

[Recalling Algiers attack, Secretary-General says, 2007 bombing 'hit heart of the UN'](#)

11 December 2017 – In a message commemorating the 2007 bombing of the United Nations offices in Algiers, the capital of Algeria, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres expressed the Organization's continuing support to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

"These terrorists hit Algeria, but they also hit the UN in the heart. It was the entire staff of the Organization who was touched, who felt this pain," said the Secretary-General, in a message in French.

"Unfortunately, these attacks are only increasing and we are now targeted around the world, while we are here to support the most vulnerable populations," he highlighted.

Seventeen staff members from several UN humanitarian and development agencies were killed on 11 December 2007 when a car bomb ripped through the offices. A number of Algerians were also killed and over one hundred injured.

"We will not forget them. We will not forget the pain of those who remain, who must survive after such trauma and continue their lives, broken homes and interrupted dreams," he added in his message, expressing his deepest sympathies and support.

Also in the message the Secretary-General expressed his full solidarity with the people and the Government of Algeria in their efforts to fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

"The United Nations will always be at your side," he said.

[UN aid official in Yemen urges lifting of blockade, says millions a 'step away from famine'](#)

11 December 2017 – The continuing blockade of ports in Yemen must be lifted, a senior United Nations humanitarian official today urged, calling for greater access to more than eight million people on the verge of famine.

Speaking from Sana'a, Jamie McGoldrick, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in

Yemen [said](#) that “the lives of millions of people, including 8.4 million Yemenis who are a step away from famine, hinge on our ability to continue our operations and to provide health, safe water, food, shelter and nutrition support.”

He called on all groups involved in the conflict to “fully facilitate sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access, as required by international humanitarian law.”

Mr. McGoldrick said this means lifting of restrictions on Yemen’s Red Sea ports and Sana’a airport, which continue to delay aid from entering the country and hindering the availability of food and fuel.

He also urged parties to the conflict to ensure protection for aid workers and facilities, process visas and not interfere unnecessarily in the work of aid organizations.

The UN aid official also warned about renewed violence along the western coast of the country and other parts of Yemen.

“I am greatly alarmed at reports of hospitals being damaged, populations being impeded from fleeing to safe areas and killings and arbitrary detentions reportedly being carried out in Sana’a,” said Mr. McGoldrick.

In the statement, the official warned that fresh violence would “only lead to further devastation” for the 22 million people in need.

He said that a political solution is the only means to put an end to the suffering, and reiterated his called on any countries with influence to step up their engagement to protect civilians and put an end to this conflict.

“As stated by the UN Secretary-General, it is in the interest of everybody to stop this war,” he said echoing António Guterres’s comments in recent weeks.

[Human Rights Day: UN officials pledge to focus on advancement of human dignity, equality and rights](#)

11 December 2017 – Top United Nations officials on Monday urged everyone to raise their voices and stand up for the rights of others, while celebrating the launch of a year-long campaign on the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights during a special event at UN Headquarters in New York.

“Over seven decades, this mighty document has helped to profoundly change our

world,” [said Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Monday, at an event to commemorate [Human Rights Day](#), observed annually on 10 December.

“[The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)] establishes the equality and dignity of every human being. It stipulates that every government has a duty to enable all people to enjoy their inalienable rights and freedoms. And it establishes that these rights are universal,” he added.

Mr. Guterres highlighted the progress achieved by humankind since the adoption of the Universal Declaration, including advancing and protecting the rights of women, children and victims of discrimination as well as in holding accountable perpetrators of gross human rights violations and abuses.

However, he also called for taking a stock in areas where progress has not been achieved.

“In practice, recognition of the inherent dignity and equal rights of human beings is still far from universal,” he said, noting that millions around the world continue to suffer human rights violations and abuses. “And human rights defenders still face persecution, reprisals are rising and the space for civil society action is shrinking in very many nations,” added Mr. Guterres.

