

DPRK's nuclear risk 'most dangerous crisis we face today,' warns UN chief Guterres

5 September 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today unequivocally condemned the latest nuclear and missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), denouncing them as profoundly destabilizing for regional and international security.

Yet again, the DPRK has [broken the global norm](#) against nuclear test explosions, Secretary-General António Guterres told reporters today at UN Headquarters in New York.

Yet again, the country has defied the Security Council and the international community.

"Yet again, the DPRK has needlessly and recklessly put millions of people at risk including its own citizens already suffering drought, hunger and serious violations of their human rights," he added.

Mr. Guterres reiterated his call on DPRK authorities to comply fully with its international obligations, including [Security Council Resolution 2371](#), which was adopted last month.

He welcomed yesterday's meeting of the Security Council, saying: "The unity of the Council is crucial in addressing this crisis. That unity also creates an opportunity to engage diplomatically to decrease tensions, increase confidence and prevent any escalation all aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

The Secretary-General stressed dialogue and communication as necessary to avoid miscalculation or misunderstanding.

"Confrontational rhetoric may lead to unintended consequences," he elaborated. "The solution must be political. The potential consequences of military action are too horrific."

"As Secretary-General, I am ready to support any efforts towards a peaceful solution of this alarming situation, and as I said, to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula," underscored Mr. Guterres.

In response to a journalist who asked which of the global challenges he thought would be most focussed upon at the forthcoming General Assembly's High-Level Week, Mr. Guterres answered "The most dangerous crisis we face today, [is] the crisis related to the nuclear risk in relation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

The 'gathering force' of climate change

Turning to another topic of vital importance, Mr. Guterres said the world continues to witness climate change gather force., and he expressed solidarity with all those suffering the devastating impacts of the unprecedented events seen in recent weeks –from Texas to Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sierra Leone.

“The United Nations stands ready to support relief efforts in any way possible,” he said, noting that the number of natural disasters has nearly quadrupled since 1970, with the US, followed by China and India experiencing the most since 1995.

Last year alone, 24.2 million people were displaced by sudden-onset disasters – three times as many as by conflict and violence. Even before the current floods, preliminary reports for this year show that there have been 2,087 deaths from natural disasters.

It is true that scientists caution us about linking any single weather event with climate change.

But they are equally clear that such extreme weather is precisely what their models predict will be the new normal of a warming world.

“With science forecasting a dramatic rise in both the frequency and severity of disasters, it is time to get serious about keeping ambition high on climate action – and on building resilience and reducing disaster risk,” he said.

Grievances of Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine have 'festered far too long'

Members of the Rohingya community crossing the border into Bangladesh. Photo: Azam Sheikh Ali Haider/UN Migration Agency ([IOM](#)) 2017

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Also today, the Secretary-General called for the Muslims of Rakhine state to be given either nationality or legal status, and voiced concern about violence that has since late August forced nearly 125,000 people to flee and risk destabilizing the region.

“I have condemned the recent attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. But now we are receiving constant reports of violence by Myanmar's security forces, including indiscriminate attacks,” he told journalists, expressing concern about the security, humanitarian and human rights situation in Rakhine. “This will only further increase radicalization.”

Mr. Guterres said that he has officially written to the Security Council to express his concern and to propose various steps to end the violence, adding

that the grievances of Rohingya and the Muslims in the Rakhine state have festered for far too long and are becoming an undeniable factor in regional destabilization.

Mr. Guterres called on the international community to prevent further escalation and to seek a holistic solution, and urged the authorities in Myanmar to provide security and aid to those in need and safe access to life-saving aid.

[In Ethiopia, UN agency chiefs say more investment is needed to bolster drought-prone areas](#)

5 September 2017 – More investment is needed in long-term projects to protect people in developing countries from droughts, the heads of the United Nations food agencies today said after a visit to Ethiopia where 9.5 million people are hungry.

