

## [Guterres says UN ready to support relief efforts in South Asia countries hit by floods, landslides](#)

1 September 2017 – Saddened by the loss of life and the devastation caused by widespread floods and landslides due to torrential monsoon rains in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said today that the United Nations is ready to support ongoing relief efforts.

In a [statement](#) issued by a UN spokesperson, the Secretary-General extended his condolences to the Governments and the people of Bangladesh, India and Nepal and saluted the respective Governments' leadership in responding to the needs of those affected.

Meanwhile on the ground, United Nations humanitarian agencies are working with partners and the respective Governments to bring in clean water, food, shelter and medical aid for some of the estimated 41 million people affected by flooding and landslides in South Asia.

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## [UN allocates \\$21M to meet urgent needs in newly-accessible areas across Sudan](#)

1 September 2017 – The United Nations today allocated \$21 million to provide life-saving food support, nutrition, water and sanitation, health and other assistance to thousands of Sudanese in newly accessible areas in Darfur's Jebel Marra area, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

"Our response will address both the immediate needs through emergency, life-saving assistance and strengthen resilience of the most vulnerable and their communities to future and recurring shocks," [said](#) Marta Ruedas, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan.

The funds come from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)) and the Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF), which is comprised of donor funds and overseen by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

The funding will allow humanitarian agencies to support vulnerable people in these areas where access was previously limited.

In a statement from OCHA, the UN said that acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) cases and the continuing influx of refugees from South Sudan have been straining available resources and increasing pressure on the limited basic services in

the targeted areas where funding is now headed.

The announcement of the funds comes days after the former UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien released \$45 million from CERF to Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad and Sudan.

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## [UN mission in Afghanistan confirms at least 44 civilians killed, hurt in latest airstrikes](#)

1 September 2017 – At least 28 women and children were killed and an additional 16 injured in air strikes this week in Afghanistan, the United Nations political mission in the country said in initial findings of its probe into the deaths.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)) urged authorities to ensure independent, impartial and prompt investigations of both incidents, and to compensate the victims.

"I am deeply saddened to hear that women and children have once again suffered so terribly from the conflict," [said](#) Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA. "This is unacceptable. All parties must live up to their obligations to take all feasible measures to protect civilians."

The incidents took place in Herat, a western province bordering Iran and Turkmenistan, and in Logar, which is south of Kabul on the eastern side of the country.

UNAMA cited a news release issued by United States Forces in Afghanistan that it is aware of an incident in the Logar area and that they have opened an investigation into it.

The air strikes reportedly targeted Anti-Government Elements who had used a civilian compound to attack aircraft.

The UN mission said that it will continue its independent work to establish the facts as to what happened, including allegations that civilians were used as shields.

More civilians have been killed or injured in aerial operations in the first half of this year than in 2016, according to UNAMA.

Initial figures show at least 232 civilians were injured or killed, a 43 per cent increase over 2016, and the majority of the victims have been women and

children.

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## [Syria: Forces battling ISIL 'losing sight of ultimate aim' to free civilians from terror – UN rights chief](#)

31 August 2017 – Forces fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorist group in Syria are losing sight of the obligation to protect civilians as the battle to retake Raqqa from ISIL is being waged at the cost of their lives, the top United Nations human rights official warned today.

Surely [the purpose of defeating ISIL](#) should be to protect and assist civilians who have been suffering under their murderous regime,&#8221 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a news release.

Given the extremely high number of reports of civilian casualties this month and the intensity of the airstrikes on Raqqa, coupled with ISIL's use of civilians as human shields, I am deeply concerned that civilians &#8211 who should be protected at all times – are paying an unacceptable price and that forces involved in battling ISIL are losing sight of the ultimate goal of this battle,&#8221 he added.

Between 1 and 29 August, the Coalition reports that it conducted 1,094 airstrikes on and near Raqqa city &#8211 up from 645 in July. In July, throughout the whole of Syria, a total of 885 airstrikes were conducted by the Coalition.

The Russian air force, which operates separately from the Coalition, reported publicly that it had carried out 990 combat flights in Syria from 1 to 21 August and that 2,518 aviation strikes had been conducted.

Airstrikes and ground-based strikes on Raqqa have resulted in a large number of civilians casualties. While it is difficult to get a full picture, the Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) has managed to verify 151 civilian deaths in six incidents since 1 August 2017, in each of which more than 20 civilians were reportedly killed.

