

World community has 'collective responsibility' to stop human trafficking, support victims – UN chief

21 November 2017 – Briefing the Security Council Tuesday, top United Nations officials, including the Secretary-General and the head of the Organization's anti-crime office, underscored the international community's collective responsibility to stop criminals and terrorists from preying on vulnerable populations and migrants.

"Their brutality knows no bounds: sexual exploitation, forced labour, the removal of bodily organs and slavery are the tools of their trade," said [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, Tuesday, alongside Yuri Federov, the head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, connected via video conference.

["We must act urgently to protect the human rights and dignity of migrant populations,](#) [bring] the perpetrators to justice, [and] increase humanitarian aid," he added.

Noting, in particular, the horrific images of African migrants being sold as "goods" in Libya, Mr. Guterres also stressed the need to help Libyan authorities strengthen their own capacity to protect and provide for vulnerable men, women and children.

At the same time, he highlighted the urgent need to create more opportunities for regular migration, to restore the integrity of the refugee protection regime, and to increase the number of refugees resettled in developed countries.

"We must also do more to support the victims and survivors of trafficking," Mr. Guterres said, underlining that they should be treated as victims of crime and not detained, prosecuted or punished for unlawful activities they were compelled to engage in, in order to survive.

Slavery and other such egregious abuses of human rights have no place in the 21st century
Secretary-General Guterres

Also in his briefing, the UN chief recalled the steps taken by the Security Council – the body within the UN system tasked with maintaining international peace and security – including through resolutions to combat financial flow to traffickers.

He also stated that along with the Political Declaration on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, [adopted](#) by the General Assembly this September, the global community has built a framework for action rooted

in international law.

“Cooperation, mutual legal assistance and information-sharing are the mainstays of our activities,” he added, calling for intensification of efforts by Member States as well as the UN system and use all tools at their disposal to combat human trafficking.

Together with action on these fronts, he cited the need to address poverty and exclusion in line with the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

“The international community’s commitment is being tested,” said Mr. Guterres, calling for a display of “determination to end human trafficking, help its many victims and hold those responsible accountable for their crimes.”

Channel ‘collective horror’ into action against human trafficking – UN anti-crime chief

Also at today’s meeting, Yuri Fedotov, the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime urged the international community for a global partnership against human trafficking.



On the screens, Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

“Collective horror at [the situation in Libya] serves an important purpose: it can quicken the pace of our actions,” he said.

Mr. Fedotov also stressed that UNIDO is “fully prepared” to help Libyan authorities strengthen their ability to prosecute the criminals behind such appalling crimes as well as to support them investigate the finances flowing from such activities.

The Security Council [...] reaffirms its condemnation in the strongest terms of all instances of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, who make up the vast majority of all victims of trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflicts
Council resolution 2388 (2017)

Other speakers at the open debate included Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

The Security Council open debate on preventing trafficking in persons in conflict situations was convened by Italy, the Council President for the month of November.

The debate also saw the unanimous adoption of a resolution by the 15-member Council in which it called on all Member States “to reinforce their political commitment to and improve their implementation of applicable legal

obligations to criminalize, prevent, and otherwise combat trafficking in persons.”

The text also urged for strengthening efforts to detect and disrupt such activities, including through robust victim identification mechanisms and providing access to protection and assistance for identified victims.

It also called for combatting crimes that might be connected with trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict, such as money-laundering, corruption, the smuggling of migrants and other forms of organized crime.

[UNICEF warns of contaminated drinking water in camps for Rohingya refugees](#)

21 November 2017 – The United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) is working with authorities in Bangladesh to urgently investigate high levels E.coli contamination in water drawn from wells inside the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar.

“The latest figures from the World Health Organization suggest that 62 per cent of water available to households is contaminated,” UNICEF spokesperson Christophe Boulhierac told reporters Tuesday at the regular press briefing in Geneva.

“We are also concerned by an increase in cases of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) which have included several deaths,” he added.

Between 25 August and 11 November 2017, a total of 36,096 AWD cases were reported, including 10 related deaths – 42 per cent, or 15,206, of which were children under age five.

