

[UN releases \\$9.1 million to fill 'critical healthcare gaps' in Yemen](#)

7 February 2018 – With only 50 per cent of medical facilities fully functional in Yemen, the United Nations health agency is striving to fill a ‘critical’ healthcare shortage and will use a \$9.1 million emergency response grant to assist 630,000 vulnerable people in districts around Sana’a and al-Hudayda.

The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) is working with partners ‘to fill [critical gaps](#) in the provision of basic healthcare, to respond to disease outbreaks, to strengthen disease surveillance, to distribute medical supplies and to deliver life-saving services to mothers and their children,’ said WHO Yemen Representative Nevio Zagaria.

The grant from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)) will be used to deliver urgent health assistance to 189,000 internally displaced persons and 441,000 people from host communities, including chronically ill people, pregnant and lactating mothers, severely malnourished children, and injured people.

Assistance will be provided in the form of health services close to where they live, including for general services and trauma; child and nutrition care; reproductive, maternal and new-born care; mental health; and treatment for communicable diseases and life-threatening non-communicable diseases.

‘CERF funding will provide additional resources help make our work possible at a time of great need for the people of Yemen,’ said Mr. Zagaria.

With only half of health facilities fully functional, 16.4 million people in Yemen require assistance to ensure adequate access to healthcare, with 9.3 million in acute need. Ongoing outbreaks of cholera and diphtheria have underscored the impacts of a failing health system.

[Liberia: UN mission farewell ceremony honours last departing police and military personnel](#)

6 February 2018 – After 14 years of serving in the United Nations Mission in Liberia ([UNMIL](#)), an official farewell ceremony was held on Tuesday in the capital, Monrovia, to honour the last departing Police and Military personnel

serving there.

“Today, [Liberia is a success story](#) and classical example of a post conflict nation that has emerged stronger than ever before, the country is indeed a symbol of hope for other nations engulfed in conflicts and wars” said Force Commander Major General Salihu Zaway Uba, who heads UNMIL’s Military component – that includes Nigeria, Pakistan and Ukraine personnel.

In 2003, UNMIL began with 16,475 uniformed personnel. Since that time, 61 contingents from various countries have served there. At Tuesday’s farewell ceremony 404 Military and 285 Police personnel were honoured.

According to the Major General, the Mission’s military and police have taken greater stride towards strengthening peace and security, rule of law and governance, among others in Liberia.

Police Commissioner Simon Blatchly Heads the Formed Police Unit, which is composed of Nigerian and Chinese personnel.

The Force Commander stated that it was not all roses particularly for the military, which had the highest fatalities of 138 personnel, while the police lost 21 persons.

“As we are closing, the memory of those 159 persons and others in the Mission will continue to live in our minds, we will continue to pay special tribute to them and those who contributed to peace and security in Liberia” said the Major General.

On behalf of Police Commissioner Blatchly, the Force Commander expressed their profound appreciation to the uniformed component of UNMI, saying “As individual units and contingents, you have done remarkably well to keep the flags high, we are proud of your endeavours as significant contribution to peace in Liberia.”

[Over 14,000 farmers in rural Nepal to benefit from new UN project](#)

6 February 2018 – Thousands of family farmers are expected to benefit from a United Nations Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) initiative in Nepal that uses an innovative approach to build both the farmers’ capacities as well as add value to their products.

Being implemented in partnership with the Government of Nepal, the Cooperative Market Development Programme aims to establish and operationalize cooperative market chain of fruits and vegetables to increase farmers’ income and other livelihood opportunities.

“This [partnership] will directly benefit thousands of Nepali farmers over the next five years, through crucial support in modernizing their production and market chain,” said Renaud Meyer, the UNDP Country Director for Nepal.

“The active engagement and financing from the Ministry [of Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation] shows strong commitment, leadership and ownership of the programme,” he added.

According to UNDP-Nepal, the Programme focuses on six districts near the country’s capital, Kathmandu, which despite having a number of farmers’ cooperative groups, are plagued by poor infrastructure, lack of transport and storage facilities, inadequate access to market information as well as regulatory and institutional bottlenecks.

In addition to improving infrastructure, the initiative also aims to enhance quality, quantity and consistency of the supply of fruits and vegetables as well as train farmers on employing better techniques, as well as building their marketing and institutional capacity.

In all, about 14,000 farmers and their families are expected to benefit from the initiative, which is also expected to contribute to the South Asian country’s implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 on ending poverty in all its forms, and ending hunger and achieving food security, respectively.

