

## Central African Republic: UN chief condemns killing of 'blue helmet' in country's east

4 December 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has condemned the killing today of a Mauritanian peacekeeper and the wounding of three others of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)) by anti-Balaka militia in Bria in the country's east.

According to a [statement](#) issued by a UN spokesperson, the attack occurred at a checkpoint staffed by MINUSCA peacekeepers near an internally displaced persons site in the town.

This brings to 14 the number of peacekeepers killed in targeted attacks in the Central African Republic since January 2017.

"The Secretary-General offers his deepest condolences and sympathy to the family of the victim and to the Government of Mauritania. He wishes a swift recovery to the injured," said the statement.

Through the statement, Mr. Guterres recalled that attacks against UN peacekeepers may constitute a war crime. He urged the Central African authorities to swiftly investigate this incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.

"The Secretary-General reiterates the determination of MINUSCA to protect civilians and contribute to the stabilization of the Central African Republic," the statement said, adding that the UN chief urged all parties to cease violence and work together to bring peace and stability to the country.

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 chief proposes 'sweeping' management reform to budget committee

4 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Monday proposed sweeping management reform to Member States in the General Assembly's main administrative and budgetary body, including the adoption of an annual budget cycle, the granting of the power for him to redeploy

resources within the approved budget, and the elimination of duplicate functions currently undertaken by different departments.

“Reform is not an end in itself. The purpose of reform is simple and clear: to [best position](#) the United Nations to do the work that Member States ask us to do,” said Mr. Guterres in his remarks to the [Fifth Committee](#).

He said that his reports to the General Assembly outlined reform of the peace and security architecture, development system reform and management reform aimed at simplifying procedures and decentralizing decisions, with greater transparency, efficiency, agility and accountability.

Elaborating on the management reform, Mr. Guterres proposed moving from a biennial to an annual budget, and shortening the planning and budgetary cycle from five to three years.

He also asked Member States’ support to grant him additional authority to redeploy resources up to 20 per cent of a section within the budget parts, not between parts. This would enable the UN Secretariat to better respond to changing demands while preserving the principle that resources allocated for particular pillars of the Organization should be used for those pillars.

The UN chief also proposed that the scope of the commitment authority for “unforeseen and extraordinary expenses” be broadened to cover unforeseen events in the areas of development and human rights, beyond peace and security.

As for the duplicative functions undertaken by different departments, he proposed establishing a Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance with a clear policy, strategy and compliance role, which will be complemented by a Department of Operational Support focusing on operations, services, transactions and surge support to entities in weak environments.

Regarding the Umoja enterprise resource planning system and the global service delivery model, he proposed that these functions be carried out in two or three centres and to undertake a strategic assessment of locations.

He also proposed streamlining and simplifying human resources rules, processes and procedures to ensure timely recruitment, deployment and staff development.

Mr. Guterres stressed that achieving gender parity and increasing geographical diversity are important aspects of his reforms.

He said within his Executive Office, gender parity has been achieved in professional position while geographical diversity has also been substantially increased.

“This shows that the two goals are not mutually exclusive but reinforcing. It also shows what I am able to do with greater managerial authority,” he said.

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## UN chief urges universal ratification of International Criminal Court's founding treaty

4 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Monday stressed the importance of all States ratifying the treaty that established the International Criminal Court as the central institution of the global criminal justice system, known as the Rome Statute.

“To ensure accountability around the world, it is essential to reach [universal ratification](#) of the Rome Statute,” said Mr. Guterres at the opening in New York of the 16th session of the Assembly of States Parties to the treaty, whose adoption in 1998, he said, was “a hopeful, historic moment near the end of a century marked by atrocities and unspeakable inhumanity.”

“I invite all State parties to support any effort to achieve this goal,” he added.

According to ICC, 123 countries are [States Parties](#) to the Statute –33 African States, 19 Asia-Pacific States, 18 Eastern European States, 28 Latin American and Caribbean States, and 25 Western European and other States.

The UN chief noted that nearly 20 years after the signature of its founding instrument, the Court has become a fundamental pillar of the rule of law in the world.

The Court has helped investigate and secure convictions in important cases, such as the use of child soldiers, or of sexual violence as a tactic of war, and also attacks on cultural property, while helping many State Parties reinforce their domestic criminal justice systems, he added.

Mr. Guterres also stressed that “the ICC was created as a court of last resort” and States Parties have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute the serious crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

“The United Nations supports State Parties, at their request, to develop domestic capacities to uphold this obligation,” he said.

He explained that how essential it is to reach universal ratification of the Statute to ensure accountability when States Parties fall short of fulfilling the obligation.

Mr. Guterres welcomed the decisions of South Africa and The Gambia to rescind their notifications of withdrawal, but expressed his regret over Burundi's decision to withdraw from the Statute.

