

UN migration agency launches \$60 million appeal for famine-struck East, Horn of Africa

9 June 2017 – The United Nations migration agency today appealed for some \$60 million to aid an estimated 16 million people suffering from the worst drought seen in decades in East and Horn of Africa.

“In the coming months, we are likely to see [many more needing humanitarian aid](#) and being displaced, due to the poor rains,” said Jeffrey Labovitz, Regional Director for East and Horn of Africa at the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Through the appeal, IOM said that it intends to target 2 million of the most vulnerable drought-affected people through December of this year in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

The drought is fuelling migration between these borders, particularly from Somalia, and could impact how the people who are moving and the people who are receiving them recover from the drought.

“It is estimated that cross border movements may increase significantly with the predicted poor harvest as a result of below average rains during March-May and the humanitarian response is not scaled up to meet the needs of affected populations,” according to the appeal.

The \$60,665,000 aid would include a [combination of lifesaving and early recover interventions](#), as well as build long-term capacity to recover. These include shelter, protection, food, water and sanitation.

Mr. Labovitz stressed that due to the “impressive efforts” from local and international actors, the drought has not yet led to a famine as recorded in 2011, but “there is need for sustained funding and international support to mitigate what could still deteriorate.”

The current drought has already shown to be different from that in 2011, which was concentrated in South Central Somalia. This year, it is affecting more parts of the country, including the north-eastern and the Somaliland regions, with a higher total number of people at risk.

The drought is affecting the region’s main source of water – the river basins.

Over the past six months, severe drought conditions have contributed to the displacement of more than 700,000 people within Somalia alone.

International community must ensure 'endemic' impunity in DR Congo brought to an end – UN rights chief

9 June 2017 – Voicing concern over lack of progress on the part of Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to undertake credible investigations into widespread allegations of rights violations and abuses in the Kasai Central and Kasai Oriental provinces, the top United Nations human rights official today called for setting up of an international investigation mechanism to look into the situation.

“The crimes committed in the Kasais appear to be of such gravity that [they must be of concern to the international community as a whole](#), and in particular the Human Rights Council,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, urged the Council today.

“We have an obligation to the victims and a duty to send a message to the perpetrators of these crimes that we are watching and that the international community is throwing its weight behind ensuring that the endemic impunity in the DRC is brought to an end.”

According to a news release issued by the High Commissioner’s Office (OHCHR), since August last year, some 1.3 million people from the two provinces have been displaced within the country and about 30,000 forced to flee to neighbouring Angola.

The release raised particular alarm over the [presence of at least 42 mass graves](#) documented by OHCHR and reports that many of these were dug by Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) after clashes with presumed elements of the Kamuina Nsapu militia over the past several months.

The actual number of the graves are feared to be higher.

SEE ALSO: [Discovery of more mass graves reveal ‘unfolding horror’ in DR Congo](#)

In early May this year, High Commissioner Zeid urged the Government of the DRC to take a series of steps to ensure that a credible, transparent investigation, respecting international standards and with the involvement of OHCHR, be established by 8 June.

However, while the Government sought technical support and advice from OHCHR and the [UN mission in the country \(known by its French acronym, MONUSCO\)](#) the response of national authorities till date falls short, in view of the gravity and widespread nature of the violations and the need to ensure justice for victims, noted the news release.

The scale and nature of these human rights violations and abuses, and the consistently inadequate responses of the domestic authorities, oblige us to call for an international investigation to complement national efforts. High Commissioner Zeid

It is the sovereign duty of the Government of the DRC to carry out judicial investigations into human rights violations committed on its territory and we will continue to support the Government by providing advice and support towards its fulfilment of these obligations, noted the High Commissioner, adding: [However,] the scale and nature of these human rights violations and abuses, and the consistently inadequate responses of the domestic authorities, oblige us to call for an international investigation to complement national efforts.

Continued allegations of rights violations but investigations hindered by security constraints

The news release also noted that the UN [Joint Human Rights Office](#) comprising the Human Rights Division at MONUSCO and the former OHCHR presence in the country continues to receive allegations of serious rights violations, but security constraints have hindered further investigations.

The flare-up of violence in the Kasais occurred in August 2016 when a customary chief was killed by the FARDC. The Kamuina Nsapu militia, named after the chief, sought to avenge the killing by targeting police and army personnel, state symbols and institutions, such as Government buildings, police stations and churches, it also recruited children to join its ranks.

The FARDC reportedly reacted to the attacks by launching a intense counter-attacks, including by firing indiscriminately with machine guns in towns where the militia were suspected to be as well as conducting door to door searches, shooting dead suspected militia members or sympathizers.

While a number of national investigations have been launched into the alleged crimes committed by the Kamuina Nsapu, the Government has failed to conduct meaningful investigations into the conduct of the FARDC and the Police nationale congolaise, noted the news release.

'Pervading toxic culture of impunity' for alleged war crimes at root of Darfur conflict – ICC Prosecutor

8 June 2017 – The Prosecutor for the International Criminal Court today reiterated her call for States to arrest and surrender the suspects of

alleged genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Darfur region of Sudan, including President Omar Al Bashir.

