

## Haiti: Recent political advances have set stage to address pressing challenges, says UN envoy

11 April 2017 – Highlighting improvements in Haiti's political situation, including the recent elections and opportunities to address longstanding disputes, the senior United Nations official in the island nation has urged the international community to continue its partnership with Haiti and its people to help consolidate the gains achieved.

"The elections provided for the installation of all directly-elected officials at all levels of Haiti's governance structure for the first time since 2006, including the peaceful transfer of power to the third democratically-elected President since 2004" the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sandra Honoré, [told](#) the UN Security Council today.

"Haiti's return to Constitutional order and the full functioning of the Executive, the Legislature and local government has now set the stage to address the many pressing challenges facing the country," she added.

In her briefing, Ms. Honoré, also the head of the UN Stabilization Mission ([MINUSTAH](#)), noted that the security situation in Haiti remains largely stable and that while the island's police force continues to show increased capacity in planning and executing complex operations as well as in combating crime and maintaining public order, its further development, including in the areas of internal management and oversight, police-to-population ratio and the geographic coverage were needed.

She went on to cite political challenges as a major impediment to consistent progress in the administration of justice and human rights to truly anchor the rule of law and render police work more effective while creating conditions conducive for foreign and domestic investment and job creation.



Sandra Honoré, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSTAH, briefs the Security Council. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas





Ambassador Denis Regis of Haiti, addresses the Security Council meeting on the question concerning his country. UN Photo/Manuel Elias



Ambassador Nikki Haley of the United States and President of the Security Council for April, chairs the Council meeting on the question concerning Haiti. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas



[Secretary-General](#) António Guterres meets with Sandra Honoré, his Special Representative and Head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). UN Photo/Evan Schneider

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Further, noting that some deficiencies continued to undermine the effectiveness of the justice and human rights system, the senior UN official also urged the Government to assign a ministerial-level focal point for human rights as well as to expedite the transparent and merit-based appointment of the National Ombudsperson.

“The progress achieved during the past 13 years in Haiti’s stabilization process is notable,” she said, adding that reshaping the partnership among the international community, the UN system and Haiti is important to ensure such progress remains sustainable.

Also, recalling the recommendation of the Secretary-General on the closure of MINUSTAH in six months and the establishment of a smaller operation with focus on the rule of law, with strong good offices and human rights monitoring roles, Ms. Honoré said:

“With your support, the transition to a new and smaller Mission would be guided by a Joint Transition Plan that underpins the gradual transfer of tasks to the Government, international partners and the UN Country Team.”

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## [African migrants reportedly being sold in 'slave markets' in Libya, UN agency warns](#)

11 April 2017 – Hundreds of migrants along North African migrant routes are being bought and sold openly in modern day 'slave markets' in Libya, survivors have told the United Nations migration agency, which warned that these reports "can be added to a long list of outrages" in the country.

The International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) is sounding the alarm today after its staff in Niger and Libya documented over the past weekend shocking testimonies of trafficking victims from several African nations, including Nigeria, Ghana and the Gambia. They described 'slave markets' tormenting hundreds of young African men bound for Libya.

Operations Officers with IOM's office in Niger reported on the rescue of a Senegalese migrant who this week was returning to his home after being held captive for months. According to the young man's testimony, while trying to travel north through the Sahara, he arrived in Agadez, Niger, where he was told he would have to pay about \$320 to continue north, towards Libya. A trafficker provided him with accommodation until the day of his departure, which was to be by pick-up truck.

When his pick-up reached Sabha in southwestern Libya, the driver insisted that he hadn't been paid by the trafficker, and that he was transporting the migrants to a parking area where the young man witnessed a slave market taking place. "Sub-Saharan migrants were being sold and bought by Libyans, with the support of Ghanaians and Nigerians who work for them," IOM Niger staff reported.

### ***Reports of slave markets can be added to a 'long list of outrages' in Libya***

"The latest reports of 'slave markets' for migrants can be added to a long list of outrages [in Libya]," said Mohammed Abdiker, IOM's head of operation and emergencies. "The situation is dire. The more IOM engages inside Libya, the more we learn that it is a vale of tears for all too many migrants."

Mr. Abdiker added that in recent months IOM staff in Libya had gained access to several detention centres, where they are trying to improve conditions. "What we know is that migrants who fall into the hands of smugglers face systematic malnutrition, sexual abuse and even murder. Last year we learned 14 migrants died in a single month in one of those locations, just from disease and malnutrition. We are hearing about mass graves in the desert."

He said so far this year, the Libyan Coast Guard and others have found 171 bodies washed up on Mediterranean shores, from migrant voyages that foundered



off shore. The Coast Guard has also rescued thousands more, he added.

“Migrants who go to Libya while trying to get to Europe, have no idea of the torture archipelago that awaits them just over the border,” said Leonard Doyle, chief IOM spokesman in Geneva. “There they become commodities to be bought, sold and discarded when they have no more value.

Many describe being sold “in squares or garages” by locals in the south-western Libyan town of Sabha, or by the drivers who trafficked them across the Sahara desert.

Mr. Doyle added: “To get the message out across Africa about the dangers, we are recording the testimonies of migrants who have suffered and are spreading them across social media and on local FM radio. Tragically, the most credible messengers are migrants returning home with IOM help. Too often they are broken, brutalized and have been abused, often sexually. Their voices carry more weight than anyone else’s.”

