

[UN counts on China's leadership to implement 2030 Agenda, diplomatic solution on Korean Peninsula](#)

During an official visit, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Sunday met in Beijing with Xi Jinping, President of China where he congratulated the President on his recent re-election.

Mr. Guterres expressed his appreciation for President Xi's [support to the UN's work](#) and told him that the UN continues to count on China's leadership and commitment to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#), including through international cooperation under the [Belt and Road Initiative](#).

The Secretary-General also commended China's consistent and constructive advocacy for a diplomatic solution to the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Moreover, he underlined the UN's commitment to assist in supporting a process of sincere dialogue, leading to sustainable peace and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula.

[Syria: 'Critical that civilians be protected' says UN chief amid fresh attacks in Eastern Ghouta](#)

Following a period of relative calm in Syria's Eastern Ghouta, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has expressed deep concern on Sunday over renewed, intensive violence in Douma.

"The Secretary-General calls on all parties to [cease fighting](#) and restore the calm that had been in place and adhere fully to Security Council resolution 2401 (2018)," said Stéphane Dujarric, his spokesperson.

"He reiterates there is no military solution to the conflict," he added.

Through his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres explained that over the last 36 hours, he has received reports indicating sustained airstrikes and shelling on Douma that have killed civilians, destroyed infrastructure and damaged health facilities.

There has also been shelling on Damascus city, reportedly killing civilians.

Mr. Dujuric underscored that the Secretary-General is particularly alarmed by allegations of chemical weapons used against civilian populations in Douma.

While the UN is not in a position to verify these reports, he continued, “the Secretary-General notes that any use of chemical weapons, if confirmed, is abhorrent, and requires a thorough investigation.”

“It is critical that civilians be protected,” Mr. Dujuric stressed.

“The Secretary-General calls on all sides to ensure respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, including humanitarian access across Syria to all people in need, as per relevant Security Council resolutions,” he concluded.

Since 11 March, some 25,000 people have reportedly left East Ghouta, seeking shelter in the rural Damascus villages of Dweir, Adra and Herjelleh.

UN Security Council condemns in “strongest terms” fresh attack in Mali, peacekeeper slain

Late Friday night the United Nations Security Council condemned “in the strongest terms” an attack earlier in the day on a vehicle of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali ([MINUSMA](#)) that killed a Nigerian peacekeeper in Gao.

“The members of the Security Council expressed their deepest condolences and sympathy to the family of the victim, as well as to the Government of Niger and to MINUSMA,” the Council said in a statement paying tribute to the peacekeepers who risk their lives and calling on the Malian Government to swiftly investigate the attack and bring the perpetrators to justice.

“Attacks targeting peacekeepers may constitute war crimes under international law,” the statement underlined, stressing that “involvement in planning, directing, sponsoring or conducting attacks against MINUSMA peacekeepers constitute a basis for sanctions designations pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolutions.”

The Council members reaffirmed that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and emphasized the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these

reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice.

They stressed that those responsible should be held accountable, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the relevant authorities.

The Council reiterated that “any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable,” and reaffirmed the need for all States to combat, in accordance with the [UN Charter](#) and other obligations under international law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

They echoed their full support for MINUSMA, the French forces that support it, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Mali Mahamat Saleh Annadif and for the UN Mission to assist the Malian authorities and people in their efforts to bring lasting peace and stability to their country – including through the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (the Agreement).

The Council recognized the determination and ownership of the Governments of the Group of Five for the Sahel States (G5 Sahel) to address terrorism and transnational organized crime, including through cross-border joint military counter-terrorist operations.

The members expressed concern over Mali’s security situation and the transnational dimension of the terrorist threat in the Sahel region, urging the Malian parties to “fully implement the Agreement without further delay.”

“They noted that the full implementation of the Agreement and the intensification of efforts to overcome asymmetric threats can contribute to improving the security situation across Mali,” the statement continued.