Not one of the suspects for whom warrants have been issued has been arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Court, ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda told the United Nations Security Council, and in remarks directed at the victims and their families she said to those who continue to long for justice in Darfur; do not despair and do not abandon hope.

Indeed, she recalled that the international tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia were reminders that persistence and determination could result in the arrest and surrender of suspects many years after the issuance of arrest warrants.

The Court was established by the treaty known as the Rome Statute adopted at an international conference in Rome on 17 July 1998. It entered into force on 1 July 2002.

The States that form this Council have the power, independently and collectively, to positively influence and incentivize States, whether or not parties to the Rome Statute, to assist in the efforts to arrest and surrender the Darfur suspects, she said, adding that regional organizations can do the same.

The prosecutor said there have been alleged cases of non-compliance by the parties to the treaty.

She said a pre-trial chamber of the Court plans to decide whether South Africa acted in non-compliance with the Statute when it failed to arrest and surrender Mr. Al Bashir in June 2015. Most recently, Mr. Al Bashir travelled to Jordan on 29 March 2017, but Jordan declined to arrest and surrender him.

Inviting, facilitating or supporting the international travel of any person subject to an ICC arrest warrant is inconsistent with a commitment to international criminal justice, she said. It is also an affront to the victims in the Darfur situation.

Ms. Bensouda noted that to date, the Court has made 13 decisions on non-compliance and referred them to the Security Council. Yet not one has been acted upon by this Council, she said. By failing to act in response to such Court decisions, this Council is in essence relinquishing and undermining its clear role on such matters arising from the Rome Statute and the Council's resolution 1593 (2005), which referred the Darfur situation to the body.

In 2005, the Council asked the Hague-based Court to investigate war crimes in Darfur. ICC judges issued arrest warrants in 2009 for Mr. Al-Bashir and other top officials for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in the western Darfur region, where up to 300,000 people may have died and millions have been displaced since civil war erupted in 2003 between the Government and rebels.

Yemen's children 'have suffered enough;' UNICEF official warns of cholera rise, malnutrition

8 June 2017 – The situation facing children in Yemen is “extremely dire,” a senior United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) official warned today, citing a dramatic increase in cases of malnutrition and a massive outbreak of cholera across the war-torn country.

Speaking to the press at the UN Headquarters in New York, Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, highlighted a dramatic increase in the number of children with malnutrition.

When he left Yemen four years ago, there was already a huge caseload of children with severe acute malnutrition. On his recent visit to Yemen, he found the caseload having since doubled, with nearly half a million children under the age of five suffering the most extreme and visible form of undernutrition.

“It does not end there. Yemen has been hit by a massive outbreak of cholera,” he said, noting that reported cases already exceeded 100,000. With 3,000 to 5,000 cases added daily, it is possible that the outbreak will reach 250,000 to 300,000 cases, he said.

To make the matter worse, the country’s medical care system is on the verge of collapse, or “half-collapsed,” he said, and the half of the health system that is partially functional is operating “on a zero budget.” Moreover, health workers have not received salaries for eight to nine months.

“Children in Yemen have suffered enough. It is high time that all those who are responsible realize that the country is at the verge of collapse; that one of Yemen’s biggest assets, its children, are getting killed,” he said.

The situation in Yemen must be on the radar of the international community, he stressed, calling for a scaled-up support.

Despite pressure and losses, ISIL

remains potent threat, UN political chief warns Security Council

8 June 2017 – After losing control on population centres and declining financial strength, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorist group is more focused than ever before on enabling and inspiring attacks outside of conflict zones, the top United Nations political official said today.

The threat from ISIL has been intensified by its use of the Internet and social media to disseminate propaganda online to a wide international audience, Jeffrey Feltman, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, told a Security Council meeting on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

Although the volume of such messages has declined in the past 16 months, the threat persists as supporters outside Syria and Iraq collect and re-distribute this propaganda, he added.

In Europe, for example, ISIL has used its online presence to encourage supporters to mount attacks in their countries of residence. This has led to multiple attacks, including in Belgium, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, noted Mr. Feltman, adding that while some of those extremists had been labelled lone actors, investigations demonstrate that the perpetrators often received support or resources from facilitators and, in a number of cases, were in direct contact with ISIL enablers.

He also noted a decrease in the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and in the overall number

of ISIL fighters during the last 16 months but returnees and the relocation of fighters

from the conflict zones to other regions now present a considerable and an increasingly transnational threat to international security.

At same time, Mr. Feltman also warned that ISIL continues to fund affiliates, while urging them to become more self-sufficient and proactive in developing internal revenue streams.

Money services, including exchange houses and money couriers, continue to be a preferred method for ISIL and its supporters to move funds across borders, he said, expressing concern that funds for reconstruction and stabilization for newly liberated areas should not enable ISIL remnants to abuse those new resources.

Further, welcoming recent Security Council initiatives countering terrorist narratives, protecting critical infrastructure and stemming the destruction, looting and smuggling of cultural heritage sites and artefacts, the senior UN

official called for more effort to implement norms and mechanisms, particularly those relating to terrorist financing and foreign terrorist fighter threats.

He also informed the meeting of the work undertaken by the UN and other actors, including the INTERPOL and the Financial Action Task Force to strengthen regional and national frameworks to counter terrorism financing and arrest the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.