

Kosovo: Time for action overtakes time for excuses, UN envoy tells Security Council

14 November 2017 – Noting recent momentum to advance democracy and good governance in Kosovo, the head of the United Nations Mission there urged for more emphasis on rebuilding trust and reconciliation, including through engagement with women and the youth, as well as on overcoming challenges related to freedom of cultural and religious identity.

“With the end of the election cycle, the time for action now moves ahead of the time for excuse,” Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the head of the UN Mission in Kosovo ([UNMIK](#)), [told](#) the Security Council Tuesday.

“It is important that the potential for embarking on a sustainable peace process not be hindered by inflexibility or simple inaction,” he added, calling all parties to play their part in the process.

In his briefing, Mr. Tanin informed the Security Council that 40 new judges and 13 new state prosecutors from the Serb community were sworn into office in Kosovo, who would work as part of a unitary Kosovo justice system.

He, however, noted that the implementation of agreements made in 2013 and earlier, continue, at best, to be sporadic and variable.

“Within the framework of the European Union (EU)-facilitated dialogue, technical implementation needs more meaningful commitment from both sides,” said the UN envoy, noting that the most obvious gap is the lack of progress towards the implementation of the agreed Community/Association of Serb-majority municipalities.

Regarding Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the UNMIK said that Pristina representatives attend all CEFTA meetings, and that UNMIK’s participation is limited to the requirements of the legal statutes.

“This participation continues strictly to the extent required by CEFTA members to ensure its functionality, which in turn supports economic opportunity throughout the region,” he said, noting the importance of economic and employment opportunities as well as addressing corruption, ensuring public accountability at all levels and combatting organized criminality.

“The final objective of [UNMIK] remains clear, with your support: sustained peace, and the opportunities it brings for individuals to fulfil their aspirations and their potential,” concluded Mr. Tanin.

One in 10 children work, UN agency reports at start of conference to end underage labour

14 November 2017 – An estimated 152 million children around the world work, a practice that the international community at a United Nations co-organized conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is trying to eliminate.

“Of those, almost half are in hazardous work. We need to recognize that progress has been very uneven,” [said](#) International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) Director-General Guy addressing the opening of the [IV Global Conference](#) on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, which started today.

The senior UN official urged governments to work together to eradicate child labour by 2025, as agreed to in the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“The goals cannot be clearer, nor can the uncomfortable reality that if we do not do more and better, we will not achieve them,” Ryder warned.

According to an ILO report released yesterday, more than half of all children – some 73 million – work in jobs that directly endanger their health, safety and moral development.

A majority of the children cited between the ages of five and 17 work in agriculture, including farming, fishing, forestry and livestock.

“Poverty is the main cause of child labour in agriculture, together with limited access to quality education, inadequate agricultural technology and access to adult labour, high hazards and risks, and traditional attitudes towards children’s participation in agricultural activities,” ILO said in the report, [Ending child labour by 2025: A review of policies and programmes](#).

Among other findings, the report noted a link between child labour and armed conflicts.

The incidence of child labour in countries affected by armed conflict is 77 per cent higher than the global average, while the incidence of hazardous work is 50 per cent higher, according to the report, which noted the use of Syrian refugee children in the work force throughout the world.

The authors point to the need to boost legal protection and inspections of work places, strengthening social protection and investing in free, quality education, as ways to fight against child labour.

The conference in Buenos Aires runs through Thursday.

Suffering deepens in Yemen as border shutdowns enter second week – UN agencies

14 November 2017 – A proposal to deliver vitally needed aid to war-ravaged Yemen via smaller ports than those under blockade will not solve the catastrophic humanitarian situation there, a senior UN official said Wednesday.

Speaking over the phone to journalists in Geneva, Jamie McGoldrick, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, called for the reopening of the country's major import hubs, Hodeida and Saleef, along with Sana'a airport.

Smaller ports such as Aden in southern Yemen and Jazan – which is in neighbouring Saudi Arabia – lack the capacity to handle the amount of fuel, food and medicines that's needed, Mr McGoldrick said.

"Coming from Jazan in the north or coming from Aden in the south to serve the bulk of the population that we have identified, in the northern part of the country, it would be very difficult in many places because of for security issues, because of logistical issues" he said.

This would increase the cost of supplies by an estimated \$30 per metric tonne "and this is something that would then reduce the amount of money we have to serve the population and right now our humanitarian response plan is only 57 per cent funded," explained Mr. McGoldrick.

He said that Yemen has just 20 days' worth of diesel left in the north, and three months' reserves of wheat, adding that while he has heard reports that Aden and other ports were opening, there has been no confirmation of it.

The decision to blockade Yemen was taken by the Saudi-led coalition – engaged there in a three-year war against Houthi militants, which, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), has left more than seven million close to famine and 21 million needing assistance in one of the world's poorest countries.

With humanitarian supplies "dangerously low," Mr. McGoldrick warned that keeping famine and disease at bay risks setbacks.

Suffering worsens in Yemen

With the closure of land, sea and air borders now entering its second week, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) expressed alarm at the worsening humanitarian situation.

