

Ongoing tensions pose continued dangers for civilians in eastern Ukraine, notes UN report

12 September 2017 – Last month saw a decrease in the number of civilian casualties due to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, according to a new report issued today by the United Nations human rights office, which added that the sudden flaring and easing of tensions continues to make daily life dangerous for civilians living close to the so-called “contact line.”

A [press release](#) issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) noted that the “harvest ceasefire,” which began at the end of June, may have contributed to the decrease in civilian casualties in August.

“However, the ceasefire never fully took hold, with hostilities suddenly flaring and then easing,” it added, noting that this unpredictability made daily life particularly dangerous for civilians living close to the contact line on both sides.

From 16 May to 15 August 2017, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine recorded 26 conflict-related civilian deaths and 135 injuries. At least 2,803 civilians have been killed, and between 7,000 and 9,000 civilians injured during the conflict overall.

OHCHR is concerned that there is no mechanism for victims to seek reparation and compensation, especially for those who have been injured and the families of people who have been killed. The report also highlights the need to develop a mechanism for compensation or restitution for property destroyed or damaged due to the conflict.

Calling on all parties to immediately adhere to the ceasefire, the report describes incidents of shelling which damaged residential neighbourhoods, schools, hospitals, and water and power facilities. It also raises concerns about unlawful detentions, continued killings and enforced disappearances in the conflict zone.

Among other things, the report also contains new allegations of the use of torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence, to extract confessions from conflict-related detainees on both sides of the contact line.

The report also points to a new development, namely business people being detained by law enforcement in government-controlled territory on charges of financing terrorism after they paid “taxes” in territory controlled by armed groups.

More than 1.7 million people have been displaced in Ukraine since the start of the conflict four years ago. During a visit to the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, in June, UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres called on all sides to

fully respect the ceasefire and underscored the world body's support to the country and its people.

In addition to today's report, OHCHR will later this month issue a report on the human rights situation in Crimea, as mandated by the General Assembly.

[Abuse, exploitation and trafficking 'stark reality' for migrant children trying to reach Europe – UN report](#)

12 September 2017 – More than 75 per cent of migrant and refugee children trying to reach Europe via the Central Mediterranean route face appalling levels of abuse, exploitation and trafficking, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) said, calling on the continent to establish safe and regular pathways for migration.

"The stark reality is that it is now standard practice that children moving through the Mediterranean are abused, trafficked, beaten and discriminated against," said Afshan Khan, the UNICEF Regional Director and Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe.

The grim picture is revealed in [Harrowing Journeys: Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea, at risk of trafficking and exploitation](#), a joint UNICEF-IOM report, which notes that children from sub-Saharan Africa are targeted more than any other group, pointing to impact of discrimination and racism.

Based on testimonies of some 22,000 migrants and refugees, including some 11,000 children and youth, the report also shows that while all migrants and refugees are at high risk, children and youth are far more likely to experience exploitation and trafficking than adults aged 25 years and above.

Furthermore, children and youth traveling alone or over longer periods, along with those possessing lower levels of education, were also found to be highly vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of traffickers and criminal groups over the course of their journeys.

On top of these perils, young people reaching Europe often arrive heavily laden with debt, exposing them to further risks. On average, they have to pay between \$1,000-\$5,000 for the journey.

We must re-invigorate a rights-based approach to migration, improving mechanisms to identify and protect the most vulnerable

throughout the migration process, regardless of their legal status
Eugenio Ambrosi, IOM Regional Director

“For people who leave their countries to escape violence, instability or poverty, the factors pushing them to migrate are severe and they make perilous journeys knowing that [they may be forced to pay with their dignity, their wellbeing or even their lives](#),” said Eugenio Ambrosi, the IOM Regional Director for the European Union (EU), Norway and Switzerland.

“We must re-invigorate a rights-based approach to migration, improving mechanisms to identify and protect the most vulnerable throughout the migration process, regardless of their legal status,” he noted.

“EU leaders should put in place lasting solutions that include safe and legal migration pathways, establishing protection corridors and finding alternatives to the detention of migrant children,” added UNICEF Regional Director Afshan Khan.

In addition to safe and regular pathways for children on the move, the UNICEF-IOM report also urges all concerned parties – countries of origin, transit and destination, the African Union, the EU, international and national organizations with support from the donor community – to prioritize strengthening of services to protect migrant and refugee children, finding alternatives to the detention of children on the move, working across borders to combat trafficking and exploitation, and combatting xenophobia, racism and discrimination against all migrants and refugees.

