

## UN envoy warns against Kosovo and Serbia trading 'ethno-nationalist' barbs

16 May 2017 – A flurry of recent intolerant and provocative rhetoric has further damaged the trust between Kosovo and Serbia – a development that must be closely watched – though the situation remains generally stable, the head of the local United Nations peacekeeping mission in Kosovo told the Security Council today.

“Escalation has been avoided in several instances due to external diplomatic interventions, but the necessary level of trust between Pristina and Belgrade has been further eroded by a number of irresponsible and inflammatory statements,” said Zahir Tanin, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative and the head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo ([UNMIK](#)), during a quarterly debate on the situation there.

Kosovo declared its independence in 2008 from Serbia while the latter has not recognized the move.

“Public communications, during this reporting period, unfortunately descended back to intolerant and ethno-nationalist slogans,” said Mr. Tanin said, noting that both sides repeatedly accused one another of provocation, whereas the process of normalisation of relations requires cooperation.

One issue of contention is the extradition of Ramush Haradinaj, leader of the AAK political party from France. The question of regional or sub-regional unions is another issue on which both sides traded barbs.

“Improving the situation in Kosovo and the region requires leadership which transcends ethno-national divisions, rather than amplifying them,” Mr. Tanin said.

On a positive note, the Mitrovica wall dispute was resolved peacefully through negotiations, and the initial determination to form a Kosovo army by legislative amendments has calmed.

“Such outcomes helped to diffuse tensions and maintain peace,” Mr. Tanin said.

On the forthcoming parliamentary election in Kosovo in June, he said the next government, regardless of its composition, would continue to face numerous pressing challenges, but provide opportunities for the renewal of political will and direction, as well as for greater diversity in leadership and representation, for example greater engagement with youth, he said.

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## [With barely enough money for food, conflict-displaced Ukrainians struggling to survive, reports UN agency](#)

16 May 2017 – Two-thirds of internally displaced Ukrainians are struggling financially; many without even enough money for food, according to the latest report by the United Nations migration agency on the situation in the crisis-torn country.

In its report *National Monitoring System on Situation of IDPs in Ukraine*, the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), reveals that on average, income per internally displaced person (IDP) in Ukraine is 1,991 Ukrainian Hryvnia – or \$75 per month, approximately \$2.50 per day. While a loaf of bread costing about 0.40, some 21 per cent are surviving on less than \$2 a day.

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## [Soaring temperatures pose new threat to Mosul's displaced – UN migration agency](#)

16 May 2017 – The United Nations migration agency today warned that while hundreds of thousands of people displaced from Mosul have braved the ongoing offensive to oust the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), the beleaguered citizens are now struggling to cope with another danger – the sweltering summer heat.

“With [temperatures nearing 37 degrees Celsius](#) and rising, the coming months will be trying,” said UN Migration Agency ([IOM](#)) communications officer Hala Jaber.

From June onwards, temperatures in the Ninewa governorate will hit, and sometimes surpass, the 50° mark. The PVC tents that provided warmth during the cold winter will be hard to tolerate in summer, as temperatures inside register at least 10° higher than outside.

The scorching heat is already impacting health and living conditions at IOM's

emergency site at the former Qayara airstrip, which hosts over 52,000 displaced Iraqis or 8,746 families.

Thirty-seven-year old Thaer, who returned to Qayara after his six-month-old son was treated for acute dehydration sleeps outside to escape the suffocating heat.

“During the day, the tents are very hot and at night unbearable with all of us inside. So, I and my older children are sleeping outside the tent to escape the heat,” he said.



An Iraqi woman from Mosul holds her daughter in one hand and empty water containers in the other. Two other children follow her in search of water near the Garmava temporary camp in central Iraq. Credit: UNHCR/S. Baldwin

At full capacity, IOM teams are in the process of ensuring that all internally displaced persons (IDPs) are equipped with basic materials to help alleviate summer discomfort, including supplementary mini kits – containing 40-litre capacity cool boxes, battery-rechargeable fans and summer bed linens – for distribution to some 7,790 families in Qayara and neighbouring Haj Ali camp.

Another 5,400 or so summer kits have already been distributed to IDP families from West Mosul, who have arrived in the emergency sites since the end of March 2017.

IOM’s primary health centres in both Qayara and Haj Ali, home to 34,000 people, each serve an average of 1,800 patients per week with medication. Displaced people with scabies have also been seeking treatment in IOM’s medical centre in Qayara, prompting the primary health care to set specific morning hours, exclusive to these cases. Winter colds have been replaced by diarrhoea and dehydration, particularly among children.