The Council maintained that the efforts of the G5 Sahel’s Force Conjointe to counter the activities of terrorist and other organized criminal groups will contribute to a more secure Sahel region.

“The members of the Security Council further stressed the importance that MINUSMA has the necessary capacities, including combat convoy companies, to fulfil its mandate and promote the safety and security of the United Nations peacekeepers, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2364 (2017),” concluded the statement.

The UN mission in Mali is one of the most dangerous, having taken more than 160 peacekeepers’ [lives](#). In late February, [four peacekeepers were killed](#) when their convoy came under attack in Mopti, central Mali and on 5 April two Chadian peacekeepers were slain in Aguelhok, Kidal region.

Universal health coverage key to safer, fairer world, says WHO chief on eve of World Health Day

World Health Day 2018 coincides with the 70th anniversary of the United Nations health agency, which, since its establishment, has seen an increase in life expectancy by nearly 25 years.

“Health is a human right. No one should get sick and die just because they are poor, or because they cannot access the health service they need,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), in his message prior to the Day, which is marked annually on 7 April.

According to WHO, at least half the world’s population do not have coverage for full essential health services, with about 100 million people living on [\\$1.90 or less a day](#) because they have to pay for health care.

“Universal health coverage is a political choice. It takes vision, courage and long-term thinking,” said Mr. Tedros, adding “But the payoff is a safer, fairer and healthier world for everyone.”

[Secretary-General](#) António Guterres recalled that WHO was founded on the principle that “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being.”

“Since then, average global life expectancy has expanded by 23 years,” he continued, noting the eradication of smallpox and the dissipation of polio.

Mr. Guterres stressed that although millions more children live to celebrate their fifth birthday, people around the world still lacked vital health services.

“Today, we join WHO in recommitting to ensure that everyone, everywhere, gets the health services they need,” Mr. Guterres said.

“Join me in calling for Health for All,” concluded the Secretary-General.

Universal coverage

As part of the landmark [2030 Agenda](#) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), all UN Member States agreed to try to achieve universal health coverage by 2030.

When people have to pay most health service costs themselves, often the poor cannot obtain what they need and even the rich may fall victim to financial hardship from long-term illness.

Universal health coverage requires strengthening health systems in all countries – with robust financing structures being key. It emphasizes not only what services are covered, but also how they are funded, managed, and delivered.

WHO maintains that pooling resources from compulsory funding sources, such as mandatory insurance contributions, can improve health service coverage by spreading the financial risks of illness across a population.

Health services, including traditional and complementary medicine services, organized around the comprehensive needs and expectations of people and communities will help empower them to take a more active role in their health and health system.

70 years of progress

Over the past seven decades, WHO has spearheaded efforts to rid the world of killer diseases and fight against deadly habits, like tobacco use.

“[Good health](#) is the most precious thing anyone can have,” Mr. Tedros said in a separate message. “When people are healthy, they can learn, work, and support themselves and their families.”

“When they are sick, nothing else matters. Families and communities fall behind. That’s why WHO is so committed to ensuring good health for all,” he underscored

Many countries have successfully eliminated measles, malaria and debilitating tropical diseases, as well as mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

New WHO recommendations for earlier treatment, efforts to access cheaper generic medicines and innovative partnerships have produced vaccines against meningitis, Ebola and the world’s first for malaria.

UN Headquarters in New York celebrated World Health Day, WHO’s 70th Birthday and Universal Health Coverage with a special event on shaping future health systems that leave no one behind.

It also launched a set of six stamps commemorative UN World Health Day stamps to promote worldwide awareness and action to achieve health for everyone around the world.

[On Rwandan genocide anniversary, UN](#)

Leaders ask: Can world muster the will to prevent new atrocities?

As the world officially remembers the genocidal murder of 800,000 Rwandans in 1994, United Nations leaders warn that ethnic cleansing and mass atrocities continue to blight humanity and call for sharper action to prevent such wholesale violations.