[Security Council approves toughest resolution yet against DPR Korea](#)

11 September 2017 – The Security Council today unanimously agreed to impose tighter sanctions on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), imposing limits on oil exports, banning the country’s textile imports and access to gas liquids, and more closely inspecting cargo ships going in and out of its ports.

In the approved text, the 15-member Council seeks to cap refined petroleum products up to 500,000 barrels beginning in October, and up to 2 million barrels per year starting in January for a period of one year.

In addition, the resolution takes action against DPRK nationals who work outside of the country and who could be “generating foreign export earnings that the DPRK uses to support its prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.”

The resolution prohibits UN Member States from providing work authorizations for DPRK nationals unless “is required for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, denuclearization or any other purpose,” consistent with other resolutions on the topic.

Building on resolution 1874 (2009), the Council also gives countries the right to inspect ships with the consent of the countries where the ships are registered, “if they have information that provides reasonable grounds to believe that the cargo of such vessels contains items the supply, sale, transfer or export of which is prohibited.”

In addition, the Council banned textile imports, including fabrics and partially completed apparel, beginning 90 days from the adoption of the resolution.

The resolution follows the condemnation by the Council of the nuclear test carried out by DPRK on 3 September of this year and its violation of eight resolutions dating back to 2006 which could have “large-scale regional security implications.”

“The proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery, constitutes a threat to international peace and security,” the Council said in today’s text.

[Security Council strongly condemns ‘heinous’ attack on Egyptian police](#)

11 September 2017 – The members of the United Nations Security Council strongly condemned the “heinous and cowardly” terrorist attack that took place on Monday in Sinai, in which at least 18 policemen were killed and 3 were injured.

“They expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of Egypt, and they wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured,” read a statement issued to the press by the 15-member body.

Council members reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these “reprehensible acts of terrorism” to justice.

Also today, UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said the world body sent its condolences to the Government and people of Egypt on the attack.

At close of 71st General Assembly, outgoing President stresses sustainability

11 September 2017 – The United Nations General Assembly today closed its 71st session with a focus on sustainable development, as outgoing president Peter Thomson handed over the gavel to his successor, Miroslav Lajčák.

In his final address, Mr. Thomson summarized the achievements of his one-year tenure, and urged the international community to raise awareness about the behavioural changes needed to create a more sustainable way of life and to combat climate change, as agreed to in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

“We must embrace the power of innovation and technology to leverage SDG implementation and combat climate change at the speed and scale required,” he said. “We are witnessing exponential change in multiple areas of technology and we must manage the risks and seize the opportunities for the common good of humanity and the planet.”

Mr. Thomson also underlined the importance of partnerships and a change in how development is financed, as requirements for achieving the [SDGs](#) by the 2030 deadline.

“We have not come this far as a species only to be defeated by greed,” Mr. Thomson said, echoing what he told the press in his final press conference on Friday.

In that [press briefing](#), Mr. Thomson said that he had written to all heads of government and to some 4,000 universities asking them to teach SDGs in school.

We have not come this far as a species only to be defeated by greed
Peter Thomson

“We are stealing from our grandchildren’s future if we continue to take more from the planetary ecosystem than it can sustainably grant,” Mr. Thomson said in today’s statement.

Ahead of his address, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres lauded the outgoing official for overseeing a “productive” session that included the adoption of a landmark declaration on [refugees and migrants](#), the establishment of a technology bank for the least developed countries, and a momentum to save the oceans, among others.

“Thank you for helping to steer the Member States to a solid record of achievement over the past year. Day in and day out, you brought us together,” said the Secretary-General.

Paying homage to the 16th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and other targets in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C., Mr. Guterres noted that this “[spirit of unity has particular meaning today.](#)”

“This was an assault on the United States. But so many of our Member States saw their citizens murdered that day,” he said. “I know you join me in expressing our sorrow and solidarity on this day.”

Following the remarks, the General Assembly stood for one minute of silent prayer or meditation, as is the custom, after which the incoming president, Mr. Lajčák, took the oath of office and received the symbolic gavel from Mr. Thomson.

Mr. Lajčák will open the 72nd session of the General Assembly tomorrow afternoon.