He also said that achieving justice also means assisting victims, noting that the Trust Fund for Victims is now engaged in reparations and is supporting efforts to address the harm caused by the international crimes covered by the Statute.

At today's meeting, ICC President Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi and Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda presented an annual [report](#) on the institution's activities to the Assembly of States Parties. The session runs through 14 December at UN Headquarters in New York.

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## **Recognize migration's positive impact and address its challenges in realistic way, urges senior UN official**

4 December 2017 – Noting that the movement of people across borders is a global reality, a senior United Nations official stressed that policy decisions governing migration must be based on fact and not on perception or myth.

Noting that the movement of people across borders is a global reality, a senior United Nations official stressed that policy decisions governing migration must be based on fact and not on perception or myth.

"There is a lot of misperception in the migration field that needs to be addressed," Louise Arbour, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for International Migration, said at the opening of a stocktaking meeting on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

"The global compact for migration is an opportunity to reorient the often-toxic narrative against migrants towards a more accurate narrative on migration that recognizes its overwhelmingly positive impact and is prepared to address its challenges in a sober, realistic way."

In her remarks, Ms. Arbour also spoke of the need to be "realistic" about how migration happens and how migration policies work and stressed that the complex phenomenon should not be reduced to "simple, binary categories" such as refugees or economic migrants; security or human rights; or legal pathways versus returns.

"Nor can we see migrations as being divided on geographical lines, even while respecting the regional particularities that do exist. Migration is a truly global phenomenon, neither a unique gift nor burden on any one set of countries," she added.

The [stocktaking](#) meeting being held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, follows an intensive preparatory process around the world to inform the development of the global compact. The process saw five regional meetings in Santiago (Chile), Beirut (Lebanon), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Bangkok (Thailand) and Geneva (Switzerland). The process also included two multi-stakeholder hearings, seven regional civil society consultations, and numerous national consultations.

“It is the global nature of migration that brings us here today,” said Ms. Arbour, noting that migration’s inherent international nature necessitates a global response and, at the same time, noted that it does not contradict a State’s sovereign right – subject to international and domestic law – to manage who enters and stays within its borders.

“A successful global compact will need to reflect this: its success will rest on maximum State political and moral buy-in and willingness to enhance cooperation at the regional and international levels,” she said.

On the [agenda](#) for the three-day meeting are discussions on the global, regional, subregional and national perspectives; perspectives from stakeholders; an ‘Idea Lab’ session which includes ‘TED Talks’ on data and evidence, public perceptions and narratives, and migration and identity; and follow-up and implementation.

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## **Rapid, large-scale, coordinated action needed to beat pollution – UN chief**

4 December 2017 – Noting the severity of the threats posed by pollution to both people and the planet, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres highlighted the need for rapid, large-scale and coordinated action by all actors to make the world pollution-free.

“We already have much of the knowledge and technical solutions we need to prevent, mitigate and manage pollution,” said the Secretary-General, in a [message](#) to the UN Environment Assembly, currently under way in Nairobi, Kenya.

“Beating pollution will help reduce poverty, improve public health, create decent jobs, address climate change and protect life on land and sea,” he added.

Being held from 4 to 6 December, the UN Environment Assembly brings together Governments, entrepreneurs, activists and others to share ideas and commit to action to protect on environment.

In his remarks, Mr. Guterres noted the assembly’s focus this year on tackling

pollution and said that important successes have been achieved towards that target, including the entry into force of the [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#) (a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury), as well as the announcement that the [Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer](#) will enter into force on in January 2019, having obtained the required threshold of 20 ratifications.

“Making our planet pollution-free is a long-term necessary endeavour. The world counts on this Assembly to show strong leadership by sounding the alarm and calling on all Governments to act to beat pollution,” he said.

Discussions at the Environment Assembly are focused on a new UN Environment Programme (UNEP) report, [Towards a Pollution-Free Planet](#), that urges greater political leadership and partnerships at all levels; strengthened environmental governance ; improved resource efficiency and lifestyle changes; low-carbon tech investments; and advocacy to combat pollution in all its forms.

[According](#) to UNEP, environmental degradation causes nearly one in four of all deaths worldwide, or 12.6 million people a year, and the widespread destruction of key ecosystems.

In addition to the impact on health and environment, pollution also extracts a high economic cost – estimated at over \$4.6 trillion (equivalent to 6.2 per cent of global economic output) each year in welfare losses due to pollution.

“Given the grim statistics on how we are poisoning ourselves and our planet, bold decisions from the UN Environment Assembly are critical,” said Erik Solheim, the Executive Director of UNEP.

“That is as true for threats like pollution as it is for climate change and the many other environmental threats we face,” he added, noting that all global processes linked to the environment, such as the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change distil to one simple message, “we must take care of people and planet.”