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## [Millions across Africa, Yemen could be at risk of death from starvation – UN agency](#)

11 April 2017 – Warning of increasing risk of mass deaths from starvation in many countries in Africa and in Yemen due to worsening drought and conflict, the United Nations refugee agency has called for international support to prevent the repeat of the 2011 tragedy in the Horn of Africa that claimed more than 260,000 lives.

“An avoidable humanitarian crisis in the region, possibly worse than that of 2011, is fast becoming an inevitability,” Adrian Edwards, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) [told](#) journalists at the regular bi-weekly [media briefing](#) in Geneva.

“A repeat must be avoided at all costs.”

According to estimates, some 20 million people are living in areas hit hard by drought. About 4.2 million among them are refugees and the number of the displaced is rising as a result of consecutive harvest failures, famine and insecurity.

Worst affected are children and lactating mothers.

In southeast Ethiopia, for example, acute malnutrition rates among newly arriving Somali refugee children aged between 6 months and five years is reported in the range of 50-79 per cent. Similarly, in South Sudan, children

account for the majority of the refugees (about 62 per cent).

An avoidable humanitarian crisis in the region, possibly worse than that of 2011, is fast becoming an inevitability

Nearly all refugees, including these children, are dependent on food assistance, such as those provided by the World Food Programme &#8211; the UN's emergency food relief agency &#8211; but with lack of funds to buy food rations are being cut. Worst hit are those in Uganda where rations have been cut by up to 75 per cent. Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Rwanda (by between 20 and 50 per cent) and Djibouti (by 12 per cent) are also witnessing this decrease.

&#8220Many refugees are without full access to livelihoods and agriculture or food production and their ability to take matters into their own hands and help themselves is limited,&#8221 noted Mr. Edwards.

#### ***Almost five million children could be out of school***

The severe food insecurity is also causing many students, such as those in Kenya, to drop out of school. Some 175,000 students in drought areas in the country have stopped attending school and almost 600 schools have closed in Ethiopia.

In all, some five million children could see their educations being disrupted over coming weeks and months.

#### ***Drastic situation turning worse in countries***

The daunting humanitarian scenario has been further complicated by a range of challenges including new displacement, economic hardships, crop failure and conflict.

In Somalia, of the half a million people displaced since November, 278,000 were displaced in the first quarter of this year and the country continues to see a complex situation of both outflows and returns, mainly from Yemen.

Furthermore, in famine hit parts of South Sudan, increase in fighting, insecurity, lack of access to aid and a collapsing economy have left 100,000 people facing starvation and a further one million people are now on the brink of famine.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen, too continues to decline. Already the world's largest humanitarian crisis, food needs are being cited as the lead factor in displacement at three quarters of all locations across the war-torn country where there are internally displaced people.

#### ***UN efforts scaled up but resources extremely scarce***

Responding to the growing crisis, the UN refugee agency and its partners have been scaling up their efforts.

However, with its South Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen operations funded only between 3 and 11 per cent the challenges are immense.

It is now urgent that the shortfalls be addressed, underscored the UNHCR spokesperson.

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## [Security Council condemns ‘barbaric and cowardly’ terrorist attack in Stockholm](#)

10 April 2017 – The United Nations Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the “barbaric and cowardly” terrorist attack which took place in Stockholm on 7 April, and during which at least four people, including a child, were killed and over a dozen injured.

In a [press statement](#), the members of the Council expressed their deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Government of Sweden.

Reaffirming that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, the Council reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

Through its statement, the Council also reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means, in accordance with the UN Charter and other obligations under international law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

The members of the Security Council underlined the need to bring the perpetrators of these terrorist acts to justice.

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## [Money migrants send home a ‘critical lifeline’ for one in seven people worldwide](#)

10 April 2017 – Despite the political fire drawn by the ongoing migrant



crisis in Europe and beyond, a senior official from the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development ([IFAD](#)) today highlighted the vital development benefit of the nearly half a trillion dollars that migrants send home each year to poor families and countries.

“We hear concerns raised about migrants and refugees entering countries, but let’s not forget that [the money they send home](#), particularly to countries where conflict or environmental disasters are taking a toll, actually helps stabilize families and rebuild communities,” Adolfo Brizzi, Director at IFAD, told an event entitled ‘Money Talks – Why Migrants Matter’ during the Perugia International Journalism Festival in Italy.

It is estimated that there are almost 250 million migrants living outside their home countries. Remittances – the money sent back to relatives – are believed to support an additional 750 million people worldwide.

“Migrants’ money represents a critical lifeline for millions of households, helping families raise their living standards above subsistence and vulnerability levels, while investing in health, education, housing as well as entrepreneurial activities,” Mr. Brizzi underscored.

While the amounts of remittances may seem small, they may represent more than half of a family’s income. Further, adding all the transactions together could reach half a trillion dollars, which have a direct impact of one in every seven people in the world.

However, Mr. Brizzi stressed that families back home could benefit more if they have better access to competitive money transfer markets and targeted financial services to help them manage their funds.

Over the last decade, IFAD has piloted over 50 programmes to leverage the impact of remittances in rural areas in more than 40 developing countries, helping to aid the flow of funds and giving families more options to invest their money and create opportunities for business development and employment.