

Media coverage frames public thinking on migrants and migration – UN report

1 December 2017 – Changes in traditional media and growing use of social media are offering new avenues for “migrant-led” media and journalism as well as a unique opportunity for migrants to highlight their concerns and contributions – in their own words – the United Nations International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) has said.

“Ranging from films and newspapers to tweets, [media] coverage may have portrayed migration in one way or another, or simply raised it as a topical issue,” said the UN agency in the latest edition of its flagship report, the [World Migration Report](#).

“Migration coverage is not only positive or negative, but also presents a variety of different issues, narratives and viewpoints [...] identifying how matters are framed is important because [...] media frames affect how people think about migration,” it added.

In the report, IOM argues that while much research evidence, around the world, points to media associating migrants with “bad news,” such negativity is not necessarily unique to migration coverage, as journalists “generally tend to emphasize problems across most topics.”

However, there has been movement towards more positive – or at least more neutral – coverage of migration issues across several destination and origin countries that does not seem to be attributable to any particular event, it notes.

At the same time, rapid multiplication and diversification of social and online media brings potential for good but also pitfalls – in particular, “fake” news.

Citing examples from numerous country, IOM expresses that such news items likely represent only the tip of the “fake news iceberg.”

“Social media make it easy to approach specific audiences with political messages and materials, in ways that can be hard to detect and scrutinize. Such microtargeting of persuadable audiences, identified and contacted through their social media activity, is a growing phenomenon,” it warns.

Moving ahead, the UN agency has urged the need for more research into the role of media in transit and origin countries – and particularly migrants’ own use of, and preferences for, different types of media.

“This is especially important for understanding how and to what extent information sources shape perceptions,” it says, stressing that greater evidence on whether and how different types of messages and emotions shape public perceptions and policy activity on mobility would be valuable both within and beyond the world of research.

IOM also calls for more attention to different media systems and how they may or may not produce different kinds of content regarding migration, highlighting that the presence of highly differentiated experiences around the world suggests that greater levels of public debate about the appropriate role of media in specific contexts will move forward the conversations already happening in policy, civil society and research.

“Questions such as these will be debated differently across varied local, national and international contexts,” reads the report.

“As a result, both producers and consumers of research should recognize that there is no single, universal way to sum up the role of the media, or to change media coverage of migration.”

The 2018 World Migration Report, the ninth in the series and the first since IOM became a UN agency, [also focuses](#) on themes such as transnational connectivity and violent extremism and social exclusion.

It was launched Thursday at the IOM’s 108th Council meeting, in Geneva.

[Massive underfunding hampering relief efforts for the displaced in DRC and Zambia – UN agency](#)

1 December 2017 – With millions displaced within the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and thousands more forced to flee across the border into Zambia, the United Nations refugee agency is appealing for urgent resources to make sure that relief programmes – hanging on by threads – do not collapse.

“The number of refugees fleeing militia violence in south-eastern DRC and arriving in [Zambia has crossed the 12,000 mark](#) – with more than 8,400 arrivals in the last three months,” Babar Baloch, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters at a regular news briefing in Geneva Friday.

In addition, according to refugee accounts, [more than four million people are displaced inside the DRC](#), and there are fears that many more could be forced to flee the country as fighting is intensifying.

The worst affected are women and children, who form about 80 per cent of the refugee numbers, and there are reports of civilians being killed, women being raped, private property looted and houses torched.

However, assistance programmes in both countries are “hugely underfunded”

added Mr. Baloch, noting that of the \$236.2 million required in the DRC, only \$54.6 million has been received so far, while in Zambia, only \$13.6 million has been received.

“In both cases, this is less than a quarter of what is needed,” he expressed.

According to the UN refugee agency, most of the people displaced from the DRC into Zambia hail from the Haut-Katanga and Tanganyika provinces of the and many among them crossed into the Zambian province of Luapula (which borders the DRC on three sides).

People are also crossing into other northern and north-western provinces of Zambia. In total, the country hosts over 65,000 refugees, including some 33,000 from the DRC.

[UN agency to fly 15,000 migrants home from Libya in wake of reported abuses](#)

1 December 2017 – The United Nations migration agency plans to fly 15,000 more migrants home from detention centres in Libya before year-end in the wake of shocking reports of rampant migrant abuse and squalid and overcrowded conditions at these facilities across the North African country.

“Scaling up our return programme may not serve to fully address [the plight of migrants](#) in Libya, but it is our duty to take migrants out of detention centers as a matter of absolute priority,” said William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) at its Council meeting in Geneva on Thursday.

