

World Cancer Day: UN agency chief urges greater access to diagnosis, prevention and treatment services

2 February 2018 – Millions of people suffering from cancer in developing countries still lack access to effective prevention, screening, early diagnosis and treatment, the head of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)) said Friday, urging continued efforts to ensure greater access to these vital services.

“Twenty-eight African countries do not have a single radiotherapy machine,” [said](#) Yukiya Amano, the Director-General of IAEA, at an event commemorating World Cancer Day, marked annually on 3 February.

“The IAEA will continue to work hard to change that, and to improve facilities in other regions of the world where the need is also great,” he added, noting that addressing the challenges confronting the developing world will remain a priority for the Agency.

“We will strive to continuously improve the services we offer our Member States so they can provide better care – and hope – for their people,” he stressed.

Globally, cancer is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, with approximately 14 million new cases and 8 million cancer-related deaths annually and there are concerns that the number of new cases could rise by about 70 per cent over the next 20 years.

Observed every year on 4 February, [World Cancer Day](#) aims to raise awareness on the broad class of disease which can affect any part of the body, and the increased global burden that cancer inflicts on people – both poor and rich.

This year, the observation [includes](#) a discussion on applications of nuclear techniques in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, as well as one on importance of multidisciplinary team for optimal cancer care.

The commemoration also includes a “health fair” showcasing a variety of information and services including detection of various types of cancer, including breast, prostate, colon, and skin cancer. It is being held at the Vienna International Centre Rotunda.

Many cancer can prevent by avoiding risk factors such as smoking – WHO

[According](#) to the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), between 30 to 50 per cent of cancers can currently be prevented by avoiding risk factors and implementing existing evidence-based prevention strategies.

Some of these risk factors include tobacco use including cigarettes and smokeless tobacco; being overweight or obese; unhealthy diet with low fruit

and vegetable intake; lack of physical activity alcohol use; sexually transmitted Human papillomavirus (HPV)-infection; infection by hepatitis or other carcinogenic infections; ionizing and ultraviolet radiation; urban air pollution; and indoor smoke from household use of solid fuels.

Tobacco use is the single most important risk factor for cancer and is responsible for approximately 22 per cent of cancer-related deaths globally.

The cancer burden can also be reduced through early detection of cancer and management of patients who develop cancer.

SEE ALSO: [WHO Factsheet on Cancer](#)

Some prevention strategies, according to WHO, can include increase avoidance of the risk factors listed above; vaccination against HPV and hepatitis B viruses; controlling occupational hazards; and reducing exposure to ultraviolet radiation and ionizing radiation.

Furthermore, many cancers have a high chance of cure if diagnosed early and treated adequately.

“When identified early, cancer is more likely to respond to effective treatment and can result in a greater probability of surviving, less morbidity, and less expensive treatment,” said the UN health agency in a fact-sheet, noting that significant improvements can be made in the lives of cancer patients by detecting cancer early and avoiding delays in care.

[Ahead of monsoon season, UN supports Bangladesh's efforts protect Rohingya camps from floods, landslides](#)

2 February 2018 – The United Nations refugee agency and its partners are ramping up to assist Bangladesh's efforts to mitigate some expected impacts of the upcoming monsoon season in the country, during which, according to an initial risk analysis, at least 100,000 Rohingya refugees could be in grave danger from landslides and floods.

“The adverse weather conditions, including [potential cyclones](#), could put tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees staying at the highly congested settlements in Cox's Bazar district at serious risk,” Andrej Mahecic, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) told reporters at the regular press briefing in Geneva, Switzerland, on Friday.

The findings of an initial risk analysis of the world's largest refugee settlement area in Kutapalong and Balukhali indicate that at least 100,000 of

the more than 569,000 refugees there could be in grave danger from landslides and floods.

Up to one third of the settlement area could be flooded. As a result, more than 85,000 refugees could lose their shelters. Another 23,000 refugees living on steep slopes within the site could be at risk of landslides, Mr. Mahecic said.

Key services in the settlement are also at risk of being washed away, including latrines, washrooms, tube wells, and health centres, and access roads into the settlements could be blocked and inaccessible to vehicles, making it hard to provide emergency aid. There is also a high risk for public health situation, especially of outbreaks of communicable diseases, he added.

The Government of Bangladesh has acknowledged and committed to addressing these concerns, while UN and humanitarian partners have set up an emergency preparedness group to co-ordinate these efforts.

UNHCR has already taken a number of steps, including provision of biodegradable sandbags to help anchor the structures in heavy rains.

Several engineering projects are also underway to build bamboo-reinforced footpaths and stairs, raised bridges, bamboo/brick/concrete retaining walls for soil stabilisation and drainage networks.

The work is scheduled to start within the next few weeks to level some of the steep hilltops to reduce the risk of landslides, as well as to increase the amount of useable area.

A relocation of some families living in the most precarious parts of the camp will also start soon.

Early warning systems are also being put in place, with public information campaigns also underway. UNHCR is also working with the Bangladeshi authorities and other key operational agencies to pre-position materials and heavy-lifting machinery.

Bangladesh: Three decades of service and sacrifice in UN peacekeeping

2 February 2018 – United Nations peacekeepers come from diverse cultures and speak different languages, but share a common purpose: the protection of vulnerable communities and the provision of support to countries struggling to move from conflict to peace.

