

At UN, Central African Republic President outlines country's peace, reconciliation process

22 September 2017 – The President of the Central African Republic (CAR), Faustin Archange Touadéra, reaffirmed today at the United Nations General Assembly his determination and that of his Government to make the peace efforts succeed, but stressed that the country suffers from limited capacity as it continues to cope with a raft of post-conflict challenges.

In addition to the weak State response to the violence of armed groups, Mr. Touadéra regretted that even the staff of the UN Multi-Dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission, known by its's French acronym, UNMISCA, is not sufficient to cope to the challenges of protecting civilian populations.

“The increase in security threats due to violence imposed by armed groups required that steps be taken to curb the risks of widespread crisis,” he told UN Member delegations attending the Assembly's annual general debate.

With this in mind, he called on the international community to increase the military strength of MINUSCA, particularly in view of the immensity of the territory it must cover. Mr. Touadéra also urged that the operation's mandate, which is coming to an end very soon, be revised to assist the Government in regaining control over areas with natural resources.

He went on to welcome the unprecedented mobilization of international solidarity in for CAR towards the implementation of the Rehabilitation and Peacebuilding Programme (RCPCA), after the November 2016 Brussels Donor Conference. “To follow up on the implementation of this plan, we have concluded an Agreement serving as a new framework for mutual engagement between the Central African Republic and the international community,” said Mr. Touadéra.

He outlined his hope that steps would be taken in 2017 to establish dialogue with the armed groups, noting that other major efforts would focus on implementing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. He would also seek greater dialogue with regional actors in hopes they would provide political support for the road map for peace and national reconciliation.

[Full statement \(in French\) available here](#)

[‘No room for complacency’ when survival of future generations is at stake, Bhutan tells UN Assembly](#)

22 September 2017 – Addressing global leaders at the 72nd annual general debate at the United Nations, the Prime Minister of Bhutan underscored that the impacts of climate change – illustrated by devastating hurricanes and floods, and record-setting temperatures year after year – are very real.

“After centuries of neglect, fighting climate change is complex and expensive,” said Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay, underlining the need for all countries to fulfil their respective commitments.

“I am optimistic that we will be able to prevent the worst effects of climate change. But for that we must work together.”

Underscoring the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), he highlighted that poverty eradication is a critical component of all 17 Goals, and that while the endeavour is a complex challenge, it is possible with concerted effort.

The Prime Minister also spoke on the challenges posed by terrorism, as well as threats to international peace and security, and urged all countries to contribute to making the world a safer place.

Also in his address, the Mister Tobgay noted the reform initiatives by [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres and urged all UN Member States to support those measures. He also highlighted the ‘gross national happiness’ approach to development adopted by Bhutan as well as efforts to strengthen democracy in the nation.

[Full statement available here](#)

[Torture during interrogations not just wrong but also counterproductive – UN rights chief](#)

22 September 2017 – The torture and ill-treatment of persons suspected of crimes is not only “deeply wrong” but, from an interrogator’s perspective, also counterproductive, the United Nations human rights chief said today at an event held in New York.

“Abundant scientific and historical evidence demonstrates that the information yielded by people who are being subjected to violence is unreliable,” High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein [said](#) at the event, entitled “Torture during Interrogations – Illegal, Immoral, and Ineffective.”

The torture of detainees, who are captive and cannot defend themselves, also creates enormous rage among their larger communities, he added. “By feeding the desire for vengeance, torture produces more hatred and more violence.”

Today’s event, organized by the High Commissioner’s Office ([OHCHR](#)) and held on the sidelines of the annual high-level segment of the General Assembly, sought to inform discussions among Member States about the development of standards and guidelines on investigative interviewing by police and other law enforcement agencies, with the aim of assisting States to meet their fundamental legal obligations to prevent torture and ill-treatment.

Among the participants in the event were the lead investigative interviewer in the Anders Behring Breivik case in Norway, and a former NCIS Deputy Assistant Director for Counterterrorism from the United States.

“Officials required to enforce the law should not undermine the rule of law.”