Participants at the Human Rights Day and launch of the year-long campaign for the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that included Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, General Assembly President Miroslav Lajčák, former High Commissioners for Human Rights Louise Arbour and Navi Pillay and Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour. Photo: UN WebTV screen capture

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[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

Underscoring the need for all sections of the society to “speak out and take a stand” for human rights, the UN chief announced his own pledge that he will respect the rights of others regardless of who they are, and will uphold their rights even when he disagrees with them.

“When anyone’s human rights are denied, everyone’s rights are undermined, so I will stand up. I will raise my voice. I will take action. I will use my rights to stand up for your rights,” he committed.

Also speaking at the ceremony, Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly highlighted that the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was not only a milestone for the General Assembly, but was also one for humanity.

“But [the Universal Declaration] did not create human rights. They existed before this. Not on paper – but in people. In fact, human rights are an

inherent part of humanity. And they always will be,” he said, adding that while the rights can be denied, they cannot be taken away – neither by law nor policy or action.

Recalling the efforts, that ultimately led to the adoption of the Universal Declaration in 1948, he called on everyone to use the seminal document to inspire themselves and help protect and promote everyone’s human rights.

“Stand up taller – and speak up louder – for human rights,” he urged.

Also speaking today were Wu Hongbo, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; as well as Louise Arbour and Navi Pillay, former High Commissioners of Human Rights.

The [campaign](#), which was officially [launched](#) yesterday by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein at Palais de Chaillot in Paris on Sunday.

[Security tensions may have deepened rights violations in DPRK, Security Council told](#)

11 December 2017 – People’s rights are reportedly violated in “almost every aspect” of their lives in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), the United Nations human rights chief warned Monday, stressing that security tensions on the Korean Peninsula should not negate concerns about the situation of ordinary people there.

“I regret that it is impossible for me to point to any significant improvement in the human rights situation [...] Indeed, security tensions seem to have deepened the extremely serious human rights violations endured by the DPRK’s 25 million people,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein told the Security Council via video link from Paris.

He said that while his Office ([OHCHR](#)) struggles to paint the complete picture of the situation due to the lack of access to the DPRK, “escapees have reported to us extremely widespread violations of rights in almost every aspect of people’s lives.”

Those violations include widespread torture in detention centres, where it is used to extract information or confessions from people suspected of such activities as planning to leave the country or communicating with the outside world. Detainees work in mines or infrastructure projects in conditions of severe deprivation.

Moreover, there is absolute secrecy about people detained in the five political prison camps which are also reportedly operational, Mr. Zeid said, noting that OHCHR's interviews with persons who have left the DPRK indicate that fear of being sent to these facilities is a powerful instrument of control.

Repatriated escapees are routinely subjected to multiple forms of torture and ill-treatment at detention centres, including beatings, forced labour, deprivation of food and healthcare and sexual violence. Women are subjected to invasive body searches that may amount to rape under international law.

Mr. Zeid also said that no progress has been made regarding cases of international abductions and enforced disappearances of foreign nationals.

"The people of the DPRK also face severe violations of their economic, social and cultural rights," Mr. Zeid said, noting that they face chronic food insecurity, and pervasive corruption that is forcing even very poor people to frequently pay hefty bribes to enable their children to pursue primary or higher education, to engage in private business, and access healthcare.

Mr. Zeid said sanctions imposed by the Security Council on the DPRK may be adversely affecting the humanitarian assistance provided by UN agencies and others, which is literally a lifeline for some 13 million acutely vulnerable individuals in the country, asking the 15-member body to conduct an assessment of the human rights impact of sanctions, and minimize their adverse humanitarian consequences.

Above all, every effort must be made to ensure the Government of the DPRK makes urgent changes to the country's laws and policies, to enable greater freedom and access to fundamental services and goods.

OHCHR is strengthening monitoring efforts by recruiting criminal law experts and establishing a repository of cases to be used in future prosecutions.

While there is debate whether it is adequate for the Council to discuss human rights issues, today's meeting was OHCHR's fourth briefing to the Council on the DPRK in as many years.