“We are seeing an upward trend in infection rates. Whilst the exact cause of increased cases of AWD remains uncertain, it may be linked to contaminated food or water, Mr. Boulhierac elaborated.

Some of the wells inside the camps were dug too shallowly, less than 40 meters deep; have been poorly sited; and are very congested with no safeguards to prevent bacterial contamination at ground level.

“Contamination may be being caused through poor hygiene practices, such as the use of dirty containers [and] bad hygiene habits of the population in water handling,” the spokesperson said.

UNICEF and the Bangladesh authorities are investigating levels of contamination to ensure better construction practices for tube wells that meet international standards and have an appropriate ceiling.

“We are stepping up measures to distribute water purification tablets to provide for water treatment at the household level as well as promoting good hygiene practices,” he said, noting that providing safe drinking water has been one of UNICEF’s highest priorities in responding to the Rohingya refugees’ needs.

Smaller settlements at risk of being overlooked

Since 25 August, some 622,000 refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar have sought refuge in Cox’s Bazar – bringing the total number of refugees there to an estimated 834,000.

As international attention focuses on the main Kutupalong and Balukhali settlements, the thousands who have settled in smaller villages in the southern part of the district risk being [excluded from humanitarian aid](#) programmes, the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) said.

Access to clean water is also a major concern across all the locations, particularly as the dry season approaches. Aid agencies providing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services are racing to identify solutions to this potentially life-threatening problem.

Although most are in the main settlements, 22,067 refugees live in Shamlapur, with 16 people sharing one latrine that are mostly full or dangerous; 22,130 in Leda, which has only one latrine per 47 people – well below the humanitarian ‘Sphere’ standard of one per 20 people; and 29,915 in Unchiprang, where there is also only one well per 57 people. This totals more than 74,000 Rohingya refugees in all.

Many are contaminated with E.coli or are too shallow to provide enough clean water for the population through the dry season.

IOM emergency managers say that the three sites urgently need to be developed, including providing vital infrastructure – access roads, lighting and waste management.

“Most of the temporary pit latrines are full. With little to no land for de-sludging, they are becoming unusable and a danger to communities living nearby,” said IOM WASH specialist Stephen Waswa Otieno.

[UN report urges Sudan to address plight of millions of displaced people in Darfur](#)

Government of Sudan to pursue effective, transparent and durable policies to enable the 2.6 million people who have been internally displaced by the long-running conflict in Darfur to return home voluntarily or to reintegrate into host communities.

I urge the Government to address [fundamental issues](#) that are preventing the return of displaced people, such as continued violence, including from armed militias, which raise continuing and justifiable fears for their safety and the lack of basic services that leave them dependent on aid,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a news release Tuesday.

Compiled by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) and the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur ([UNAMID](#)), the report details the situation of internally displaced people (IDPs) from January 2014 to December 2016, a period largely marked by the Government military campaign [Decisive Summer](#) that led to mass civilian displacement.

The report says there are [reasonable grounds](#) to believe that the military operations resulted in serious violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law.

While calling on the Government to carry out a prompt and comprehensive disarmament of armed militias to create an enabling and safe environment for IDPs to return, the report emphasizes the need for extensive consultations with IDPs to ensure that their return and reintegration are carried out in full respect of their rights.

The report however notes that despite a ceasefire between the Government and various armed opposition groups, which has largely held since June 2016, violence against IDPs remains widespread and impunity for human rights violations persists.

Tensions between ethnic groups, frequently over land, continued to surface, often erupting in violence and triggering further displacement.

While State governments, native administrations and traditional leaders have made considerable efforts to prevent and respond to such violence, the underlying causes of such conflict, remain unaddressed, the report says.

In the majority of the 66 camps across Darfur, UNAMID continued to document cases of random shootings at night, acts of criminality and harassment of displaced persons and sexual violence, including rape, within and around IDP camps and farmlands.

Victims cited the absence of police stations, lack of confidence in the authorities, social stigma and fear of reprisals as reasons for not reporting the attacks.

