

## [‘Blue helmet’ killed in Central African Republic; UN mission condemns attack](#)

One United Nations peacekeeper was killed and 11 others were wounded early Tuesday morning when the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)) was attacked by rebel fighters.

“The Secretary-General extends his condolences to the family of the fallen peacekeeper and wishes a speedy recovery to the injured,” Stéphane Dujarric, spokesperson for the Secretary-General, told reporters at the regular press briefing in New York.

The temporary MINUSCA base in [Tagbara](#), a village 60km north-east of Bambari in Ouaka Prefecture, was violently attacked by anti-Balaka fighters. After several hours of exchanging gunfire, one blue helmet was killed and 11 others injured. More than 22 anti-Balaka attackers were killed, according to the UN.

In response to the attack, MINUSCA evacuated the wounded and the slain peacekeeper, and deployed reinforcements to Tagbara. Later that morning, they also discovered the bodies of 13 men, four women and four children near a church.

The evening before, MINUSCA peacefully recovered and sheltered 13 women, seven men and three children after the temporary Tagbara base was informed that ex-Seleka Unité pour la Centrafrique (UPC) had detained the 23 people.

The Mission also reported that in a joint operation with the Central African armed forces on Saturday, 15 people who had been taken hostage by the Lord’s Resistance Army were rescued.

“The UN Mission strongly condemns all of these events,” MINUSCA said.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, plunged the country of 4.5 million people into civil conflict in 2013.

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## [UN eyes transition of Haiti role from peacekeeping to development](#)

The United Nations has already started to prepare for a post-peacekeeping

presence in Haiti, a senior UN official said Tuesday, stressing there are many reasons to be optimistic that the country's progress towards stability is now irreversible.

"While achieving results should remain our common priority, we have already started to prepare for a transition to a non-peacekeeping presence, based on lessons learned in Haiti and in other contexts," the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, told the Security Council.

He said that in the coming months, his office will provide progress assessments to allow the 15-member body to take well-informed decisions for the drawdown and eventual withdrawal of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti ([MINUJUSTH](#)).

Established in October last year, MINUJUSTH replaced UN Stabilization Mission, which operated in the tiny island nation for 13 years.

Much smaller than its predecessor, which had more than 4,000 military and police personnel, MINUJUSTH assists Haiti to further develop national police, strengthen rule of law institutions and promote and protect human rights.

While the Security Council is expected to renew MINUJUSTH, whose initial mandate expires on 15 April 2018, Mr. Lacroix said the UN is determined to ensure it be the last peacekeeping operation deployed to Haiti.

Last month, UN released a strategic assessment of MINUJUSTH, including 11 benchmarks for a smooth transition to a non-peacekeeping presence by the last quarter of 2019.

"Haiti has come a long way to achieve the relative political and security stability it is now enjoying, but persistent economic uncertainties, which can result in social exclusion, particularly of youth and the most vulnerable, may undermine this progress," said Mr. Lacroix.

In mid March, he visited Haiti for the first time since [taking office](#) a year ago.

He said that MINUJUSTH is fully operational and actively implementing its mandate.

For instance, the Mission has co-located 135 individual police officers with the Haitian National Police (HNP) in each of Haiti's 10 departments, and it is dedicated to helping curb prolonged pretrial detention and prison overcrowding through on-site monitoring.

The weaknesses of the rule of law institutions continue to generate multiple human rights challenges and encourage a culture of impunity, he said, noting that priorities in this domain include the need to strengthen national human rights institutions.

Acknowledging the relationship between the UN peacekeeping mission and the Government of Haiti could have been smoother, he welcomed the most recent

announcement by the country's President of his priorities on reform, including the strengthening of the justice system and national police, the fight against impunity and prolonged pre-trial detention, the fight against and prevention of corruption, the establishment of the Permanent Electoral Council, and the launching of a national dialogue.