Once Raqqa is retaken from ISIL, the next big battle will be Deir-  
ez-Zor

So as airstrikes bombard Raqqa, some 20,000 civilians are either trapped, or risk their lives to flee and end up confined in makeshift camps in areas controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces under horrendous conditions until prolonged security procedures are completed, with no oversight on how they are treated and screened, Mr. Zeid said.

The High Commissioner called on all those with involvement or influence in the conflict to facilitate the rapid, safe departure of civilians wishing to leave Raqqa, and to ensure the protection of those who remain.

OHCHR has also received information about ISIL forcibly conscripting civilians in Deir-ez-Zor, including children.

Once Raqqa is retaken from ISIL, the next big battle will be Deir-ez-Zor, Mr. Zeid said, appealing to all the parties involved in the conflict in Syria to fully respect their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population and civilian objects.

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## [In the Gaza Strip, UN chief appeals for Palestinian unity; renews call for two-state solution](#)

30 August 2017 – Visiting Gaza for the first time since taking office as United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres today called for Palestinian unity, saying division only undermines the cause of the Palestinian people.

Speaking to reporters at a UN-supported school in northern Gaza, the Secretary-General appealed for unity, in line with the principles of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, which include rejecting violence and terrorism, and recognizing Israel's right to exist in peace.

I have a dream. A dream to one day see the Holy Land with two states – Israel and Palestine – living in peace and security together, Mr. Guterres [told](#) reporters in Beit Lahiya, Gaza, at a school run by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)).

Making this second appeal, Mr. Guterres underscored the importance of a credible political process and actions to improve living conditions of Palestinians.

It is important to open the closures, in line with resolution 1860, he said, referring the Security Council resolution from 2009 which

called for an immediate ceasefire to the fighting between Israel and Hamas and lifting of blockades for food, fuel and medicines.

The resolution was meant to diffuse an intra-Palestinian conflict which flared when Hamas took over Gaza in 2007. Since then, Israel sought to isolate the group by restricting the movements of goods and people in and out of the strip.

In today's statement, Mr. Guterres that it was important to avoid the 'build-up of the militantism' that can undermine the confidence between the two people, he added.

The UN chief today appealed to the international community to strongly support humanitarian aid in Gaza. He ordered an immediate release of \$4 million from the limited resources of the Central Emergency Relief Fund ([CERF](#)), to support the UN activities working for the benefit of the Gaza people.

**VIDEO:** In Gaza [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres visits a school managed by UNRWA saying their contribution to the Palestinian people 'will never be forgotten'. Credit: UN News

Mr. Guterres, who toured the Israeli-Gaza border by helicopter and then crossed it by vehicle, called the conditions in Gaza, 'one of the most dramatic humanitarian crises' he has seen during his time working as a humanitarian.

The two million people living in Gaza have lack access to basic services, such as electricity, food or healthcare. The real gross domestic product (GDP) is largely stagnant, unemployment is up and the infrastructure and private sector have been gradually debilitated, according to a [UN report](#) published last month.

Given the current trends, Gaza would become 'unliveable' by 2020, according to the report.

#### *'True peacemakers'*

Wrapping up his trip to the Middle East, Mr. Guterres today also visited the Museum of the Jewish People, where he reiterated his ongoing calls for an end to anti-Semitism around the world.

Pledging that he will do all possible to stand against anti-Semitism and all other forms of bigotry and discrimination, Mr. Guterres stressed that anti-Semitism includes calls for the destruction of Israel.



Secretary-General António Guterres delivers a speech at the Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv, Israel. Photo: OSSG

Israel is a Member State of the United Nations. It bears all the responsibilities and enjoys all the rights of every other Member State and, therefore, it must be treated as such," he stressed.

Mr. Guterres described meeting families in Nahal Oz, a kibbutz close to the Gaza Strip. Speaking with relatives of a child killed by a Palestinian rocket, he told of a request to help the Palestinians in Gaza have better lives.

Calling the request a "fantastic example of solidarity, of humanity, of tolerance," Mr. Guterres paid tribute to the "voices of these true peacemakers."

"Let us not forget that those individual peacebuilders represent the best faces of their communities and serve as the human foundation so essential for a lasting peace, here and everywhere," he said.