The High Commissioner noted that people who are in police custody for a very broad range of reasons are frequently subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment. This is particularly true, he said, in the first hours and days after their arrest, when – although they should benefit from the presumption of innocence – suspects may have no access to legal assistance or independent medical examination, and have not been brought before a judge.

“Alarmingly, in the past, some States have resorted to using psychologists to design brutal interrogation methods such as waterboarding, forcing detainees into small containers, forcing them to hold painful positions for hours or slamming them into flexible walls,” he stated.

“Furthermore, conditions for detainees are often so squalid and inadequate that they may amount to torture or other forms of ill-treatment under the terms of the Convention against Torture. This is true even in numerous developed countries.”

The High Commissioner cited the example of an allegation in which a pre-trial detainee in one of the richest countries in the world had died after prison guards cut off his water supply for seven days, to punish him for a violent outburst – leading to his death from dehydration.

“These abuses should matter, very deeply, to every member of the community,” he said. “Not only do they violate the rights of the individuals concerned, they also corrode what should be the protective and principled function of every police force.”

“Officials required to enforce the law should not undermine the rule of law,” he continued. “If police break the law in pursuit of law enforcement, the message is one of capricious and abusive power. The institution which should protect the people becomes unmoored from principle; unresponsive to the law, it is a loose cannon.

“This destruction of public trust is profoundly damaging. When added to the perception that police abuses and humiliation of specific communities is tolerated – based on economic, geographic, ethnic, religious or other distinctions – it will certainly exacerbate tensions and may lead to serious violence.

OHCHR is planning to co-create a Manual on Investigative Interviewing, with the UN’s Police Division, for use by UN police officers. The Convention against Torture Initiative and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights are also preparing guidance on investigative interviewing that does not rely on threats and brutality.

[‘Surge of solidarity’ can halt spread of poverty, Cameroon’s President tells UN Assembly](#)

22 September 2017 – The first speaker to take the podium on the fourth day of the United Nations General Assembly annual high-level debate, President Paul Biya of Cameroon, underscored that peace, essential for the survival of humanity and sustainable development, “is dangerously under threat,” notably from terrorism, conflicts, poverty and climate disruptions.

“Today, I would say, we are all ‘beggars for peace.” And such persistent threats are of utmost concern to us all,” he said, pointing to terrorist attacks around the globe.

Mr. Biya condemned ongoing conflicts in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East that are wreaking hardships, deaths, refugees and displaced persons. Noting that his country – hosting thousands of refugees from the Central African Republic and Nigeria – understands their struggles, he urged policies, behaviours and actions to re-focus attention on people.

Turning to climate change, he cited the two main challenges for Africa: the ongoing forest degradation in Central Africa, calling it “the earth’s second lung;” and the desertification affecting Lake Chad, “which is essential for the survival of communities and biodiversity.”

Despite the numerous UN declarations and resolutions, as well as ‘development decades,’ plans of action and other agendas, the result, noted Mr. Biya has

been that poverty persists and the gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen. “Let us all mobilize in a powerful surge of solidarity to roll back poverty. Let us match our actions with our words,” he pressed. To provide conditions for a decent life, “let us thus focus on People!” urged President Biya.

[Full statement available here](#)

Darfur: AU-UN mission urges restraint after clashes at camp for displaced persons



A section of the Kalma camp for internally displaced people (IDP), near Nyala, in South Darfur. Photo: UNAMID/Albert González Farran

22 September 2017 – The joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping mission in Darfur today urged “the utmost restraint” by all parties after clashes between government forces and internally displaced persons at the Kalma camp led to the death of at least three IDPs and injuries to some 26 others.

“I call upon everyone involved in this situation to restore calm as soon as possible. A peaceful resolution of differences is the only way forward for the Darfuri people,” [said](#) Jeremiah Mamabolo, the Joint Special Representative and head of the AU-UN mission ([UNAMID](#)).

A medical team from UNAMID is currently at Kalma camp, located in South Darfur, to assist local authorities in treating the injured. The mission is also engaging with the state government and IDP leaders to peacefully resolve the issue.

The incident reportedly occurred after Sudanese Government forces dispersed a group of IDPs protesting against President Omar Al-Bashir’s visit to South Darfur.