

## [Rainy season worsens cholera crisis in war-torn Yemen; UN agencies deliver clean water, food](#)

21 July 2017 – Yemen is facing the world’s largest cholera outbreak, the United Nations health agency today warned, with 5,000 Yemenis falling sick every day – the majority of them children and the elderly.

“The cholera outbreak is far from being over,” Fadela Chaib, spokesperson for the UN World Health Organization (WHO), told reporters in Geneva. “The rainy season had just started and would exacerbate the situation in terms of transmission.”

WHO reported 368,207 people are suspected of having cholera and at least 1,828 died of it since late April.

UN agencies, including WHO and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), are scaling up access to clean water and sanitation, and setting up treatment centres for oral rehydration therapy and other measures.

The response is also focused on providing food as the country remains on the verge of famine. Seventeen million people are currently hungry in the war-torn country, making them more vulnerable to catching the bacteria.

“It is necessary to break the vicious cycle of malnutrition and diarrhoea,” Ms. Chaib said.

Children aged 15 and under accounted for 41 per cent of all suspected cases, and people aged over 60 for 33 per cent of all deaths.

Asked if the number of cases could rise about 600,000, as projected by the non-governmental organization Oxfam, Ms. Chaib called the current toll “heavy” and said the situation “remains alarming.”

In 2011, some 719,377 suspected cases of cholera were recorded in Haiti, and 8,767 people died, according to national figures cited by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

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## [UN report reveals shocking abuse African migrant women face on their](#)

# journey to Europe

21 July 2017 – The United Nations migration agency today said that perhaps 80 per cent of Nigerian migrant women and girls arriving on Europe's shores in Italy could potentially be sex trafficking victims, spotlighting the horrific levels of abuse and violence migrants face along their arduous journeys for a better future.

In its report, *Human Trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route* (in Italian), the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) highlights the plight of those who have been assisted by the UN agency and calls for urgent action against the "market" which are supplied these victims as well as what is called is a "growing demand" for paid sexual services.

["Trafficking is a transnational crime that devastates the lives of thousands of people and is the cause of untold suffering,"](#) Federico Soda, the Director of the IOM Coordinating Office for the Mediterranean, said in a news release announcing the findings.

"This is a theme we have been working on for years, committing to protect, prevent and collaborate with the authorities dealing with organized crime."

According to the UN agency, over the past three years, its office in Italy has witnessed an almost 600 per cent increase in the number of potential sex trafficking victims arriving in Italy by sea. The upward trend has continued during the first six months of this year, with most victims arriving from Nigeria.

The data feeding the report was drawn from IOM operations in various parts of Italy, where staff met with potential victims of trafficking as soon as they reached the country, allowing the UN agency to develop a list of indicators that can help identify potential victims.

Described in the report, the indicators include gender (most sex trafficking victims are women); age (most victims age between 13-24 years); nationality (most are Nigerians); and psycho-physical wellness (victims are mostly silent and often "controlled" by other migrants who speak on their behalf or refuse to let them be interviewed by IOM).

When IOM staff identify a potential victim of trafficking, they explain to them that it is possible to access protection mechanisms and, with the victim's consent, the staff inform the anti-trafficking helpline about the victim.

Also, if the person agrees, IOM staff provides assistance in communicating and filing a report to the investigating authorities.

"The report describes IOM's activities in the face of this phenomenon: the difficulties in protecting victims and the main vulnerabilities

identified among several cases of people who were assisted by [the agency], said Carlotta Santarossa, the project's manager at IOM, adding:

"We also wanted to tell some of the stories of people who have been assisted by IOM staff to highlight the true nature of this painful and hateful form of slavery."

*The English version of the report will be released shortly, according to IOM.*

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## [UN agency lauds new project to register undocumented Afghan refugees in Pakistan](#)

21 July 2017 – A new pilot project in Pakistan to register undocumented Afghan refugees who up to now have been without identity papers and living in fear of being arrested or deported would allow up to one million people to have legal status, the United Nations refugee said.

"This [significant step](#) will help regularize the stay for many Afghans at a time when return to their home country may not be possible," Duniya Aslam Khan, spokesperson at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters at the UN's Geneva Office.

The six-month registration programme started yesterday in the capital Islamabad and Peshwar, in the north-west, which hosts the largest number of undocumented Afghans. The programme is expected to be rolled out throughout the country starting on 16 August.

Afghans registered under the new scheme receive Pakistani Citizen cards, which allow them to legally stay in Pakistan until the Government of Afghanistan can issue them passports and other documents, and provides protections under Pakistani law.

"The initiative will bring much needed relief for many Afghan families where some were registered refugees, while others had no legal status," Ms. Khan said.

The registration project comes after three years of consultations between the Governments, and is part of Pakistan's Comprehensive Policy on the Repatriation and Management of Afghans, which was endorsed by its cabinet in February this year.

