

## 'No country, no region' can tackle global challenges alone says UN's Mohammed

Against the backdrop of seemingly endless challenges across the world, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told a conference of development-minded partners in Nigeria that “no country, no region” could tackle them alone

“In the regions today, no country is alone. Our borders don't make any difference in the Sahel when we talk about issues of terrorism, migration, and climate change”, Ms. Mohammed said on Tuesday at the opening of the Kaduna State [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) Acceleration Conference 2019.

“No country, no region can tackle the global challenges of today”, she spelled out.

Under the theme “Building effective partnership for accelerated progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals”, the two-day conference aims to fortify partnerships to fast-track implementation of the global goals, which each country is adapting to reach ambitious targets on poverty and hunger eradication, among other challenges.

United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed (center) at the Kaduna State Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Acceleration Conference on 22 January, 2019., by UNIC Lagos

Ms. Mohammed advocated strongly for gender parity saying that “part of our population, especially women and girls, has to be put at the centre of the results” and not only “at the centre of our policies”.

Moreover, she continued, “we need to see young people at the centre of the impact that is made on everyone's life. Because they are not the future tomorrow; they are the future today.”

Calling the rise in global hunger over the past few years “a great concern”, Ms. Mohammed underscored that the world has enough to feed itself two to three times over, but inequalities mean that millions go to bed hungry and “short change us in the revenue [that] otherwise would have been put into governance.”

Despite a global decline in the number of people living in poverty, the Deputy Secretary-General observed that there are many reasons why extreme poverty remains. She singled out the two explanations of “when there is no enabling environment and when there is no stability”.

Ms. Mohammed stressed the importance of using a national outlook, within a regional context, to drive what are global goals.

The Deputy Secretary-General also argued that effective partnerships are vital to achieving the SDGs. As a case in point she focused on the room, where federal and state governments, members of the international community, civil society, and local and community authorities, were all participants.

Also speaking at the conference, Governor Mallam Nasir Ahmad el-Rufai said that Kaduna state stood out as an SDG pacesetter. He noted that his administration has adopted the targets and indicators, and developed an integrated, sustainable infrastructure that would make Kaduna a leading investment destination in Nigeria and provide it with a “comparative advantage” to make it globally competitive.

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## **Sudan: Amidst deaths, injuries, imprisonments, UNICEF stresses children’s protection ‘at all times’**

Children are likely among the dead during a month of nationwide protests in Sudan with “scores” of others injured and detained, according to a top UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) official, who spelled out that “children should never be targeted nor used or exploited”.

“Children were reportedly killed in ongoing turmoil that broke out last month in Sudan,” [Geert Cappelaere](#), UNICEF Regional Director for the [Middle East and North Africa](#), said on Wednesday, noting that “scores of children were also injured and others detained”.

Against the back drop of an “unprecedented hike in the cost of living and shortages in bread and fuel” he said that poverty has increased, “forcing some families into negative measures like taking their children out of school”.

UNICEF calls on the authorities in Sudan to prioritize the protection of children – *UNICEF Regional Director Geert Cappelaere*

Pointing to information it had received, UNICEF revealed that there has been an uptick in the number of Sudanese children now requiring health and nutrition care, since the anti-Government protests began.

“While it is difficult for UNICEF to verify these reports, children must be protected at all times from all forms of violence, harm, cruelty and

mistreatment whether physical or mental” stressed Mr. Cappelaere.

“UNICEF calls on the authorities in Sudan to prioritize the protection of children and safeguard their rights to education and health in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child” concluded the UNICEF Regional Director.

News agencies have reported that demonstrations against an on-going economic crisis have been taking place across the country on a near-daily basis, since 19 December. Large crowds, including teenagers and demonstrators in their 20s, have been calling for an end to the 30-year rule of President Omar al-Bashir.

There have been reports of many being fired on with tear gas and bullets, and thousands being detained. The UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet, expressed alarm at the use of “excessive force” last Thursday.

A Government crackdown against journalists covering the protests is also reportedly underway. At least 26 people are reported to have died, including two security officers.

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## [Central African Republic militia leader and football executive, transferred to ICC](#)

Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona, the coordinator of a mainly Christian militia faction in the Central African Republic and a senior African football executive, has been transferred to the International Criminal Court ([ICC](#)) to face accusations of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In a [statement](#), the Court, which is based in The Hague, the Netherlands, detailed an extensive list of some of his alleged crimes, including murder, torture, persecution, mutilation, deportation or forcible transfer, enforced disappearance and “other inhumane acts.”

Mr Ngaïssona was arrested on 12 December last year in France, on a warrant for crimes allegedly committed in CAR during 2013 and 2014. In a press release, the ICC said that the date of his initial appearance before the court will be announced “soon.”

Speaking on Wednesday to UN News, ICC spokesperson Fadi El Abdallah outlined the next steps in the case: “The Pre-Trial Chamber Two of the ICC found reasonable grounds to believe that Mr Ngaïssona is liable for these charges”, he said, adding that the pre-trial hearing would “confirm the identity of the

suspect, ensure that he understands the charges and confirms the language in which the proceedings should be conducted for his understanding”.

He said it would also set a date “to begin the confirmation of charges hearing, which is a pre-trial hearing allowing the judges to decide whether or not the case should move to a trial.”