The cessation of hostilities has provided the opportunity to focus on the situation of IDPs, which is so crucial to achieving peace. I urge the Government of Sudan to implement key elements set out in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, and renew my call to all parties to fully engage in

efforts to bring lasting peace to Darfur,” said UNAMID Joint Special Representative Jeremiah Mamabolo.

[Lack of quality opportunities stalling young people's quest for decent work – UN report](#)

21 November 2017 – Overall economic growth remains disconnected from employment generation, the United Nations International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) has warned, noting that young people continue to suffer from persistent unemployment and lack of quality job opportunities.

“Addressing these persistent labour market and social challenges faced by young women and men is crucial, not only for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth but also for the future of work and societal cohesion,” said Deborah Greenfield, the ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy, in a [news release](#) announcing the agency's latest report on youth employment trends.

According to the [Global Employment Trends for Youth](#), while the estimated 70.9 million unemployed youth in 2017 is an important improvement from the crisis peak of 76.7 million in 2009, but that figure is expected to rise by about 200,000 in 2018, reaching a total of 71.1 million.

Furthermore, about 39 per cent of young workers in the emerging and developing world – 160.8 million youth – are living in moderate or extreme poverty (less than \$3.10 a day), and more than two in every five young people in today's workforce are unemployed or are working but poor, a striking reality that is impacting society across the world.

Worst affected are young women in the workforce, whose presence in the labour force lags behind by about 16.6 per cent compared to their male counterparts. Unemployment rates of young women are also significantly higher than those of young men, and the gender gap in the rate of young people not in employment, education or training is even wider, stated ILO.

Changing dynamics in the world of work

The ILO report also revealed changing dynamics in the employment sector with an increasing number of young jobseekers and young entrepreneurs taking to the internet to find new and diverse forms of employment, such as crowd work, which offer flexibility and expand income earning opportunities.

However, there are grave risks too, such as low incomes, no guarantee of job or income continuity, and lack of access to work-related benefits.

Young people often start their working lives in temporary employment with the knowledge that they may never attain 'job security'. They are more likely to transition to stable and satisfactory employment in developed and emerging economies than in developing countries, noted ILO, calling for greater investments in quality education and skills development.

At the same time, policies must take into account the fast changing world of work now driven by technology to enable young women and men be ahead of the curve, added the report.

[At UN, sanitation chain, wastewater treatment focus of World Toilet Day event](#)

20 November 2017 – Even in wealthier countries, where people have access to toilets and faecal material is contained, treatment and final disposal of wastewater can be far from perfect, leading to polluted rivers and coastlines, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told a World Toilet Day event on Monday.

“Where does our poo go? [...] This year’s Toilet Day observance encourages people to think about the [sanitation chain](#),” said Ms. Mohammed in her remarks at a panel discussion on toilets and wastewater, co-organized by the Permanent Mission of Singapore, UN-Water and the International Chamber of Commerce.

[World Toilet Day](#) is observed on 19 November, and events are held around that day to raise awareness of the importance of safe sanitation.

Ms. Mohammed said that nearly 900 million people worldwide practice open defecation – not because they want to but because they have no choice.

“Regardless where we are from, we all have the right to safe and dignified toilets,” she said, noting that she stressed this point during a recent dialogue with community members in Saint-Michele de L’Atalaye in Haiti.

The [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development calls for ending open defecation and working towards universal access to safely managed sanitation services and safely treated wastewater, she continued.

The UN deputy chief also urged all to ask questions such as “Who is responsible for disposal?”, “What are people’s working conditions?” And “Where does menstrual hygiene waste go?”

She noted that faeces contaminate the environment, spreading dangerous

diseases and undermining progress in health and child survival. Disposable menstrual products often end up in solid waste or wastewater systems not designed to handle them.

Toilets can take many forms. Some systems provide treatment and safe disposal in situ, while others are connected to a sewer. Pit latrines and septic tanks need to be regularly emptied and the waste taken to a treatment facility.

Workers providing these services are “true sanitation heroes,” she said.

Wastewater and faecal sludge must also be treated and converted into products that can be safely used or returned to the environment, she stressed, highlighting the massive potential of treated wastewater as a source of energy, nutrients and water.