IOM’s voluntary humanitarian return programme has brought more than 14,007 migrants back their home countries so far in 2017, a significant increase from the 2,775 voluntary returns carried out in 2016. A large-scale airlift already underway will take an additional 15,000 migrants home from detention in Libya by year-end, the agency said.

Libya in recent weeks has witnessed a drastic increase in the numbers of migrants held in detention centres – from a usual range of 5,000 to 6,000 to over 15,000, as migrants have been transferred from unofficial detention centres in Sabratha. Migrants face smuggling and mistreatment during their journey on the central Mediterranean route, which claimed 2,803 migrant lives to drowning this year alone.

To date, IOM has registered more than 400,000 migrants in Libya, with the total number of migrants in the country estimated to be more than 700,000 to one million.

The scaling up of the assistance will also include migrants wishing to go back home but are not in detention centres.

Earlier this week, the African Union, the European Union and the Libyan Government agreed to alleviate the plight of thousands of migrants trapped in Libya. IOM to fully support this initiative.

The establishment of a planned joint task force with all concerned parties is aimed at ensuring that the migration crisis in Libya is dealt with in a coordinated way.

For the returns to be sustainable, IOM is also scaling up its reintegration support for the migrants in countries of origin and will be working on addressing the root causes of migration, as well as increasing our programming to counter smuggling and human trafficking in the migration routes. IOM is appealing for further support to enhance such an approach.

“We are conscious that return alone is not sufficient to address the situation of migrants in Libya, and therefore we are also committed to expanding our advocacy and capacity building efforts in order to introduce new approaches to migration management in Libya, in close cooperation with the Government of Libya and partners in the UN,” Othman Belbeisi, IOM’s Chief of Mission in Libya.

The majority of migrants asking to join IOM’s voluntary return programme are Sub-Saharan Africans, including 4,316 originating from Nigeria, 1,588 from Guinea, 1,351 from Gambia, 1,305 from Mali and 973 from Senegal.

[UN relief wing appeals for record \\$22.5 billion in aid for 2018](#)

1 December 2017 – A record level of aid funding – more than \$22.5 billion – is needed to deliver lifesaving assistance around the world in 2018, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator said on Friday.

Announcing the [Global Humanitarian Appeal](#), Mark Lowcock said that an estimated 136 million people face urgent needs because of protracted conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics and displacement.

“Were we better financed, we would save more lives. But we would also protect more futures [...],” he said, noting that it costs us about £230 a year to provide the lifesaving comprehensive assistance that we are talking about through these response plans – about 77 cents a day.

“That’s one of the cheapest investments you can make in the safety of humanity for the future, so we are hoping that, on the basis of the quality

of the plans we will be able to reach higher levels of funding than we have both said we have achieved for this year," he explained.

He noted that the amount of the Appeal is \$300 million more than what was sought last year. "And that partly reflects the fact that although the agencies are getting faster, more efficient and more cost effective in what they are doing, the cost of operating in some of the places where we have to operate is growing because they are highly insecure and protecting the aid operation is becoming more challenging."

In Yemen, a child dies every 10 minutes, said Mr. Lowcock, who is also the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, adding that the country is likely to remain the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Twenty million of the country's 25 million people are in need of assistance, and seven to eight million "right on the brink of famine," Mark Lowcock added.

He repeated his call for the Saudi-led coalition to continue unwinding its blockade – put in place after a rocket attack by Houthi fighters three weeks ago – warning of a humanitarian crisis the like of which the world "has not seen in decades" if it is not done.

Acknowledging that humanitarian aid on its own could not solve chronic instability, the UN aid chief said it was a personal priority to work with governments on development and peacebuilding to address the root causes of their problems.

The fact that this year's appeal is higher than in 2016 reflects growing needs, not only in countries in the international spotlight, such as Yemen, Myanmar and Syria.

In Africa alone, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya and Somalia are all expected to see more civilian suffering.

Many countries had seen marginal progress in the last year however, according to the UN's humanitarian coordinating agency, OCHA. These include Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali and Ukraine.

Also in Geneva for the UN appeal, Save the Children International warned that youngsters are among the most vulnerable victims of humanitarian crises.

The organization's head Helle Thorning-Schmidt told journalists how protracted conflict was "stealing" children's lives twice; first when they were displaced by conflict, and then for a second time when they were unable to return home.