UN/MINUSTAH

Thanks to a water supply system funded by MINUSTAH, 18,000 people are now able to collect clean water in the remote neighbourhood of Los Palis, commune of Hinche, Haiti., by UN/MINUSTAH

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## [Donors pledge \\$2 billion to scale up aid delivery in Yemen; UN chief urges unrestricted access to make sure it reaches people in need](#)

An appeal that raised some \$2 billion to help millions of people in Yemen was a “remarkable success of international solidarity” for the country’s war-weary people, but aid alone will not provide a solution to the conflict, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters in Geneva after opening a [pledging conference for Yemen](#), Mr. Guterres [said](#) that [more than \\$2 billion](#) had been promised by Member States before the end of the event.

Above all, the UN chief said, “we need a serious political process to lead to a political solution because there was never a humanitarian solution for any humanitarian crisis. The solution has always been political and in Yemen what we need is a political solution for these pledging conferences not to be repeated in the future.”

The Secretary-General insisted that while humanitarian resources are very important, they are not enough; it was essential, he said, that they reach the people in need. “And for that, we need unrestricted access into Yemen; we need unrestricted access everywhere inside [the country].”

This call was also made by UN aid chief Mark Lowcock, who [said](#) during the event: “We need better access across the country. We want to see Sana’a airport reopen to commercial flights, notably for humanitarian cases.”

The event was co-chaired by the UN and the governments of Sweden and Switzerland. [Pledges](#) were made by 40 Member States and organizations, including the Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)), for humanitarian action in Yemen in 2018.

International pledges for nearly \$2 billion represent almost double the amount raised in 2017 to fund humanitarian aid in the Arabian Peninsula country.

Yemen has been at war for more than three years.

Conflict is ongoing there between an international coalition forces supporting President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi on the one side, and Houthi militias and allied units of the armed forces on the other, which seized control of the capital, Sana’a.

Aid agencies have repeatedly warned about the toll this has had on non-combatants: forced and repeated displacement of families, massive food insecurity and the collapse of essential services including healthcare and education.

In 2017, the world’s worst outbreak of cholera to date affected one million Yemenis, and diphtheria is now on the rise in what was already one of the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the region before fighting erupted.

Latest UN data indicates that a record 22.2 million people – some 75 per cent of the population – now need humanitarian assistance. The UN chief added that “a horrifying 8.4 million of these do not know how they will obtain their next meal.”



UN Photo/Violaine Martin

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock at the High Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen.

Mr. Lowcock, who is the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, stressed the dire situation faced by millions of families in Yemen.

The \$3 billion appeal target represented a “substantial sum of money,” he said, but it was “small in relation to the needs” of Yemenis.

Many now face a 25 per cent rise in the cost of food, the UN official said, explaining that the country imported nearly all of its daily requirements and had been hit hard by the sharp devaluation of the country’s currency, the Yemeni Rial.

In total, some 190 organizations – 150 of which are Yemeni – are involved in the UN-coordinated humanitarian response plan.

It has been responsible for scaling up food assistance to seven million people a month, and helped boost access to water, health services and sanitation.

Such support would not be possible without sufficient funding, Mr. Lowcock said, before listing other “key conditions” that needed to be met to enable an effective humanitarian response.

First among these is aid access.

All ports in Yemen needed “to remain open without restrictions”, the UN official said, a sentiment echoed by Ambassador Manuel Bessler, Head of Switzerland’s Humanitarian Aid Department, who stressed that Yemenis needed help immediately:

“We heard it again and again, Yemen needs urgent help, it needs access for

people [...] it needs access for the markets, for the sea ports and airports.”

The end of last year saw severe delays in unloading basic foodstuffs caused by the enforced closure of much of the country’s air, sea and land ports by coalition forces.

Mr. Lowcock also called for public sector salaries to be paid across Yemen after months of non-payment; this would prevent another cholera outbreak by providing essential services, he said, and keep children in school, providing essential continuity for them.



UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferre

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres briefs the media during a press conference at the High Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen.

Those comments were echoed by Isabella Lovin, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, who told journalists during a break in the pledging conference that every day the conflict drags on “is one day too many” for ordinary Yemenis.

There was the risk, she added, of “an entire generation of children” going without healthcare and education, while reports of children being recruited by armed groups were “deeply disturbing.”

