

[UN experts urge US state of Virginia to halt execution of man with mental disorder](#)

5 July 2017 – Two United Nations human rights experts have urged the US state of Virginia to cancel the planned execution on Thursday of a man with psychosocial disability.

“We urge the authorities to annul the death sentence against Mr. [William] Morva and to retry him in compliance with international standards related to due process and fair trial,” said the UN Special Rapporteurs on summary executions, Agnes Callamard, and on right to health, Dainius Pūras, in a [news release](#).

Their joint appeal to the Governor of Virginia was issued ahead of the planned execution of Mr. Morva by lethal injection.

The 35-year-old Hungarian-American was sentenced to death in 2008 for the murder of a hospital security guard and a Sheriff’s deputy.

According to the news release, a court-appointed psychiatrist diagnosed Mr. Morva with delusional disorder in 2014, and noted that his crimes may have been committed as a result of the delusions he was experiencing. During his trial, the jury was not told about his psychosocial condition and he did not receive reasonable accommodation to adjust the process to his individual needs.

“The denial of reasonable accommodation in detention can be considered a form of discrimination against him because of his mental health condition,” the experts said.

Mr. Morva’s condition is such that he has ceased all communication with his legal team, gravely hampering their ability to defend him as his execution approaches.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN 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.

[Children in West and Central Africa](#)

moving in greater numbers than ever before, finds UN report

5 July 2017 – With more than seven million children in West and Central Africa uprooted from their homes each year due to violence, poverty and climate change, and projections that this number will continue to rise, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has called for greater efforts to ensure that migrant and displaced children are protected from exploitation and abuse.

In its latest report, [In Search of Opportunities: Voices of children on the move in West and Central Africa](#), the UN agency noted that almost a third of that number remained in Sub-Saharan Africa and less than one in five headed to Europe.

Children in West and Central Africa are [moving in greater numbers than ever before](#) [...], majority of them within Africa, not to Europe or elsewhere,” Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF’s Regional Director for the region, said in a news release announcing the findings.

We must broaden the discussion on migration to encompass the vulnerabilities of all children on the move and expand systems to protect them, in all their intended destinations.”

The report, based on a series of interviews with migrants and their families from several countries, has revealed a complex set of drivers for migration beyond poverty.

In addition to conflict, insecurity, poverty and lack of services, climate change is also forcing many in West and Central Africa to leave their homes.

Furthermore, with estimates that the region could see a three to four degree Celsius rise in temperature this century – more than one and a half times higher than anywhere else in the world – increased tensions and hostilities over access to resources could push even greater numbers of people to move elsewhere.

In the midst of such projections, the region’s lack of sufficient protection systems – both within and across borders – to ensure the safety and wellbeing of refugee and migrant children is particularly concerning, said UNICEF in the news release, calling on policy makers to place children at the centre of any response to migration.

This can be done by strengthening the chain of protection for children between countries of origin, transit and destination,” noted the UN agency.

The close cooperation of governments, UN, and non-governmental partners is critical in to ensure children’s access to healthcare, education and other essential services, regardless of their migration status,” it added.

UNICEF has also called on all governments, in the region, in Europe and elsewhere to adopt the six-point Agenda for Action for the protection of refugee and migrant children.

The Agenda for Action calls for greater protection of child [refugees and migrants](#), particularly unaccompanied children, from exploitation and violence; ending detention of children seeking refugee status or migrating, by introducing a range of practical alternatives; keeping families together as the best way to protect children and give children legal status; keeping all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services; acting on the underlying causes of large scale movements of refugees and migrants; and promoting measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalisation in countries of transit and destination.

[Latest ballistic missile launch by DPR Korea a 'dangerous escalation of the situation' – UN chief](#)

4 July 2017 – Strongly commending today's launch of a ballistic missile of possible intercontinental range by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has underscored that the country's leadership must cease such actions and comply fully with its international obligations.

“This action is yet another brazen violation of Security Council resolutions and constitutes [a dangerous escalation of the situation](#),” read a statement attributable to the UN chief's Spokesperson.

“The DPRK leadership must cease further provocative actions and comply fully with its international obligations,” it added.

According to reports, the latest launch was conducted over the Sea of Japan.

In the statement, Secretary-General Guterres also underlined the importance of maintaining the unity of the international community in addressing this serious challenge.

