

Majority of children fleeing to Europe just want to get away, UNICEF reports

25 July 2017 – Facing violence and trauma in Libya and other countries, thousands of children decided to flee by themselves, seeking to get away but not necessarily aiming for Europe, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) today reported.

A new study of push-pull factors on child marriage showed that 75 per cent of children on the move decided to leave unaccompanied and that initially, they had no intention to come to Europe, UNICEF spokesperson Sarah Crowe told journalists in Geneva.

“What was striking in the new findings was that there were far more push factors, pushing children away from home – conflicts or violence at home – than there were pull factors [that lure them to Europe], and this went against the current narrative,” Ms. Crowe said.

She noted that of the children who arrived in Libya, 63 per cent of young people left the country because of the generalized violence and trauma they suffered or witnessed, making them more willing to take terrifying sea journeys.

“As one young Gambian boy said, ‘if you have a lion behind your back and a sea in front of you, you take the sea,’” said Ms. Crowe.

Among girls interviewed, one in five left because of forced child marriage at home.

For the first six months of the year, a total of 12,239 children had arrived to Italy, and 93 per cent were travelling alone – the majority of them teenage boys, according to UNICEF figures.

In Greece, however, the majority of children were actually being sent on the voyage by their parents, or were accompanied by their parents.

UNICEF said the study is important for policymakers to understand why the children are making the voyage and how best to help them once they arrive in Europe.

Deadly voyages increasingly expensive

Voyages through the so-called Eastern Mediterranean route and into the European Union now cost \$5,000 or more, according to the UN Migration Agency ([IOM](#)).

“With increased border controls, it has become harder to reach Europe,” noted Livia Styp-Rekowska, IOM’s Border Management Specialist in Vienna. “One constant, however, is the increase in sums demanded.”

She noted new data released today that shows the cost of getting into Europe [has increased significantly](#) when compared to 2016, the routes have changed, and different countries of destination are being prioritized.

People arriving from Afghanistan, Syria and Pakistan are charged the most, [according to IOM](#).

The most popular destination up to June 2016 was overwhelmingly Germany, but migrants now seek to get to France, Sweden, Italy, Norway, Austria and Denmark as well, with Greece used as a popular transit country.

[UN chief condemns suicide attacks on camps in northeastern Nigeria](#)

25 July 2017 – Strongly condemning yesterday's suicide attacks on the two camps for internally displaced persons in northeastern Nigeria, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has called for the perpetrators of this heinous act to be swiftly brought to justice.

According to a statement issued by his spokesman, the Secretary-General reiterated the UN support to the Government of Nigeria in its fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

These terrorist acts are targeting people who had already fled their homes as a result of Boko Haram violence, [said](#) Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, in the statement.

Preliminary media reports said that at least eight people have been killed in the attacks that took place near the Borno state capital of Maiduguri.

Mr. Haq said the Secretary-General offered his condolences to the people and Government of Nigeria for the loss of life, while also wishing a quick recovery to those injured.

Borno state has been plagued by violent attacks carried out by the Boko Haram insurgents, and Maiduguri has been targeted many times.

[Latest round of UN-led global](#)

consultations spotlights migrants' contributions to development

24 July 2017 – Although the net benefits of migration far outweigh its costs, the public perception is often the opposite, a senior United Nations official pointed out today, as the latest round of consultations on a global compact for migration began in New York.

“Such public perceptions and attitudes negatively influence sound migration policy choices,” said Louise Arbour, UN Special Representative for International Migration, in her remarks to the session, which wraps up tomorrow at UN Headquarters in New York.

“This must be reversed so that policy is evidence-based and not perception-driven. Policies responding to false perceptions reinforce the apparent validity of these erroneous stereotypes and make recourse to proper policies that much harder,” she added.

The consultation is the [fourth](#) in a series of six thematic consultations that will take place this year and feed into the drafting of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration ([GCM](#)), expected to be adopted by UN Member States in 2018.

An outgrowth of the [New York Declaration](#), adopted at a 2016 UN Summit on [refugees and migrants](#), the Compact will be the first intergovernmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the UN, to cover all dimensions of international migration in a comprehensive manner.

The current consultation, conducted by representatives of Member States, UN agencies, civil society, migrants and diaspora, examines the challenges and opportunities in leveraging the economic and social contributions of migrants to countries of origin and destination.

Ms. Arbour pointed out that in 2016 migrants sent \$429 billion to their countries of origin – one of their most tangible contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) in developing countries.

More than three times larger than official development assistance (ODA), and more stable than other forms of private capital flows, remittances – as such transfers are known – to developing countries have lifted millions of families out of poverty, she said, while stressing the need to lower the associated transaction costs to leverage remittances for development.

Migration also provides substantial development benefits to places of destination, for both developed and developing countries, particularly through the contribution of labour migrants of all skills levels, she argued.

However, there can be upfront adjustment costs in the short term that need to be addressed, she added.

In his remarks, Director General of International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) William Lacy Swing emphasized the advantages of making sure migration is considered in development planning.

He cited the need to ensure that migration is seen as an issue affecting all aspects of human development, including human rights, and the importance of mainstreaming migration in the broader development strategy.

[Afghanistan: UN condemns attack on civilians in Kabul](#)

24 July 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres condemned today's bomb attack in the Afghani capital of Kabul, warning that attacks on civilians may constitute a war crime.

In a statement from his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres expressed his deepest sympathy to the families of those killed, and reaffirmed the UN's solidarity with the people and Government.

He also stressed that "the deliberate targeting of civilians constitutes a grave violation of human rights and international humanitarian law and may constitute a war crime."

Also today, a senior official from the UN Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)) called the attack "cowardly."

"I am [personally outraged](#) by all attacks against civilians," said Pernille Kardel, the UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan. "The detonation of another large suicide device in a busy, civilian-populated area is egregious, cowardly and bereft of humanity."

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the suicide attack in the Ghulayee Dawa Khan area of Kabul, which killed more than 20 civilians and injured more than 40, the UN Assistance Mission (UNAMA) said.

The attackers targeted a bus carrying civil servants to work during morning rush hour in the city.

Suicide attacks are the [leading cause of civilians casualties this year](#), according to UNAMA's midyear report on civilian protection released last week.

Today's attack came amid planned commemorations for the 23 July 2016 Dehmazang square attack which killed and injured hundreds of people, many from the so-called Enlightened Movement, a coalition of civil society activities, protesting for Hazara minority rights.

“In the context of so much suffering and death, I wish to commend members of the Enlightenment Movement for choosing to address their grievances resulting from last year’s attack through dialogue, not violence,” said Ms. Kardel, who is the acting chief of UNAMA.

[UN chief condemns killing of peacekeeper in Central African Republic](#)

24 July 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has condemned the killing of a UN peacekeeper on Sunday in the Central African Republic, urging the country’s authorities to investigate this incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.

“The Secretary-General is appalled by attacks against United Nations peacekeepers,” [said](#) Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, in a statement issued overnight.

A Moroccan peacekeeper of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)) was killed in the south-eastern city of Bangassou in an attack allegedly carried out by anti-Balaka militias. Three others were injured.

The Secretary-General “is deeply concerned” about the continued fighting in the country’s southeast and calls on all parties to cease violence, the spokesperson said, noting that the UN chief offered his condolences to the bereaved family and to the Government of Morocco, and wished speedy recovery to those injured.