll on civilians, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres called for an immediate cessation of the military operations.

In a [statement](#) by his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres called on all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights laws, protect civilians and facilitate safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access.

“All stakeholders must immediately stop attacks directed against medical and educational facilities and put in place security conditions for UN cross-border humanitarian deliveries to resume without further delay,” he said.

In the statement, the UN chief also recalled that the south-west area of Syria is part of the July 2017 de-escalation agreement between Jordan, Russia and the United States, and called on its guarantors to uphold their commitments.

The Secretary-General also urged the international community “to unite to put an end to this expanding conflict,” which risks further de-stabilizing the region and worsening the deep humanitarian crisis in Syria and neighboring states.

He also called on all concerned to focus on moving the political process forward building on the recent consultations in Geneva.

Into its eighth year, the conflict in Syria continues to exact a [terrible toll](#) on the country’s civilians.

[According](#) to the UN [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA), over 13 million people across the war-torn country are in need of humanitarian assistance, including close to 3 million people in need trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, where they are exposed to grave protection threats.

Over half of the population has been forced from their homes, and many people have been displaced multiple times. Children and youth comprise more than half of the displaced, as well as half of those in need of humanitarian assistance.

UN condemns deadly attack against G5 Sahel force headquarters in Mali

United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has strongly condemned the attack against the G5 Sahel joint force Headquarters in Mali's restive Mopti region.

Several people were killed in the "complex" attack in Sévaré, including troops belonging to the G5 Sahel joint force – a military task force composed of armed forces of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Members of the Malian armed forces were also killed.

In a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson on Friday, Mr. Guterres underscored the "important role" the G5 Sahel joint force is playing in countering violent extremism and terrorism in the Sahel region and called on the international community to step up its support to the joint force.

He also said that the [UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali](#) (MINUSMA) continues to provide logistical support to the joint force in line with the relevant Security Council resolution.

In the statement, the UN chief also offered his condolences to the families of the victims and wishes a speedy recovery to those injured

In a separate statement, the Security Council also condemned the attack and underscored the need to bring the perpetrators and sponsors of such "reprehensible acts" of terrorism to justice.

The members of the Council also welcomed the "continued determination" of the G5 Sahel States to unite their efforts to address the impact of terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahel region, including through the development of the joint force.

They also expressed that they would "continue to monitor closely the situation" as well as the support to the joint force, in parallel to progress made in its operationalization.