

[At UN event in Rome, Pope Francis urges action on climate change, conflicts to end global hunger](#)

16 October 2017 – Food security for all requires tackling climate change and ending conflicts, His Holiness, Pope Francis, stressed Monday at an official ceremony for [World Food Day](#) held at the Rome headquarters of the United Nations agriculture agency.

“It is clear that [wars and climatic change are a cause of hunger](#), so let’s not present it as if hunger is an incurable disease,” the Pontiff said during his key note address marking the Day at headquarters of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)).

Under this year’s theme ‘addressing migration through investing in food security and rural development,’ Pope Francis called for governments worldwide to collaborate to ensure voluntary and safer migration; for a disarmament commitment; and to protect the planet while using its resources – producing and consuming food.

Noting that it was unfortunate that some countries are moving away from the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change, Pope Francis underscored “What is at stake is the credibility of the whole international system.”

Referring to the negotiation of a [Global Pact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration](#) – he asserted that managing human mobility “requires coordinated, systematic intergovernmental action in line with existing international norms, and full of love and intelligence.”

This year, World Food Day is being marked as [hunger is on the rise](#) for the first time in over a decade, affecting 815 million people – 11 per cent of the global population. The increase is largely due to the proliferation of violent conflicts and climate-related shocks, which are also major drivers of distress migration.

“It is our intention to [address the root causes of migration](#), such as poverty, food insecurity, inequality, unemployment and lack of social protection,” said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva.

“We firmly believe that increasing investments in food security, sustainable rural development and in efforts to adapt agriculture to climate change, will help create the conditions whereby people, especially the youth, will no longer be forced to abandon their lands in order to seek a better life elsewhere,” he added.

Calling today’s biggest problem “man-made conflict,” World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) Executive Director David Beasley revealed that conflicts consume 80 per cent of the agency’s expenditure – over \$6 billion.

“We will never achieve Zero Hunger by 2030 until we end conflict,” he stressed.

“I call on the people in power, the people with guns, to stop the fighting now,” said Mr. Beasley, who has met many people fleeing conflict and violence in Yemen, South Sudan and Bangladesh over the past few months.

“I saw their wounds with my own eyes and I heard their stories with my own ears. They were frightened, hungry and malnourished after enduring a nightmare that most people cannot even imagine. If we are truly going to end hunger, we must stop this kind of inhumanity,” he said.

The future of migration

In his statement commemorating the day, William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), called climate action “paramount” in mitigating displacement saying: “Climate change is having far-reaching effects on agricultural productivity and food security. It is among the main reasons for the record numbers of people compelled to migrate from rural areas to towns and cities around the world.”

Under the premise that [migration should be a choice](#), not a necessity, IOM is working towards this change with FAO, as 2018 co-chairs of the UN [Global Migration Group](#) – collaborating on projects to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations in rural areas to the impacts of natural hazards, climate change, food security and displacement.

“It is a cooperation that I think will continue to grow and strengthen as migration continues to be a megatrend in the world, which will become only greater with the worsening effects of climate change,” Mr. Swing said.

[UN envoy discusses implementation of intra-Palestinian agreement with Prime Minister Hamdallah](#)

16 October 2017 – Meeting the Palestinian Prime Minister today, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, and discussed the implementation of the intra-Palestinian agreement signed in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, on 12 October.

In particular, the agreement provides for the return of the crossings of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority by 1 November.

“The [timely and effective implementation](#) of this provision and concrete steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis will be critical for effectively

empowering the Palestinian Government in Gaza,” said Mr. Mladenov after his meeting with Prime Minister Hamdallah in Ramallah this afternoon, local time.

“The agreement is also an important step towards achieving the goal of Palestinian unity under a single, democratic and legitimate Palestinian national authority,” added Mr. Mladenov.

The senior UN official also noted that the Organization will continue to work with the Palestinian leadership, Egypt and the region in support of the process, highlighting its importance for reaching a negotiated two-state solution and sustainable peace.

Following the agreement last week, UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres [congratulated](#) by phone, Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the State of Palestine, on the agreement and emphasized the need to urgently address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, particularly with regard to the electricity crisis, and improved access to and from the territory.

[UN rights experts urge France to provide safe water, sanitation for migrants in ‘Calais Jungle’](#)

16 October 2017 – United Nations human rights experts are urging the Government of France to devise long-term measures to provide access to safe drinking water and sanitation for migrants in Calais and other areas along the northern French coast.

After the so-called ‘Calais Jungle’ camps were dismantled in November 2016, migrants continued to return to the area. Many are living without shelter and proper access to drinking water, toilets or washing facilities.

“It is [worrying](#) that approximately 700 migrants in Calais and the greater area of Calais temporarily rely on only 10 portable lavatories and water from 10 taps,” said the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to water and sanitation, Léo Heller, in a news release from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).

Despite the decision by the Conseil d’État, the highest administrative court in France, reaffirming the obligation of the French State to provide access to water and sanitation to the migrants in Calais, the local authorities have refused to implement concrete measures.