“Over the past week, the closures have [prevented humanitarian and commercial supplies](#) and restricted the movement of aid workers. They are also placing new economic strain on a civilian population already suffering through many months of conflict,” said UNHCR spokesperson William Spindler at the regular press briefing in Geneva.

“As a result,” continued Mr. Spindler, “our staff and those of our partners are seeing an increase in the number of civilians seeking humanitarian help. Vulnerable populations including internally displaced people, refugees and asylum seekers are especially hard-hit.”

The spokesperson reminded reporters that since the conflict began in March 2015, it has become the world’s largest humanitarian crisis, affecting 21 million people.

“Two million internally displaced people, a million returnees and 280,000 refugees and asylum seekers are all struggling to survive through increasingly prolonged displacement,” he stressed, adding that worsening conditions have also led to child labour and early marriage.

“Together with other members of the humanitarian community in Yemen, UNHCR is advocating for the border closures to be lifted without delay. The closures are exacerbating the humanitarian crisis, posing a critical threat to the millions struggling to survive,” Mr. Spindler concluded.

[Promote affordable, equitable access to diabetes medicines information for women, UN health agency urges](#)

14 November 2017 – On World Diabetes Day, the United Nations health agency has said that women – especially those in low-income countries – are particularly vulnerable to diabetes, a condition that can be prevented or delayed with medication, regular screening and healthier lives.

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“Approximately 205 million women around the world (about 8 per cent globally) are living with diabetes, with more than half of them in the Western Pacific and south-east Asia,” said Christian Lindmeier, a spokesperson for the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

Globally, [diabetes](#) is a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart

attack, stroke and lower limb amputation. In 2015, diabetes had been the direct cause of 1.6 million deaths, and two million people die each year from high blood glucose.

Furthermore, with blood glucose-levels rising substantially during pregnancy, there is heightened risk the health of both mother and child as well as the threat of diabetes for the child in the future.

However, early diagnosis through relatively inexpensive testing of blood sugar and simple lifestyle measures can be effective in preventing or delaying the condition and treating its consequences.

This year, World Diabetes Day calls for promoting affordable and equitable access for all women with diabetes or at risk of diabetes to the essential medicines and technologies, self-management education and information they require to achieve optimal diabetes outcomes and strengthen their capacity to prevent Type-2 diabetes.

[Type-2 diabetes](#) results from the body's ineffective use of insulin, and comprising majority of people with diabetes around the world, and largely the result of excess body weight and physical inactivity, can be prevented with a healthy diet, avoiding sugar and saturated fats intake, not smoking and using tobacco, as well as a more physically active lifestyle with at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity activity on most days.

Until recently, this Type-2 diabetes was seen only in adults but it is now also occurring increasingly frequently in children.

Other types of diabetes are Type 1 diabetes (previously known as insulin-dependent, juvenile or childhood-onset), gestational diabetes (hyperglycaemia with blood glucose values above normal but below those diagnostic of diabetes, occurring during pregnancy), as well as impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) and impaired fasting glycaemia (IFG) (intermediate conditions in the transition between normality and diabetes).

People with IGT or IFG are at high risk of progressing to type 2 diabetes, although this is not inevitable, [according](#) to WHO.

[Libya's detention of migrants 'is an outrage to humanity,' says UN human rights chief Zeid](#)

14 November 2017 – The European Union's (EU) support for Libya's Coast Guard which has resulted in thousands of migrants being detained in "horrific" conditions inside Libya is "inhuman," the United Nations High Commissioner

for Human Rights said on Tuesday.

Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein sounded the alarm after a [probe by UN monitors](#) who visited migrants held in State detention centres in Libya at the start of the month.

From 1 to 6 November, UN human rights monitors visited four Department of Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) facilities in Tripoli, where they interviewed detainees who have fled conflict, persecution and extreme poverty from States across Africa and Asia, according to the High Commissioner's Office ([OHCHR](#)).

"Monitors were shocked by what they witnessed: thousands of emaciated and traumatized men, women and children piled on top of one another, locked up in hangars with no access to the most basic necessities, and stripped of their human dignity," OHCHR spokesperson told reporters today in Geneva.

Detainees at the centres said they are often beaten or prodded with electric sticks if they ask for food and medicine. There are no functioning toilets in the hangar-like facilities and the detainees find it 'difficult to survive the smell of urine and feces.' Rape and other sexual violence appear commonplace.

The European Union is providing assistance to the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept migrant boats in the Mediterranean. This includes in international waters, despite concerns raised by rights groups that this would condemn more migrants to arbitrary and indefinite detention and expose them to forced labour or extortion. According to OHCHR, those detained have no possibility to challenge the legality of their detention, and no access to legal aid.

Nearly 20,000 people are in custody now, up from about 7,000 in mid-September.

The spike in numbers came after authorities detained thousands of migrants following clashes in Sabratha, a smuggling and trafficking hub, about 80 kilometres west of Tripoli.

"We cannot be a silent witness to modern day slavery, rape and other sexual violence, and unlawful killings in the name of managing migration and preventing desperate and traumatized people from reaching Europe's shores," said High Commissioner Zeid.

His Office has urged the Libyan authorities to stamp out human rights violations in centres under their control, while also calling on the international community not to turn a blind eye to the "unimaginable horrors" endured by migrants in Libya.