

Central African Republic: UN agency registers thousands of refugees arriving in Chad

5 January 2018 – In the wake of a recent violence flare-up in the Central African Republic (CAR), the United Nations refugee agency said Friday that it is registering and assisting thousands of mostly women and children refugees arriving in Chad.

“More than 5,000 refugees are estimated to have arrived in southern Chad since late December, escaping clashes between the armed groups Mouvement national pour la libération de la Centrafrique (MNLIC) and Révolution et Justice (RJ) in the town of Paoua,” Babar Baloch, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), [told](#) the regular press briefing in Geneva.

Located in CAR’s prefecture of Ouham-Pendé, the town also has an additional 20,000 people displaced internally.

“With our government partners in Chad, UNHCR has so far registered some 2,350 new refugees in the village of Odoumian, located some 15 kilometres from the CAR border,” he added.

Many of the refugees trekked to Chad on foot. Local officials say some 5,600 have arrived since 27 December, when the recent fighting started. Over 1,000 new refugees are also reported to have arrived at existing camps near the town of Goré.

“The influx is the largest movement of refugees from CAR, exceeding the total number for 2017, when about 2,000 fled into Chad,” the spokesperson continued, adding that many are reporting widespread human rights abuses by armed groups in villages alongside the CAR-Chad border.

Although the border with CAR is officially closed, Mr. Baloch welcomed Chad’s humanitarian gesture in allowing the refugees to seek international protection inside its territory.

Host to over 75,000 Central Africans, UNHCR is helping Chadian authorities to register and aid the refugees.

“With its partners, UNHCR is also providing medical check-ups for the many refugees arriving in poor health, some unable to walk,” he elaborated.

Armed violence and attacks inside CAR, have resulted in the country’s highest-ever recorded number of refugees and internally displaced – almost one-fourth of the population of around 4.6 million.

[UN readying training guidelines to help cabin crews identify, report human trafficking](#)

4 January 2018 – The United Nations is taking the global combat against human trafficking into the skies as the Organization’s human rights office and its Montreal-based civil aviation agency begin putting the final touches on training guidelines that could help airline cabin crew spot possible victims.

Human trafficking is considered the [third most lucrative](#) illegal activity on the planet – after the illegal sale of arms and drugs – and its clandestine nature makes it difficult to quantify with precision. In 2017, the UN International Labour Organization (ILO) [estimated](#) that some 40.3 million people worldwide were subjected to forced labour and modern slavery.

Men, women and children are recruited, transferred, harboured or received, through the use of force or deception, to be exploited into prostitution rings, forced labour, domestic servitude or the removal of their organs.

With all this in mind, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is working with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to develop guidelines for airlines operators to train cabin crews in identifying and reporting trafficked individuals.

Cabin crewmembers are in a unique situation where they can observe passengers over a certain period of time, allowing them to use their observation skills to identify a potential victim of trafficking, the document reads.

In an interview with *UN News*, Youla Haddadin, Advisor on Trafficking in Persons with OHCHR, said cabin crew and flight attendants develop strong observation skills and the jointly-developed guidelines can draw on those skills and provide cabin crew with the reporting and response procedures if they are faced with a potential trafficking situation.

[The indicators] can be used when [cabin crew] crew are trying to identify potential victims or persons accompanying them. They should observe for a period of time and collect information [while following the principle of] ‘do no harm’ – ensuring that a potential victim is not further jeopardized and ensuring their own safety and that of other passengers, she explained.

Ms. Haddadin advised using the proposed guidelines to collect information and assess the situation, share it with other colleagues and then, if they feel a response should be initiated, report it to the pilot, the law enforcement official on any plane, who will then notify ground crew.

“The cabin crewmember’s role ends there,” she said, noting that cabin crew are not law enforcement officers.

The Guidelines document gives examples of indicators for cabin crews on how to identify potential victims, including situations where a passenger is not in control of their documentation or has false identity documents; is not aware of their final destination; or may not be allowed to speak for themselves directly.

Ms. Haddadin stressed that the proposed guidelines were developed by members of the [ICAO Cabin Safety Group](#), which is comprised of representatives of airlines and national civil aviation authorities. “We sat around the table and I provided the elements related to international law, trafficking and human rights, and they contributed [their expertise].”

She told *UN News* that the guidelines are in the final stages of approval by ICAO and OHCHR and will be rolled out “very soon.” Some airlines have already started developing their own modules; a few in the United States had already begun training their cabin crews and staff on victim identification. Canada had already developed its training module and had adapted its module to the proposed guidelines.

[UN officials welcome reopening of communications between two Koreas](#)

3 January 2018 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has welcomed the reopening of the communication channel between the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea, his deputy spokesman said on Wednesday.

“It is always good to have a dialogue between the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea,” Farhan Haq told reporters in response to a question during the daily news briefing at UN Headquarters in New York.

He went on to say that the UN remains committed to ensuring the implementation of Security Council resolutions on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. “We hope that enhanced diplomatic initiatives will help achieve this goal,” he added.