“Human rights apply to all, including migrants, regardless of their status. Consequently, the legal recognition by the French court of the human rights obligation to provide access to water and sanitation should be commended, but

the authority of those decisions is diminished if they are not implemented in practice,” said the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Felipe Gonzalez Morales.

Migrants in camps at Grande-Synthe, Tatinghem, Angres and Dieppe rely on help from volunteers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They are opening their facilities and provide transportation to sports facilities so that migrants can use toilets and take showers as a temporary solution.

The group of UN experts urged the international community to join calls emphasizing the primary obligation of the Government to provide a durable solution to the situation. Earlier this year, the Special Rapporteurs contacted the Government to seek clarification about the situation.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

[Lift protest ban, protect judiciary and preserve civil society role, UN rights experts urge Kenya](#)

16 October 2017 – Voicing concern over restrictions on protests as well as attacks on judiciary and civil society in the run-up to presidential elections in Kenya, a group of United Nations independent human rights experts called on the Government to honour its obligations and protect the rights of Kenyans.

“It is precisely when political tensions are high that governments should do their utmost to let people express their grievances and to protect their rights,” said the experts in a news release issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).

“[Kenya is facing a choice](#). We urge it to choose to uphold its constitution and pursue strengthening of its democracy, to avoid deepening political divisions and exacerbating tensions.”

According to the human rights experts, a pattern of police brutality, excessive use of force, consistent harassment of judges and threats to civil society has been witnessed even before the ban was imposed.

Under the restrictions, protests are forbidden in parts of the nation’s three largest cities – Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu – until further notice, protests in other parts of the country require prior police

permission and organizers can be held criminally liable for any offence by any participant.

In the news release, experts noted that while some previous protests had been marred by violent incidents, they stressed that response to any violence must be proportional to the level of threat and that security forces must prioritize dialogue and non-violent means.

The presidential elections are to be held on 26 October.

An 'alleged climate of impunity'

Impunity fosters a culture of violence and mistrust, the opposite of what Kenya needs as it prepares for a repeat of the presidential elections

The rights experts also said that there was currently an alleged climate of impunity for law enforcement officers despite the launching of several investigations, including one into the violence that followed the 8 August general election, when dozens of people were killed and many injured as a result of police action.

In particular, they highlighted an incident on 28 September, when 27 students and staff at the University of Nairobi were reportedly injured when police used tear gas, beat them with wooden clubs, robbed them and threatened them with sexual violence.

A few days later, on 2 October, police reportedly used tear gas in a nursery in Nyalenda (a suburb of Kisumu) injuring at least three children.

"We call for a prompt, independent and thorough investigation into all allegations of police brutality," the experts said, adding: "impunity fosters a culture of violence and mistrust, the opposite of what Kenya needs as it prepares for a repeat of the presidential elections."

'Robust checks and balances are the prerogative of every democracy'

Further in the [release](#), the experts expressed serious concern over reports of repeated attacks against individual judges and the judiciary in general and attempts to limit the courts' role in hearing election-related petitions.

"Robust checks and balances are the prerogative of every democracy," they said, stressing that the independence of the judiciary must be protected.

Over the years, we have repeatedly raised concerns with the Government of Kenya about shrinking civil society space and attacks on individual human rights defenders

They also underscored that the role of the civil society must also be preserved and denounced fake information being circulated online on social media, seeking to denigrate human rights organizations, including members of the Kura Yangu Sauti Yangu initiative which works for free and fair elections.

“This is unacceptable and must immediately stop,” the experts said. “Over the years, we have repeatedly raised concerns with the Government of Kenya about shrinking civil society space and attacks on individual human rights defenders.”

The UN human rights experts noted above include Michel Forst, the [Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders](#); Agnes Callamard, [the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions](#); Diego García-Sayán, the [Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers](#); Nils Melzer, the [Special Rapporteur on torture](#); and David Kaye, the [Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression](#).

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council – the highest intergovernmental forum in the UN system on rights issues – to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

[Secretary-General condemns Saturday's attacks in Mogadishu; commends responders](#)

15 October 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today commended the first responders and residents of the Somali capital, Mogadishu, for mobilizing to aid in what is being called Somalia's worst-ever bomb attack.

In a [statement](#) from his spokesperson, the Secretary-General urged all Somalis “to unite in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism and work together in building a functional and inclusive federal state.”

Strongly condemning the attacks, he conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families, as well as his wishes for a speedy recovery to those injured.

According to media reports, at least 200 people were killed and an even greater number of people were injured.

The Secretary-General's Special Representative in Somalia, Michael Keating today said that the UN and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) were

working closely to support the response by the Federal Government of Somalia and local government authorities, including the provision of logistical support, medical supplies and expertise in the aftermath of the bombings.

“It is a revolting attack both in terms of its intent and impact,” the Special Representative [said](#).

The Special Representative said that the immediate priority is to support efforts led by the authorities to recover from the attack and help all those affected, especially the injured and newly homeless.

“The international community will do everything possible to help the people and government of Somalia to overcome this tragedy,” he said.

According to media reports, a massive car bomb detonated outside the entrance to a hotel in the city’s K5 junction, which is home to government offices, hotels and restaurants.

Later in the day, a second bombing was reported in the city’s Madina district.