The ICC Registrar, Peter Lewis, thanked the French authorities, and those of the Netherlands, for their cooperation in the arrest and transfer of the accused to the Court.

Mr. Ngaïssona, who was Minister of Youth and Sports under François Bozizé, President of the Central African Republic from 2003 to 2013, reportedly denies any involvement in the violence.

According to news reports, he was the political coordinator of the Christian anti-Balaka militia, which rose to prominence after the mainly Muslim Seleka rebels, swept Mr. Bozizé from power. The militia has been blamed for numerous killings since 2013.

Mr Ngaïssona was elected in February 2018 to the executive committee of the Confederation of African Football, despite the objections of some human rights groups.

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## **FROM THE FIELD: Enduring freezing winter in a war zone**

In Ukraine, extreme winter cold is making life harder for thousands of people whose lives have already been torn apart by conflict. Hoping to find safer places to live, families in the region have had to endure a battle for survival, in buildings without heat or electricity.



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Since 2014, conflict in Ukraine has forced 1.5 million people to flee their homes, according to the UN Refugee Agency, [UNHCR](#). After five years, many of the displaced are often forced to choose between buying food and medicine or paying for heating.

In 2018 the agency stepped up the distribution of aid, including clothing, fuel and cash, to thousands of displaced households in eastern Ukraine.

[Read more](#) here, about four displaced Ukrainians who will not be left out in the cold this winter.

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## [Security Council should ‘nurture’ Colombian consensus against return to violence, top UN official urges](#)

Two years after the signing of the historic peace agreement in Colombia and following a recent escalation of violence, the newly-appointed representative of the United Nations in the country, told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that its people have established a “broad consensus” against further conflict, before highlighting key steps to stabilize the nation.

The briefing from Carlos Ruiz Massieu took place less than a week after a car bombing outside the National Police Academy in the capital Bogotá, which left 21 dead and injured dozens. The attack was claimed by the National Liberation Army (the ELN), one of the remaining active armed opposition groups in Colombia.

In total, more than 220,000 people were killed during the long-running conflict beginning in 1964, between Government security forces, and various armed opposition groups, chiefly the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia guerilla movement, or FARC, and drug traffickers.

“In the swift rejection of the attack from across the political spectrum in Colombia, and in the marches held around the country this past Sunday, Colombians demonstrated their ever-broader consensus around the rejection of violence,” said Mr. Ruiz Massieu, who was appointed on 7 January to head the UN’s mission in the country mandated with verifying the implementation of the November 2016 peace agreement. “This consensus must continue to be nurtured,” he told the Security Council.

Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Special Representative for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia visiting the Territorial Space for Reincorporation and Training located in Llano Grande, Dabeiba – Antioquia, Colombia (January 2019), by United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia/Liliana Garavito

## **Important milestones for reconciliation**

Special Representative Ruiz Massieu went on to highlight some of the recent major achievements of the peace process, including the fact that the Government’s High-level Forum on Gender – responsible for implementation of the gender provisions of the peace agreement – met for the first time on 16 January.

He also noted “an important milestone” with the inauguration in May 2018 of the ‘Truth Commission’, a body created to examine past human rights violations, including sexual violence, and to foster reconciliation over the next three years.

Mr. Ruiz Massieu stressed that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace – the transitional body in charge of deciding responsibility for crimes committed during the armed conflict and which started working a year ago – is currently examining five cases of “violent actions impacting no less than 32,000 victims”.

“As this Council has itself insisted, it remains vitally important that the independence and autonomy of the Special Jurisdiction are respected and that it receives the support required to operate effectively,” stated the Special Representative.

## **Reintegration and security: two major challenges ahead**

Among the near-term challenges ahead, Mr. Ruiz Massieu cited the gaps remaining for the economic reintegration of former combatants, including members of the FARC. He said the various meetings he held in the field have “confirmed both the strong desire of former combatants to work and to find their place in society, as well as the uncertainty many still feel regarding their security, including their legal security, and economic future”.

The [26 December 2018 quarterly report](#) prepared by the UN verification mission for the UN Secretary-General, notes that efforts must be accelerated “to advance on the acquisition of land and to work on the development of markets for goods and services produced.”

In another step forward for full political integration and reform, on 27 October the FARC party, now a democratic force, will take part for the first time in regional and local elections. Representative Ruiz Massieu noted that efforts are being made to guarantee their and every other party’s security and protection.

In Colombia, the security situation remains fragile, as highlighted in the Secretary-General’s report. According to the UN human rights office (OHCHR), since the signing of the 2016 peace agreement, 163 killings of social leaders and human rights defenders have been verified and a total of 454 deaths reported. In the first week of January alone, seven leaders were killed and a total of 31 attacks reported. FARC members are also regularly the targets of attacks, a major challenge to national reconciliation.

“The security of communities, leaders and FARC members are ultimately tied to the ability of the State to establish an integrated security and civilian presence in conflict-affected areas,” said Mr. Ruiz Massieu, as he welcomed the efforts made by the Colombian Government to address this issue.

“I would like to stress that one of the messages I have heard consistently from Colombians during my first weeks on the ground, is how strongly they both welcome and expect the support and accompaniment of the international community as they seek to overcome the many challenges to consolidating peace,” he concluded. “The continued engagement and support of the Security Council will remain a vital pillar of Colombia’s peace process.”