The death of many livestock in Ethiopia, as well as in Somalia where 3.3 million people are in need of food after three years with too little rain, has caused a breakdown in pastoral livelihoods, contributing to soaring hunger levels and alarming increases in malnutrition rates, according to the UN Food and Agricultural Organization ([FAO](#)).

"A drought does not need to become an emergency," [said](#) Gilbert F. Hounbo, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development ([IFAD](#)), traveling as part of a four-day visit that also included FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva and David Beasley, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)).

"We know what works," added Mr. Hounbo, pointing to irrigation systems, rural financial institutions and other long-term development projects. "This is what we need to build on."

During the four-day visit, the three senior UN officials toured the Tigray region, where agency heads saw irrigation schemes, fruit nurseries and health centres. According to a press release, these measures are boosting productivity, increasing incomes and improving nutrition so that rural people can better withstand external shocks like droughts.

"We have seen clearly here that working together the three UN food agencies can achieve much more than alone," [said](#) Mr. Beasley.

The three agency heads met with high-level officials in Ethiopia and Somalia to discuss aid efforts, as well as with local residents.

“This drought has been going on for a long time and we have lost much of our livestock,” Hajiji Abdi, a community elder told them. “If we didn’t get food assistance, we would be in big trouble but this is still not enough to feed us all.”

Surge in number of civilians fleeing Myanmar’s Rokhine for Bangladesh – UN agencies

5 September 2017 – More than 123,000 people from Myanmar’s Rokhine state have fled to Bangladesh since the latest outbreak of violence, the United Nations migration agency today announced seeking \$18 million to urgently help the refugees.

“Clear signs that more will cross into Bangladesh from Myanmar before situation stabilizes,” said the Director of Operations and Emergencies at the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), Mohammed Abdiker, on [Twitter](#). “Without more international support, suffering will continue.”

Thousands of people are arriving daily in south-eastern Bangladesh, living in makeshift sites and seeking any space for shelter.

“We are running out of space in the existing settlements and new arrivals are pitching camp wherever they can erect some plastic sheeting to protect themselves from the elements,” [said](#) Sarat Dash, IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission.

“The new arrivals are putting immense strain on the existing support structures. These need to be immediately scaled up to ensure lives are not put at risk,” he cautioned.

With reports of ongoing violence, UN agencies today expressed grave concern about the situation, including reports that some civilians are dying enroute to safety.

“Those who have made it to Bangladesh are in poor condition. Most have walked for days from their villages hiding in jungles, crossing mountains and rivers with what they could salvage from their homes. They are hungry, weak and sick,” a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), Duniya Aslam Khan, [told](#) journalists in Geneva.

Two of the shelter sites Kutupalong and Nayapara camps are at breaking point,” Ms. Khan said. New arrivals are hosted by refugee families and in refugee schools, community centres, madrassas and covered

structures.

“We are running out of available space,” she stressed.

‘I just knew to run to save my life’

IOM and partners today appealed for \$18 million to aid the fleeing civilians over the next three months. The support would go for people like Rohingya Dilara, who reached Bangladesh barefoot, clutching her 18-month son.

“My husband was shot in the village. I escaped with my son and in-laws,” she [told](#) UNHCR. “We walked for three days, hiding when we had to. The mountain was wet and slippery and I kept falling.”

Dilara followed other villagers into the Kutupalong camp, which was established in the 1990s along with neighbouring Nayapara camp, and already had a population of some 30,000 people. UNHCR estimates that 20,000 civilians arrived since 25 August, when the fighting in Myanmar flared up.

“I don’t know where I am ... I just knew to run to save my life,” Dilara said.

[Yemen: UN report urges international probe into rights violations amid “entirely man-made catastrophe”](#)

5 September 2017 – The United Nations human rights chief has called for an independent, international investigation into the allegations of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Yemen, in a new report published today.

“An international investigation would go a long way in putting on notice the parties to the conflict that the international community is watching and determined to [hold to account perpetrators of violations and abuses](#),” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein in a news release on the report.