In response to a question about the progress of UN-led efforts for peace, Mr. Guterres told reporters that his Special Envoy for Yemen [Martin Griffiths](#) had been “very encouraged” by his recent discussions with representatives of the warring parties in Sana’a and Riyadh.

The Special Envoy would also be going to the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Aden for talks, Mr. Guterres added.

These had brought about “positive perspectives” for an inclusive Yemeni dialogue, the UN Secretary-General said, adding that the opportunity for peace should be “seized [...] and not missed.”

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## [UN Disarmament Commission debates ways to prevent arms race in outer space](#)

Despite the deteriorating security situation, there are some signs of progress in the field of disarmament, such as the intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United States to hold summit talks, a senior United Nations official said Monday.

"At a time when global anxieties about nuclear weapons are higher than at any time since the Cold War, measures for disarmament and arms control are more vital than ever," Thomas Markram, Deputy High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, told the opening of the 2018 session of the [UN Disarmament Commission](#), held in New York.

"Since September, there have been no fundamental changes in the interrelated trends that are eroding efficacy in arms control and negatively affecting international peace and security," added Mr. Markram, as he delivered a speech on behalf of High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu.

He stressed, however, that there have been some recent signs of progress that point to where the Commission can make a unique and constructive contribution.

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As for the reported commitment by the DPRK to denuclearization following the recent talks held in China, Mr. Markram said that "we hope these positive developments will be the start of a longer process of sincere dialogue leading to sustainable peace and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula."

Positive developments also include the successful reduction of strategic nuclear forces by Russia and the US to the levels required by their New START Treaty.

Looking to build on this momentum, the Commission has also included prevention of an arms race in outer space in its agenda for this session.

"One specific collateral measure for disarmament on which this body should certainly be able to make a contribution is the goal of preserving outer space as a realm free of conflict," Mr. Markram said, noting that several recent trends are impacting the security and sustainability of outer space activities.

These include: the massive growth in the number and diversity of actors operating in outer space, including governments and the private sector; the proliferation of hazardous space debris; and increasing dependence on outer space in the civilian, government and military sectors.

“As long as some continue to see outer space as a potential realm for war-fighting, we will face increasing risk of weaponization and conflict,” he said.

However, there continues to be common ground among the major space-faring nations and other space actors on ways to make progress in a number of areas, including the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures to mitigate misunderstandings and reduce risk, he noted.

The Commission was created in 1978 as a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly, composed of all Member States, to consider various issues in the field of disarmament and make recommendations.

Read more about [today's debate](#) here.

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## [UN condemns attack on civilians in north-east Nigeria](#)

Denouncing an attack on civilians in Nigeria's restive north-east region, a senior United Nations humanitarian official has called on all parties to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and ensure the protection of civilians.

According to reports, at least 34 people were killed and over 90 injured in the attack that took place on 1 April near Belle Village, in the outskirts of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state.

[“Innocent civilians continue to suffer daily](#) from direct and indiscriminate attacks in north-east Nigeria [and] endless numbers of explosions, brutal killings, abductions and lootings continue to uproot the lives of women, children and men daily,” said Yassine Gaba, the acting UN Humanitarian Coordinator, in a news release on Monday.

“I call on all parties to the conflict to end this violence and to respect human life and dignity.”

The situation in north-east Nigeria has witnessed a steady deterioration over the past few weeks, particularly in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.

Since the beginning of the year, at least 120 women, children and men are reported to have been killed and over 210 seriously injured, in over 22



attacks allegedly carried out by non-state armed groups directly targeting civilians.

Of particular concern is the safety of women and girls, who remain at a constant threat of grave human rights abuses and gender-based violence as well as of abduction.

On 19 February, 110 school girls were abducted in an attack in Dapchi, Yobe state. In 2014, the region witnessed one of the worst such incidents in which over 270 girls were abducted from a government school in Chibok.

Violence and insecurity in the region has left close to 7.7 million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance – especially food, shelter, water, healthcare and protection.

Since the start of the conflict in 2009, more than 20,000 people have been killed; thousands of girls, women, boys and men have been abducted; and children continue to be used routinely as so-called “suicide” bombers.