With only 33 per cent of the required \$28.83 million needed by IOM for the Mosul response, the funding gap is having a significant impact on IOM’s ability to effectively provide for the scale of needs created by the Mosul crisis.

“Hundreds of thousands of displaced Iraqis from Mosul have escaped the conflict but now need humanitarian assistance to survive. Forced to flee their homes and exposed to the elements, they are especially vulnerable to the hot summer weather,” said IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Thomas Lothar Weiss.

“IOM staff are providing emergency assistance at full capacity, but additional funding is required to cover the massive scope of the Mosul crisis needs: shelter, medical services, household items, and more, without which displaced Iraqis will continue to be at risk,” he added.

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## [Conflict-related child deaths hit new high in Afghanistan, UN warns](#)

16 May 2017 – Deeply concerned by the continued increase in conflict-related child deaths in Afghanistan, the UN Assistance Mission in the country ([UNAMA](#)) has urged parties to the conflict to take immediate measures to reduce harm.

“I was [appalled](#) to hear that an unexploded mortar round killed five boys from the same family” on Sunday, said the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, in a news release issued yesterday.

“The children were playing outside their home [...] A family destroyed in seconds – this horror is just one of too many incidents documented at the onset of this fighting season,” he added.

The first four months of 2017 witnessed the highest recorded number of child civilian casualties resulting from conflict-related incidents in Afghanistan, including the highest number of children killed, for the same comparable period since the Mission began documenting cases.

Between 1 January and 30 April 2017, UNAMA preliminarily recorded 283 child deaths, a 21 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2016. Children are killed by explosive remnants of war in civilian-populated areas and in ground fighting.

Many of the more than 700 children injured have suffered life-changing injuries, including loss of limbs, as well as significant and lasting trauma such as witnessing the death of siblings, parents, destruction to their homes or displacement.

UNAMA again urged parties to the conflict to prioritize the protection of children and welcomed the commitment of the Government to formally ratify [Protocol V](#) to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The Mission urged all parties to the conflict to commence marking, clearing, removing and destroying explosive remnants of war left behind from fighting in areas under their territorial control.

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## [1.2M adolescents’ deaths mostly](#)

## preventable with improved health services – UN agency

16 May 2017 – The deaths of more than 1.2 million adolescents every year – about 3,000 per day – could have been prevented with good health services, education and social support, the United Nations health agency today reported.

Road traffic injuries, lower respiratory infections, and suicide are the [biggest causes of death](#) among adolescents, according to a report by the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and partners.

The report, *Global accelerated action for the health of adolescents (AA-HA!): Guidance to support country implementation*, shows that road injuries are the leading cause of adolescent deaths among 10-19 year-olds, killing some 115,000 adolescents each year – the majority older adolescent boys.

Regionally, however, communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and respiratory infections are more deadly to adolescents in low- and middle-income countries in Africa than road injuries.

Among girls, the leading cause of death for younger adolescents is pneumonia and other lower respiratory infections resulting from indoor air pollution caused by cooking with dirty fuels, while older adolescent girls are more likely to die from pregnancy complications.

Self-harm and suicide are the third leading cause of adolescent mortality, particularly among older adolescents, and predominantly among girls.



Adolescent girls playing games in India. Photo: UNICEF/Ruhani Kaur

According to the report, more than two-thirds of all adolescent deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries in Africa and South-East Asia.

The UN agency said these deaths could have been largely prevented with improved health systems that serve adolescents. In some cases, adolescents do not know about the services or they simply do not exist – such as for mental health disorders, substance use or poor nutrition.

Adolescents have been entirely absent from national health plans for decades, said Flavia Bustreo, WHO's Assistant Director-General.

Relatively small investments focused on adolescents now will not only result in healthy and empowered adults who thrive and contribute positively to their communities, but it will also result in healthier future generations, yielding enormous returns.

WHO noted that many behaviours that impact health later in life — such as physical inactivity, poor diet, and risky sexual health behaviours — being in adolescence.

“Improving the way health systems serve adolescents is just one part of improving their health,” said Anthony Costello, Director at WHO’s Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health.

Parents, families, and communities are extremely important, as they have the greatest potential to positively influence adolescent behaviour and health.

In addition, growing up in humanitarian and fragile settings, increases health needs among young people. Girls, especially, may be more likely to drop out of school, marry early or engage in transactional sex to survive.