“I appeal to all the parties to the conflict, those supporting them and those with influence over them to have mercy on the people of Yemen, and to take immediate measures to ensure humanitarian relief for civilians and justice for the victims of violations,” he added.

According to the report, which records violations and abuses of human rights

and international humanitarian law since September 2014, such acts continue unabated in Yemen, with civilians suffering deeply the consequences of an entirely man-made catastrophe.

Between March 2015, when the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) began reporting on civilian casualties, and 30 August, at least 5,144 civilians have been documented as killed and more than 8,749 injured.

Children accounted for 1,184 of those who were killed and 1,592 of those injured. Coalition airstrikes continued to be the leading cause of child casualties as well as overall civilian casualties. Some 3,233 of the civilians killed were reportedly killed by Coalition forces.

The report states that the past year witnessed airstrikes against funeral gatherings and small civilian boats, in addition to markets, hospitals, schools, residential areas, and other public and private infrastructure.

The Popular Committees affiliated with the Houthis and the army units loyal to former President Abdullah Saleh (the Houthi/Saleh forces) were responsible for some 67 per cent of the 1,702 cases of recruitment of children for use in hostilities.

The report stresses that the minimal efforts towards accountability in the past year are wholly insufficient to respond to the gravity of violations and abuses continuing every day in Yemen, adding that the National Commission established to investigate human rights violations in Yemen is not perceived to be impartial.

The report also found that the governorates most affected by the conflict were Aden, Al-Hudaydah, Sana'a and Taizz.

The humanitarian crisis with nearly 18.8 million people in need of humanitarian aid and 7.3 million on the brink of famine is a direct result of the behaviour of parties to the conflict, including indiscriminate attacks, attacks against civilians and protected objects, sieges, blockades and restrictions on movement, the report states.

In many cases, information obtained suggested that civilians may have been directly targeted, or that operations were conducted heedless of their impact on civilians without regard to the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack. In some cases, information suggested that no actions were taken to mitigate the impact of operations on civilians, the report states.

UN political chief urges Security Council to 'remain united, take appropriate action' on DPR Korea

4 September 2017 – The top United Nations political official today urged the Security Council to remain united and take appropriate action against Sunday's nuclear explosive test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The latest serious developments require a comprehensive response in order to break the cycle of provocations from the DPRK, said Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, in an emergency Council meeting, noting that such a response must include wise and bold diplomacy to be effective.

Mr. Feltman, however, stressed the importance of responding to humanitarian needs regardless of the political situation as the people of the DPRK rely on the international community to provide humanitarian assistance.

Today's meeting was the Council's second emergency meeting on the DPRK in less than a week and the tenth time the body has met to discuss the DPRK this year.

The latest serious developments require a comprehensive response in order to break the cycle of provocations from the DPRK

On the details of Sunday's event, Mr. Feltman said that the DPRK characterized it as a perfect success in the test of a hydrogen bomb for intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and as marking a very significant occasion in attaining the final goal of completing the state nuclear force.

He said that it is evident the yield of the device was larger than any of the DPRK's previous nuclear tests and experts have estimated a yield of between 50 and 100 kilotons, or on average more than five times more powerful than the weapon detonated over Hiroshima and at the low end of the yield of a modern thermonuclear weapon.

Citing a DPRK article that stated the hydrogen bomb was a multi-functional thermonuclear nuke with great destructive power which can be detonated even at high altitudes for super-powerful EMP [electromagnetic pulse] attack, Mr. Feltman said that this was a rare reference by the DPRK to the use of EMP, which, triggered by a nuclear weapon, would aim for widespread damage and disruption to electricity grids and sensitive electronics, including on satellites.

He also drew attention to reports today indicating that the DPRK may be

preparing new ballistic missile tests.

“We are alarmed by this dangerous provocation,” he said, noting that [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres reiterated his call on the DPRK leadership to cease such acts and to comply fully with its international obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions.

“We will continue to carefully follow the developments and remain in close coordination with the concerned international organizations, Members of the Council and other governments concerned,” he concluded.