Last month, [condemning in the strongest terms](#), the DPRK's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile development activities, the UN Security Council had unanimously adopted a resolution, applying existing sanctions to 14 individuals and four entities from the country.

The individuals are now subjected to travel ban and asset freeze, and the four entities subjected to asset freeze. They are listed in the [annexes to](#)

[the resolution.](#)

Rising cholera, diarrhoea and malnutrition 'deadly' for children in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Sudan, warns UNICEF

4 July 2017 – Access, funding and security are urgently needed to ensure humanitarians can reach hundreds of thousands of children suffering from cholera and diarrhoea across Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Sudan, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has said.

On top of these diseases, rising rates of malnutrition in these countries could be deadly for children, Christophe Boulierac, a spokesperson for the UN agency, [said at a regular news briefing](#) in Geneva.

Access, funding and security are needed in the four countries so that UNICEF and our partners can reach children with an integrated response that deal simultaneously with both malnutrition and disease prevention treatment, he added.

According to the UNICEF spokesperson, Yemen is presently the worst cholera outbreak in the world with over 260,000 suspected cases and over 1,600 deaths. Of these, half the suspected cases and a quarter of the deaths are among children.

Furthermore, the situation of South Sudan is equally worrying. The current cholera outbreak in the country, which started in June last year, has for the first time lasted through the entire dry season and there are fears that it could worsen as the new rainy season progresses.

About 6,870 suspected cases of cholera have been reported in South Sudan so far this year, informed Mr. Boulierac, noting that children and teenagers accounted for about 51 per cent of the cases.

On top of this, about 1.1 million are malnourished in the country and almost 290,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition.

In Somalia, there are about 53,000 cases of cholera (three times more than in 2016 and ten times more than in 2015) and some 1.4 million children are feared to be malnourished, 275,000 of them severely malnourished, the UN spokesperson added.

Furthermore, in Sudan, over 20,000 suspected cases of acute water diarrhoea,

with over 400 deaths, had been recorded.

Over 20 per cent of the affected population are children, he noted.

Response in midst of daunting challenges

In their response, UN agencies, including UNICEF as well as humanitarian partners have stepped up their efforts but face considerable challenges.

In Yemen, UNICEF delivered a total of 36 tons of life saving medical and water purification supplies to Yemen on board chartered aircrafts. However, with limited access and a national health system ravaged by conflict, there are significant challenges reaching those in need.

Similarly, access is a major obstacle in Sudan where the most affected areas lack safe water and proper sanitation. In the country, UNICEF is also in urgent need of some \$22 million to provide life-saving interventions to over 100,000 children.

As part of its programmes, UNICEF along with partners is providing therapeutic and life-saving food treatment to severely malnourished children South Sudan (200,000), Somalia (200,000) and Yemen (320,000). The UN agency is also restoring and equipping health facilities, developing medical and nutritional supply pipelines and providing clean and safe water to vulnerable children and families.

UN agency condemns attack on staff in Central African Republic town

4 July 2017 – Strongly condemning an attack against its staff and premises in a northern town of the Central African Republic (CAR), the United Nations refugee agency has underscored the importance of safety of aid workers for them to be able to help civilian populations in desperate need.

At about 5 PM on 1 July, unidentified armed men entered the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) premises in Kaga Bandoro town, [threatened staff at gun point, and looted all goods and money](#) on site, Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the UN agency told the media at a regular news briefing in Geneva today.

There were six UN staff members (four from UNHCR and two from the [UN Development Programme](#)) at the premises and they were also robbed of their belongings, including personal items and passports.

“Since the attack, UNHCR has temporarily relocated staff to the [MINUSCA](#) (the

UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR) base in Kaga Bandoro, and we will be moving some to [the capital,] Bangui,” added Mr. Mahecic.

Also in the town, on the night of 28 June, [unidentified armed men tried to break](#) into a UNHCR accommodation, with the intention of attacking staff and looting belongings. That attack was thwarted by MINUSCA forces.

Frequent violence in Kaga Bandoro – located about 350 kilometers (220 miles) north of Bangui – has had a significant impact on the local population, displacing many and leaving them in need of humanitarian assistance.

In CAR, UNHCR has been providing protection and relief support to more than 8,600 refugees and 503,000 internally displaced persons.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, have plunged the country of about 4.5 million people into civil conflict since 2013. In addition to those displaced within the CAR, more than 484,000 people from the country have been forced to seek refuge in neighboring nations.