"I am [feeling confident](#) that I will have at least some sort of identity while in Pakistan," Mohammad Rehman, who was born and raised in Pakistan

to Afghan parents, told UNHCR. "If the police arrest me now, at least I will be released without much trouble."

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## Three displaced families killed in airstrike in south-west Yemen – UN rights wing

21 July 2017 – Three displaced families have been killed when their makeshift shelter was hit in an airstrike in Yemen's Taiz governorate earlier this week, the United Nations human rights wing said.

Citing witness reports, Rupert Colville, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) [said today that the straw house the families were sheltering in was destroyed in the strike](#), killing everyone who were inside at the time.

"At least 18 civilians in all, including ten children and two women, are believed to have died in the incident," he said.

The Arab Coalition Forces airstrike had taken place in the Al Asheerah village, which is near the town of Mawza, and is currently controlled by the Houthis, at around 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, 18 July.

According to Mr. Colville, the families had been recorded by OHCHR as displaced, along with three others, from their homes in a different village nearby three months ago as a result of other airstrikes, and had set up four rough shelters in an open area in Al Asheerah.

The village is located about eight kilometres from the Khalid Bin Al Walid Military Camp, where clashes between pro-Hadi forces, backed by the Coalition Forces, and the Houthis are taking place.

Noting that according to available information, there did not appear to have been "any military objectives anywhere" in the immediate vicinity of the destroyed house, the OHCHR spokesperson underscored that attacks targeting civilians or civilian objects or indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks are prohibited under international humanitarian law.

"[We] remind all parties to the conflict, including the Coalition, of their duty to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law and to respect their obligations under international human rights law," said Mr. Colville, calling on the authorities for a comprehensive and impartial investigation into this incident.

Since March 2015, OHCHR has documented 13,609 civilian casualties, including

5,021 killed and 8,588 injured. These figures are based on the casualties individually verified by its office in Yemen and the overall number could be much higher.

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## [In Nigeria, UN deputy chief says 'messages of women' vital to sustainable peace, development](#)

20 July 2017 – Urgent action is needed now towards the meaningful participation of women in peace processes, as well ensuring their voices are heard in all aspects of society, the United Nations deputy chief told reporters in Abuja today as part of a first-ever UN-African Union trip focused on women, peace and security.

“It is about action. It is about implementation,” Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told the press in the Nigerian capital, where she also spotlighted the importance of advancing gender equality as a precondition for sustainable development for all.

During the [joint AU-UN high-level trip](#), which will move on from Nigeria to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ms. Mohammed will be accompanied by UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, and the Special Envoy of the AU on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop.

“It is a new era,” Ms. Mohammed continued, “a new era where we have many tools at our disposal.”

“We know that from the economy to stability and peace, we are not able to achieve our goals if we are only investing in half of the population. Human resource is a major asset of a nation and a continent. Women often account for half. But they lack the investment we need,” she added, urging that women’s voices be heard in all aspects of society.

What we really want to do is to hear and bring the messages of women  
Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General

Ms. Mohammed cited various challenges, which went beyond abject poverty to encompass high maternal mortality rates, extremism and education gaps.

“What we really want to do is to hear and bring the messages of women in decision-making, women who bear the brunt and carry the burden of many of the tragedies that we see to see how we can come out

of this, how we can be a constructive partner in finding the solutions to sustainable development,&#8221 she stressed.

According to Ms. Mohammed: &#8220It makes economic sense. It's not charity. It is about rights [...] it's a huge part of our economic development.&#8221

Over the past two days, the deputy UN chief met with the acting President and key ministers on these and other issues that affect development.

### ***Investing in Sustainable Development Goals can help prevent conflict***

From the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria's north-east to the conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers, she said conflicts drain the country's economy of resources that could be better used for development.

&#8220Without peace we cannot have development. Whatever investments that we are putting into development we are seeing them eroded by the lack of peace,&#8221 she underscored.

Ms. Mohammed also spoke about meeting with young refugee girls, who, living in camps, fled tragedies, including some of the freed Chibok girls. &#8220We heard stories that young girls should not have to tell, and these have been a tragedy for all of us,&#8221 she lamented.

However, the deputy UN chief was inspired by their spirit as they &#8220refuse to be victims and are survivors with a future that is bright.&#8221

&#8220We saw girls [...] who talked about their dreams &#8211 no longer their nightmares,&#8221 she said, adding that while challenges remain as there are many girls still left behind, &#8220it shows that there is hope.&#8221

Ms. Mohammed underscored the importance of strengthening partnerships with Nigeria and the African Union for a scaled-up response to support women and girls who face these tragedies.

Turning to the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), she emphasized that by investing in them, &#8220we can look at the root causes [...] we can prevent the conflict from happening.&#8221

Also, as present conflicts are resolved, the [SDGs](#) provide an opportunity &#8220to invest in the day after, to make sure that we are building back so that we don't lose the dividend of peace.&#8221