Also briefing the Council was Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenca, who recalled that in response to the accelerated nuclear and ballistic missile testing by the DPRK, the Council has strengthened its DPRK sanctions regime with three additional resolutions since the last briefing.

Citing the possibility that sanctions may have a detrimental impact on livelihoods and medical care, he encouraged all international and non-governmental organizations who are facing operational challenges to use the established process to inform or seek the necessary guidance or exemption from the DPRK sanctions regime.

This will help to remove ambiguity and provide reassurance for the relevant entities and partners to facilitate the work of such organizations in the DPRK, he said, urging the sanction's regime to continue to expeditiously

review these requests.

Mr. Jenca also urged all Member States to support the lifesaving activities in the country, as some \$114 million are required to address the critical humanitarian needs in the DPRK.

He also called on financial institutions to exercise their corporate social responsibility and provide the lifesaving banking services for humanitarian organizations in the country. The channel would be sent to the Security Council for approval.

[Lift in global economy prompts opportunities to tackle deep-rooted development issues – UN](#)

11 December 2017 – A three per cent upturn in the global economy has paved the way to readjust policy towards longer-term issues, such as addressing climate change, tackling existing inequalities and removing institutional obstacles to development, according to a new United Nations report on global economic prospects.

Launched in New York on Monday, among other things, the World Economic Situation and Prospects ([WESP](#)) 2018 offers policy imperatives that include tackling inequality and delinking economic growth from environmental degradation.

“The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018 demonstrates that current macroeconomic conditions offer policy-makers greater scope to address some of the deep-rooted issues that continue to hamper progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals,” stated UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in the Foreword.

According to the report, 2017 global economic growth had reached three per cent – its highest since 2011 – as crisis-related fragilities and the adverse effects of other recent shocks have subsided.

The improvement is widespread. Roughly two-thirds of the world’s countries have experienced stronger growth in 2017 than in the previous year, and movement is expected to remain steady at three per cent in 2018 and 2019.

Noting that the recent pickup in global growth stems predominantly from firmer growth in several developed economies, the report states that East and South Asia remain the world most dynamic regions.

Despite the improved short-term outlook, the global economy continues to face

longer-term challenges, including trade policy changes and rising geopolitical tensions.

The report highlighted that the improved macroeconomic situation has opened a door for reorienting policies, including to increase economic diversification; reduce inequality; support long-term investment; and tackle institutional deficiencies. It noted that addressing these challenges can generate stronger investment and productivity, higher job creation and more sustainable medium-term economic growth.

Uneven Growth

However, the recent economic improvements have been unevenly distributed across countries and regions.

Through 2019, negligible per capita income growth is expected in several parts of Africa, Western Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean – underscoring the urgent need to foster an environment that will both accelerate medium-term growth prospects and tackle poverty through policies that address income and opportunity inequalities.

The report also found that – hindered by institutional deficiencies, inadequate basic infrastructure and greater exposure levels to natural disasters, along with challenges to security and political instability – very few least developed countries ([LDCs](#)) are expected to reach the [Sustainable Development Goal](#) target for GDP growth of “at least 7 per cent” (SDG 8.1) in the near term.

In addition to mobilizing financial resources to meet LDC investment needs, policies must also focus on conflict prevention and removing barriers that continue to hinder more rapid progress.

After remaining flat for three consecutive years, preliminary estimates suggest that 2017 global energy-related CO₂ emissions increased, according to WESP.

“While the upturn in global growth is a welcome sign of a healthier economy, it is important to remember that this may come at an environmental cost,” said Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Liu Zhenmin.

As the frequency of weather-related shocks continues to rise, the urgent need to build resilience against climate change and prioritize environmental protection is becoming more prevalent.

International shipping and aviation emission policies, which do not fall under the purview of the [Paris Agreement](#), must be strengthened as their emissions continue to grow faster than those from road transport.

“This calls for stronger efforts to delink economic growth and environmental degradation – as also emphasized by the UN [Climate Change Conference](#) in Bonn last month,” stressed Mr. Liu.