

[Liberation of Mosul a 'milestone' in global fight against ISIL – UN Security Council](#)

13 July 2017 – The liberation of Mosul has marked an important milestone in the global fight against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), the United Nations Security Council today, welcoming the announcement by Iraqi authorities that the city has been freed of the terrorist group.

As the Iraqi Security Forces liberate the remaining pockets of ISIL-controlled territory [...] all parties must comply with their obligations under international law, including, as applicable, human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly with respect to the protection of the civilian population, the Security Council members said in a press statement today.

They also recognized the Iraqi Government's ongoing partnership with the UN to stabilize liberated areas across the country and called on all Iraqis to continue to work towards that end, including through a redoubled focus on national reconciliation and the safe and voluntary return or reintegration of the millions displaced.

The members of the Council also called for ensuring accountability for all violations and abuses of human rights and humanitarian laws.

Further to the statement, the Council members expressed their sympathies and condolences to all those who have suffered, and to the families of those who have perished in the fight against ISIL.

They also underscored the need to ensure justice for ISIL's victims and survivors of its crimes, in Iraq and across the region.

[Leveraging ICTs critical to achieve Global Goals, UN highlights in new report](#)

13 July 2017 – Underscoring the importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) in today's world, the heads of over 20 United Nations agencies and offices have called for leveraging those technologies to fast forward implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable

Development.

In a [new report, launched today](#), the senior officials also highlighted the critical link between information and communication technologies and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

The 2030 Agenda [...] recognizes the great potential of global connectivity to spur human progress, noted UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in his foreword to the publication, [Fast-forward progress: Leveraging tech to achieve the global goals](#).

This report presents evidence of how UN agencies are adopting and adapting ICTs to maximize their impact and help communities and people in need, he added, highlighting efforts underway to extend telecommunication networks and ICTs into remote areas; train and equip workers with new digital skills; and ensure that schools, hospitals, clinics and whole cities are smarter, more energy efficient and safer.

The [five key areas](#) highlighted as the take aways in the publication include ensuring that no one is left offline; recognizing the catalysing factor of ICTs for innovation and change; putting people first; importance of prompt action to leverage ICTs; and creating new innovative partnerships.

The report, coordinated by the International Telecommunication Union ([ITU](#)), was written as a collaborative effort between top officials from UN entities and international organizations, with each leader selecting one Goal and explaining why ICT is important for it, including drawing on their personal insights.

As UN leaders have identified [...], ICTs must be leveraged to advance achievement of all 17 of the [SDGs](#) and we at ITU look forward to partnering with other UN agencies to facilitate this, said Houlin Zhao, the Secretary-General of ITU, said at the report's launch, in Geneva.

The report's release coincides with the ongoing 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development ([HLPF](#)), the main UN platform dealing with sustainable and inclusive development.

[World loses 'principled champion,' says UN rights chief on death of China's Liu Xiaobo](#)

13 July 2017 – The top United Nations human rights official today expressed his deep sorrow at the news that China's iconic peace and

democracy figure, Liu Xiaobo, has died at the age of 61.

The human rights movement in China and across the world has [lost a principled champion](#) who devoted his life to defending and promoting human rights, peacefully and consistently, and who was jailed for standing up for his beliefs, said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in a statement.

Mr. Liu reportedly died at the hospital where he was receiving treatment for liver cancer.

Mr. Liu was jailed in 2009 after calling for political reforms in China. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 while in prison.

The High Commissioner described Mr. Liu as the true embodiment of the democratic, non-violent ideals, the definition of civic courage and human dignity a poet and intellectual who wanted, and strove for, a better future for his country, and a man who, despite all he suffered, continued to espouse the politics of peace.

Extending heartfelt condolences and deepest respects to his wife, Liu Xia, his family and friends, Mr. Zeid said Mr. and Mrs. Liu were a courageous couple and absolutely devoted to one another.

I urge the Chinese authorities to guarantee Liu Xia's freedom of movement, and allow her to travel abroad should she wish so, he said.

Despite the imprisonment and separation from the wife he adored that could have fuelled anger and bitterness, Mr. Liu declared that he had no hatred for those who pursued and prosecuted him.

He was and will continue to be an inspiration and an example for all human rights defenders, Mr. Zeid said.

[Tourism key to foster trade for least developed countries – UN-backed report](#)

13 July 2017 – A United Nations-backed report released today stressed the need for greater recognition of tourism as a key service export in order to attract technical assistance to the sector in least developed countries (LDCs).

Although tourism [represents](#) seven per cent of all international trade and 30 per cent of the world's services trade, it is often difficult to direct trade-related technical assistance towards the sector because tourism and trade tend to fall under different line ministries, the report points out.

Produced by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the report, titled [Tourism for Sustainable Development in Least Developed Countries](#), was launched on the occasion of the Aid for Trade Review held in Geneva.

In [LCDs](#), tourism accounts for seven per cent of total exports of goods and services – a figure that stands at 10 per cent for non-oil LDC exporters.

The report says that tourism can make a strong contribution to the economies of LCDs, but successful interventions in tourism require strong collaboration across government agencies as well as across different actors at the regional or local level.

The report also aims to increase the commitment and investment in coordination and raise tourism's prominence in trade-related technical assistance as to ensure the sector delivers on its powerful capacity to create jobs and incomes where they are most needed and for those who are most vulnerable – including youth and women.

UNWTO, ITC and EIF are working to contribute to this process of increased coordination and collaboration by joining forces in the design and implementation of tailored tourism technical assistance and tourism export strategies, and leveraging resources.

The report's launch coincides with the [International Year](#) of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017.

The Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

Goal 17 sets as one of the targets a significant increase of exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020, to which tourism as service export can contribute.

[UN human rights expert calls unofficial visit to Belarus 'first step' towards cooperation](#)

12 July 2017 – An independent United Nations human rights expert back from an unofficial visit to Belarus today said he was hopeful for a dialogue to begin with the country's Government.

Miklós Haraszti said that although the Government still did not recognize his mandate, it was encouraging that they had allowed him to attend a human rights seminar, which took place on July 6, alongside the parliamentary assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"I see the authorities' tolerance as [a sign of progress](#) which may be the first step toward cooperation with the mandate created by the Human Rights Council in 2012," Mr. Haraszti said.

He also noted the publication of the Government's action plan on human rights, even though none of the 100 points within the plan tackle civic or political rights.

Mr. Haraszti, who was in the country for a special event, and not at the invitation of the Government to pursue work related to his UN mandate, said the Government could quickly change the human rights situation, if it wished.

"The absolute command that the Government has established over public life also allows it to bring change at a stroke of a pen," he told the seminar on human rights.

The seminar highlighted two key areas of concern regarding human rights in Belarus, according to the expert.

"The first is a systemic refusal of individual liberties – a permission-based regime of public life, which in effect criminalizes all Belarusians who act without prior authorization," he said. "We also note a lack of independence of the judiciary, and ongoing use of the death penalty.

"The second area of concern is the cyclical recourse to mass repression, such as the crackdowns in December 2010 and March 2017, when the authorities actually criminalize citizens for using their civic and political rights."

Mr. Haraszti spoke out against Government actions earlier this year, expressing dismay at what he called "the Government's return to the policy of violent mass repression."

UN Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.