Bangladesh is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations.

The South Asian nation first deployed uniformed personnel to serve with the Organization in 1988 when they were deployed to help monitor the armistice between Iran and Iraq. Over the past three decades, the contributions of these brave men and women in the countries in which they serve have been immense.

As of December 2017, there were 7,246 Bangladeshi troops and police personnel in 10 missions around the world. Bangladeshi peacekeepers work in various roles – some provide protection, others heal and design roads – but all serve under the blue flag to support the governments and peoples of the countries in which they serve.

Below is a snapshot of where Bangladeshi peacekeepers work and what they do.



Photo: Logan Abassi/MINUSTAH

In Haiti, an all-female Bangladeshi Formed Police Unit served with the UN mission, known as MINUSTAH, from 2015 until October 2017, when the mission completed its work. Pictured, the contingent at its departure ceremony. The 160-strong contingent focused on reconstruction efforts after the deadly earthquake in 2010.



Photo: MONUSCO/Abel Kavanagh

UN peacekeepers from Bangladesh work in some of the world's hotspots, including the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and the Darfur region of Sudan. Above, peacekeepers on patrol in Bunia, Ituri Province, DRC. At least 132 Bangladeshi peacekeepers have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Bangladeshi troops regularly patrol villages to ensure security. Above, a patrol commander from the Bangladeshi battalion meets with the chief of ADA village, in the Ituri Province of eastern DRC, during a routine security patrol. Bangladesh is currently the second-largest troop-contributing country to UN peacekeeping.

Members of the Bangladeshi contingents play different roles in UN peacekeeping missions around the world. Pictured, a UN peacekeeper from Bangladesh provides free medical consultations to residents of a community in the Central African Republic.

In 2017, Bangladesh sent two female combat pilots to the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) – Flight Lieutenant Nayma Haque and Flight Lieutenant Tamanna-E-Lutfi.

Bangladeshi engineers serving with the UN mission in South Sudan are leading efforts to improve a 78-kilometre stretch of road between Gumbo and Mangalla, on the artery between Juba and Bor. The road connects local communities, allowing them to more easily bring goods to the market.

[Humanitarian diplomacy 'getting nowhere' in Syria warns UN special adviser](#)

1 February 2018 – Civilians in Syria's besieged areas have not seen a single convoy of humanitarian aid arrive for a full two months, a senior United Nations adviser said on Thursday, lamenting that diplomatic efforts appear "totally impotent," and that hundreds of lives are being lost as a result.

Briefing reporters in Geneva after a meeting of a UN-supported humanitarian task force, Jan Egeland, Special Adviser to the UN Special Envoy, said the most recent aid convoy arrived on the 28th November 2017, in the town of al-Nashibiya, and consisted of aid for only 7,200 people.

Many civilians fleeing conflict areas took refuge in the area of Idlib, where fighting has since flared up, leaving them with little choice but to move on again.

Mr. Egeland said that the history of the war in Syria is that of millions of people fleeing for their lives every single year for the past five years, and that the situation is "screaming for a ceasefire."

"This is a war when armed men are specializing in the suffering of civilian populations and those that are the sponsors, are not able to end it."

He added that an end to the fighting was essential, and that this would require cooperation from Russia, Iran and Turkey.

Asked if the recent meeting of Syrian parties in the Russian city of Sochi could help the humanitarian situation, Mr. Egeland said he hopes that the meetings will result in progress, adding that it hasn't so far, but "this is very early days."

Mali human rights situation still a concern – UN report

1 February 2018 – Despite the signing of a 2015 Peace Agreement, the human rights situation in Mali still remains a concern, according to a United Nations report published on Thursday.

It found that more than 600 cases of human rights violations and abuses were committed between January 2016 and June 2017: an interim period established under the peace deal aimed at laying the foundations for a democratic and unified country.

“This report provides useful insights on the [challenges and progress](#) in the human rights situation in northern and central Mali,” said Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali ([MINUSMA](#)), which issued the report together with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).

“It also demonstrates that respect for human rights, far from being a generator of tension, may contribute, on the contrary, to creating an environment that is conducive to the implementation of the Peace Agreement.”

The Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali signed by the authorities, a rebel alliance from the north and a pro-government armed coalition, was finalized in June 2015.

The UN study showed that more than 800 other incidents involving unidentified armed elements and which put the lives of civilians at risk also took place during the reporting period.

Overall, these acts of violence impacted more than 2,700 victims, the majority of whom were men and children.

They include 441 individuals who were killed.

Nearly 80 per cent of violations, abuses and other incidents that put civilians at risk involved armed movements that were signatories to the Peace Agreement, those which had not signed it, or unidentified armed elements.

Perpetrators also included elements affiliated with Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine and other similar groups.

Meanwhile, the Malian defence and security forces, and other state actors, were involved in 20 per cent of the cases, while international forces, including MINUSMA, were involved in two per cent.

The report said primary factors which led to the violations include

confrontations between signatory armed groups in the Kidal region, the expansion of activities of AQIM, Ansar Dine and other similar groups, and increasing armed robberies and other violent crime in the central regions of the country, as well as counter-terrorism operations conducted by the state.