She told of tremendous suffering in Yemen, where children were dying of diseases that had been overcome 100 years ago elsewhere, before adding that her aid teams had no access to other vulnerable communities in countries including Libya and North Korea.

World AIDS Day: If everyone, everywhere realizes right to health, epidemic can be defeated, says UN

1 December 2017 – The world will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which include the target of ending AIDS by 2030 without people attaining their right to health, the United Nations said Friday, marking [World AIDS Day](#) with a strong appeal for the full realization of this fundamental right by everyone, everywhere.

The [right to health](#) is a fundamental human right everybody has the right to the enjoyment of the [highest attainable standard](#) of physical and mental health, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)) said in his message on the Day.

Indeed, the right to health is linked to all the [SDGs](#) and is interrelated with a range of other rights, including the rights to sanitation, food, decent housing, healthy working conditions and a clean environment.

He explained that it includes: equal access to health care; adequate health-care infrastructure; respectful and non-discriminatory health-care services; and that healthcare must be medically appropriate and of good quality.

But the right to health is more than that, he continued, saying that with it, people's dreams and promises can be fulfilled.

Mr. Sidibé pointed out the most marginalized and affected still face challenges in accessing urgently-needed health and social services, asserting we all must continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people being left behind and demand that no one is denied their human rights.

For all the successes, AIDS is not yet over. But by ensuring that everyone, everywhere accesses their right to health, it can be, he concluded.

In her message, Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), stressed the right to quality education for all, because the two goals health and education go hand in hand. This linkage stands at the heart of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the UNAIDS 2016-2021 Strategy, she explained.

As outlined in UNESCO's *Strategy on Education for Health and Well-Being: Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals*, health and education are mutually reinforcing: healthy learners learn better, and better-educated

learners are healthier.

“They are also mutually dependent – without the right to education we cannot truly fulfil the right to health,” Ms. Azoulay continued, stressing that in a world where young people – especially girls and young women – bear a disproportionate burden of HIV and AIDS, “we all must recognize that comprehensive sexuality education is central to their right to health, and to the health of all societies.”

Picking up that thread in her message, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN Women, said that according to UNAIDS, every four minutes, three young women become infected with HIV.

“They are [clearly not enjoying their right to health](#), nor will they, until we are able to reverse the inequalities and discrimination that fuel HIV spread. Those whose health and future are currently least prioritized must become our focus, if we are to achieve the changes we seek,” she said.

As such, leaving no woman or girl behind in the HIV response means ensuring their meaningful participation and engagement in designing that response, improving access to services and demanding their right to health.

“To do that, we foster women’s voices and leadership and support their place at decision-making tables,” Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka continued, adding that in 2016, UN Women supported networks of women living with HIV in 31 countries to increase their engagement in the national HIV responses. “This World AIDS Day, UN Women calls for a commitment to prioritize and reach all the women and girls being left behind in the HIV response: every last woman and girl.”

Threat of complacency

Meanwhile, according to the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), in 2016, 120,000 children under age 14 died of AIDS-related causes while hourly, 18 were newly infected.

The 2017 UNICEF Statistical Update on Children and AIDS, launched Friday, projects that if current trends persist, there will be 3.5 million new adolescent HIV infections by 2030.

“It is unacceptable that we continue to see so many children dying from AIDS and so little progress made to protect adolescents from new HIV infections,” said Dr. Chewe Luo, Chief of HIV for UNICEF.

“The AIDS epidemic is not over; it remains a threat to the lives of children and young people and more can and should be done to prevent it,” he added.

A UNICEF analysis of demographic trends and new HIV data reveals that targets set in the [2020 Super-Fast-Track](#) framework developed in 2016 to end AIDS among children, will not be achieved.

While noting that mother-to-child HIV transmissions have declined and two million new infections in children have been averted, UNICEF warns that such progress must not lead to complacency, saying that progress in preventing, testing and treating HIV infections among adolescents has been unacceptably slow.

“To continue at this slow rate of progress is to gamble with the lives of children and commit future generations to a preventable life of HIV and AIDS,” Dr. Luo added. “We must act urgently in order to sustain any gains we have made in the past decade.”

To address HIV-response gaps, UNICEF proposes utilising emerging innovations; scaling-up the response for children; and strengthening governments’ capacity to collect of comprehensive, disaggregated testing and treatment data.

Innovative solutions must be adopted to speed up progress in preventing HIV infection of children and ensuring those living with HIV get the treatment they need.