Twenty-four years ago, on 7 April, ethnic Hutus in Rwanda began the frenzied slaughter of Tutsis, moderate Hutus and others in what is widely regarded as one of the darkest episodes in recent history.

In memory of the Rwandan victims – and as a sombre reminder of the international community’s failure to intervene – the UN observes 7 April every year as an “[international day of reflection](#).”

“Today we remember all those who were murdered and reflect on the suffering of the survivors, who have shown that reconciliation is possible, even after a tragedy of such monumental proportions,” said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a [message](#) for the grim anniversary.

“Rwanda has learned from its tragedy; so must the international community,” Mr. Guterres said, expressing concern about “the rise of racism, hate speech and xenophobia around the world.”

“These base manifestations of human cruelty provide the breeding ground for far more evil acts,” the Secretary-General said, adding that he was particularly troubled by the systematic killings, torture, rape and humiliation of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

The brutal persecution of the Rohingya, which has caused more than one million members of the ethnic and religious minority to flee to Bangladesh, was also first in the mind of Adama Dieng, the [UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide](#), in an interview with [UN News](#).

The horrific acts committed against the Rohingya will one day be brought before an international court, Mr. Dieng said, “and I have no doubt that they will be determined as crimes against humanity, as ethnic cleansing” and possibly as genocide.



UNHCR/Roger Arnold

Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar flee to Bangladesh after facing brutal persecution that UN officials have said may amount to crimes against humanity.

Judicial punishment for such crimes is a start, but for more attention must be devoted to preventing them, said Mr. Dieng, a native of Senegal and leading international jurist.

“We said at the end of the Second World War ‘Never Again,’ but we witnessed the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda; we witnessed the genocide of the Muslims in Srebrenica,” he said, referring to the Bosnian Serb army’s slaughter in 1995 of thousands of Muslims who were rounded up in the town of Srebrenica, even though it had been declared a “safe area” by the UN.

An international framework of law and tribunals has evolved for holding accountable those who commit crimes against humanity.

In 1948, following the horrors of the Second World War, the fledgling UN adopted [The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#). Genocide was defined as certain acts committed “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.”

At the UN World Summit in 2005, all Member States formally accepted the responsibility to protect their populations from “genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.” They also agreed that when countries fail to do so, the international community has an obligation to

intervene, through action by the Security Council and in accordance with the [UN Charter](#).

But enforcing that international “Responsibility to Protect” victimized populations has often been hamstrung, Mr. Dieng said, as key countries invoke the principle of “non-interference in internal affairs.” He expressed frustration that the Security Council has not taken stronger action to prevent atrocities against civilians in Syria and South Sudan as well as Myanmar.

Genocides do not take place “all of a sudden,” Mr. Dieng said, highlighting the importance and possibility of prevention.

“Genocide is a process,” he said. “The [Holocaust](#) did not start with the gas chambers. It started with hate speech.”

In Rwanda and Bosnia, too, mass killings followed escalating hate speech and dehumanization. “That is why I should say that the world failed the Rwandan people, the world failed the Bosnian people, and I hope that the world will not fail the Rohingya population,” he said.

The UN’s annual day of reflection on the Rwandan genocide is important, Mr. Dieng said, “as a way first to honour those who fell to those crimes, but also as a lesson for the future.”

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“By remembering what happened in Rwanda, we are also sending a strong message to whoever around the world is inclined to commit such a crime,” he said.

Secretary-General Guterres, in his statement, stressed that “states have a fundamental responsibility to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”

“It is imperative,” he said, “that we unite to prevent such atrocities from occurring, and that the international community sends a strong message to perpetrators that they will be held accountable.”

“To save people at risk, we must go beyond words,” he said.

The UN will hold a commemorative ceremony on the Rwandan genocide at its New York Headquarters on 13 April on the theme “Remember, Unite, Renew.”