According to media reports, DPRK announced Wednesday the reopening of a channel of communication, the day after the offer of dialogue made by the Government of the Republic of Korea.

This communication channel, established in August 1972, was cut in February 2016 by Pyongyang after Seoul decided to close the inter-Korean industrial

zone of Kaesong, in the wake of a nuclear test by the DPRK.

Meanwhile, the President of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, met today with Ja Song Nam, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to the United Nations, at the request of the Permanent Representative.

According to a note issued by the Assembly President's Office, Mr. Lajčák said he was pleased with the readiness of DPRK to constructively engage in a dialogue with the Republic of Korea, including a possible participation of a delegation from DPRK in the Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang, Republic of Korea, as well as with the reopening of the communication channels.

[Haiti: New UN mission to take innovative approach to strengthening rule of law](#)

3 January 2018 – The head of the new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, known as [MINUJUSTH](#), has said the operation will carry out its work in an innovative in the island nation – complete with an unusually tight timeframe and a bench-marking exit strategy.

Describing what is unique about the mission, the Special Representative and Head of MINUJUSTH, Susan Page, underscored that it focusses “exclusively on the rule of law.”

“The new mandate by the [UN] Security Council is to work with the Government of Haiti to strengthen its rule of law intuitions. It's also to continue to support the HNP, the Haitian National Police, and to work on justice and human rights – and that includes human rights reporting, monitoring and analysis,” she told *UN News*.

MINUJUSTH is also unique in that its mandate calls for a benchmarking exit strategy.

“Within two years, we can figure out how we [will exit the country] but with benchmarks for progress that can be measured,” she stressed.

The mission head stated that the country team created a framework with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), which, along with SDG 16 – [to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies](#) – is working in conjunction with the Haitian Government.

“This is a way of bringing the entire country team together, along with the peacekeeping mission, to attain those goals,” she continued, adding

that the Government has already signed up to be a partner in trying to accomplish this for its own development.

Mobile team approach

Ms. Page explained that while MINUJUSTH is almost exclusively based in the capital, Port-au-Prince, it will also have a 'mobile approach' that will take teams into the field reaching the greatest number of people.

The mission chief told *UN News* that the teams will focus on peace, justice and rule of law, to help the people figure out their needs, and then connect them with top-level political figures to see how the UN can help the Government address those needs.

VIDEO: Susan Page explains how MINUJUSTH will help the Government of Haiti protect its population, improving its justice, police and human right systems.

Once they have a baseline of what the people are looking for, what they need knowledge about, we hope that this bottom-up and top-down approach will help Haiti to strengthen its own institutions with a bit of push from us, she explained.

Ms. Page sees this new approach as a possible new peacekeeping model, commenting that with the aim of doing more with less, one of the ways we can reach people is by being more flexible and being more mobile.

On the ground

Turning to the situation on the ground, Ms. Page noted that while Haiti's political system had been less than stable, now, all of that is settled.

Now that Haiti has its elected officials at all levels, including at the lowest levels in the communes, we have something to work with, she said.

The police will continue to work with the Haitian National Police on their strategic development plan, but they also have a programme that is strengthening the mid-level to upper level cadres of the National Police, she added

As for the ongoing combat against cholera in the country, Ms. Page expressed hope to get to zero transmission.

One of the ways we continue to work is through the country team, she said, mentioning the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), and the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)), which are working to strengthen sanitation and water systems.

“It’s really a whole of UN approach; and with the Government’s strategic vision and roadmap of how they intend to get there. And we can help them with that,” she said reassuringly.

[UN agency’s mobile reproductive health teams reach women in besieged area of Aleppo](#)

3 January 2018 – The United Nations reproductive rights agency has reached the Sheikh Maqsoud area of Aleppo, where thousands of women have been cut off from medical care for years.

The UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)) said its mobile reproductive teams reached the area on 30 December, providing family planning services, and antenatal and postpartum care to more than 80 women.

“Conflict typically puts these women and their babies at risk. Physical hardship and emotional trauma often complicate delivery,” [said](#) Massimo Diana, UNFPA’s Representative in Syria. “Health services are deteriorated after the seven years of crisis in Syria, in addition to the limited supplies and high patient loads.”

One health facility is operational in Sheikh Maqsoud, serving an estimated 50 patients per day. According to UNFPA that is “not sufficient to meet local needs, where about 3,000 women are estimated to be pregnant.”

The UN agency said the existing health facility is poorly equipped, with no capacity to perform Caesarean section operations or other major surgeries. There is no ambulance available to transfer critical cases to hospitals outside the area.

Humanitarian responders also noted that most roads are in disrepair and choked with mud, limiting access. The area also lacks an operating electrical system, forcing the community to rely on generators and expensive fuel, when available.

In addition to lacking quality reproductive health care, humanitarian workers observed a large number of people living with disabilities, including wheelchair users, as well as families in desperate need of warm clothing for the winter.