Migrant deaths along US-Mexico border remain high despite drop in crossings – UN agency

6 February 2018 – The number of migrants losing their lives attempting to cross the United States-Mexico border in 2017 remained high in spite of substantial decrease in the number of arrests along the frontier, the United Nations migration agency reported on Tuesday.

In a [news release](#), the UN International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) said that US Border Patrol figures show 341,084 migrants were apprehended on the country’s southwestern border in 2017 as against 611,689 in 2016 – a drop of about 44 per cent.

However, 2017 recorded 412 migrant deaths, compared to 398 the preceding year.

“The increase in deaths is especially concerning, as the available data indicate that far fewer migrants entered the US via its border with Mexico in the last year,” said Frank Laczko, Director of IOM’s Global Migration Data

Analysis Centre.

According to the UN agency, prolonged exposure to the extreme environments in the border region, where temperatures often top 104 degree Fahrenheit (40 degree Celsius), combined with the difficulty of bringing assistance those in need in remote areas have repeatedly been cited as leading causes of death.

Texas, where 191 migrant deaths were recorded in the last year, is a particular area of concern and the 2017 total represents a 26 per cent increase over the 151 fatalities recorded in the state in 2016, added IOM in the news release.

At the same time, though data on migrant fatalities on the US-Mexico border are more accessible than in many other regions of the world, they remain incomplete and the number of deaths reported by the US Border Patrol, includes only those which agents deal with directly.

“This means that federally reported figures could seriously underestimate the real number of deaths,” said Julia Black, data collection coordinator for IOM’s Missing Migrants Project.

IOM also reported that the “vast majority” of migrant border deaths recorded by the Project occur on the US side of the border – though one reason for this may be that coroners, medical examiners, and sheriffs in US border counties are more likely to regularly report data on migrant deaths to the agency’s staff.

Reports of deaths south of the border often surface locally from radio stations and small newspapers, or from social media, the UN agency added, noting that the information on fatalities could come weeks, even months after they occur.

Since the start of the [Missing Migrants Project](#), IOM has recorded 1,468 deaths on the US-Mexico border, including 14 deaths in January 2018.

[Without urgent funding, Burundi risks becoming a ‘forgotten crisis’ – UN refugee agency](#)

6 February 2018 – Warning that Burundi could become a “forgotten crisis,” with the number of people struggling for survival increasing by the day, United Nations agencies together with aid partners on Wednesday launched a funding appeal to keep the humanitarian situation from deteriorating further.

“Food rations [are] cut in many of the neighbouring countries,” said Filippo

Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, adding that vulnerable groups, including women, who have already been exposed to violence cannot be provided with the necessary support.

Since 2015, over 400,000 refugees and asylum seekers have fled the small central African landlocked nation, escaping human rights abuses, political uncertainty, and deteriorating humanitarian situation.

Over 60 per cent of that number have fled to Tanzania (254,000 refugees) and several thousands to Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda. Furthermore, with the volatile situation persisting, there are fears that the total number of refugees could rise to 450,000 by the end of 2018. Humanitarian efforts to assist those in need, however, also remain constrained due to severe lack of funding.

The \$391 million [Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) includes targeted response in those four countries along with the resources needed in each context.

Fully funded, some 430,000 vulnerable persons will benefit from the Plan through 2018.

The common thread is ensuring that the majority of the displaced living in refugee camps (about 85 per cent), are provided with food, shelter and education as well as protection from sexual and gender based violence.

“For the moment, the conditions are still fragile, so support to host countries continues to be a priority that I hope the world will not forget,” added Mr. Grandi.

Funds will also go towards strengthening social services, livelihood opportunities, protection and restoration environment as well as providing documentation and training for government officials on refugee status determination.

UNHCR ‘not encouraging’ refugee returns at this time – Spokesperson

According to Babar Baloch, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), over the last few years, some Burundian refugees have decided to return home, and are seeking to re-establish their lives in their communities.

They, however, are facing considerable economic pressures and food insecurity.

“At this stage, UNHCR and partners are not promoting or encouraging refugee returns to Burundi,” said the UNHCR spokesperson, noting that the agency is working with the relevant Governments to assist those who indicate they have made a free and informed choice to return voluntarily, to do so in safety and dignity.

“We are also reiterating our appeal to Burundi’s neighbours to continue to uphold their international responsibilities and commitments to receive

asylum-seekers at their borders and offer protection to those who need it," he added.

An outbreak of violence in Burundi in April 2015 and, later, a political crisis along with deterioration in security and humanitarian environment has pushed the country deeper into crisis and continues fuel the exodus of its populations, some of whom have been displaced as far as to South Africa and Kenya.