

UN chief calls for 'united front' against anti-Semitism after US synagogue mass-shooting

The [UN Secretary-General](#) said on Saturday he was “deeply shocked” by a deadly mass-shooting inside a synagogue in the US city of Pittsburgh, which reportedly left 11 people dead and several others wounded, some critically.

In [a statement](#) issued by his Spokesman, António Guterres said that the horrific attack, which took place inside the synagogue while it was packed with worshippers, was a “painful reminder of continuing anti-Semitism”.

Jews across the world continue to be attacked for no other reason than their identity. Anti-Semitism is a menace to democratic values and peace – *UN chief Guterres*

Police were called to the Tree of Life synagogue in the largely-Jewish neighbourhood of Squirrel Hill in the western Pennsylvania city, during morning services marking the Sabbath. A heavily-armed gunman opened fire and according to US media reports, shouted, “All Jews must die”.

The gunman was later taken into custody by police, after barricading himself into a room, and eventually surrendering after reportedly being shot. Several police officers were among the wounded, and reports say there were no children among the casualties.

Initial reports say that the gunman’s social media posts were rife with anti-Semitic comments. The shootings are now under intense investigation at a Federal level, as it is being treated as a hate crime.

In his statement, Mr. Guterres expressed his deepest condolences to the families of the victims. “Jews across the world continue to be attacked for no other reason than their identity. Anti-Semitism is a menace to democratic values and peace, and should have no place in the 21st century,” he added.

He called for “a united front – bringing together authorities at all levels, civil society, religious and community leaders and the public at large – to roll back the forces of racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other forms of hatred, bigotry, discrimination and xenophobia gaining strength in many parts of the world.”

[Mali: Two peacekeepers dead after dawn attack, several injured – UN Mission](#)

The UN Stabilization Mission in Mali, [MINUSMA](#), reported on Saturday that two peacekeepers had been killed and several others wounded, following on from a coordinated attack at dawn, on a base in the north of the country.

A proliferation of armed groups fighting government forces and their allies in the centre and northern areas of Mali following a failed coup six years ago, have made MINUSMA the most dangerous mission to serve in as a UN 'blue helmet'.

A statement from the Mission said that peacekeepers based in Ber, close to Timbuktu, had "repelled a complex attack, launched simultaneously by several pickups armed with rocket launchers and machine guns", as dawn broke on Saturday.

Blue helmets chased after the unidentified assailants, and a few hours later in the Mopti region, peacekeepers came under attack again, this time through improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.

The UN Special Representative and head of MINUSMA, Maamat Saleh Annadif, expressed his indignation over the attacks carried out by "enemies of peace".

"I strongly condemn this brutal attack which will not undermine our determination to support Mali, on its march to peace", he said. "The perpetrators of these crimes must be prosecuted and made to pay for their actions", he added.

The MINUSMA chief extended his condolences to the families of those killed, and wished the wounded a "speedy and complete recovery".

['Bring to life' moments caught on film or tape, UN agency urges on World Day](#)

Old, grainy film and video footage from years gone by, not only stirs powerful memories – it's also a vital resource for future generations, the United Nations cultural agency has highlighted, urging everyone to safeguard audio-visual heritage and make archives more accessible.

These images and sounds recorded on film, video and audio tape, "feed into our collective memory and establish links between generations", Audrey

Azoulay, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said in her [message](#) marking the official [World Day for Audiovisual Heritage](#).

“[However,] this memory, which has remained alive and is essential to historians, scientists and ordinary citizens seeking knowledge of their past, is nonetheless fragile,” she added, noting the increasing neglect of archives which are made up of what is now obsolete analogue media, like LP records and quarter-inch audio tape.

Focusing this year on the theme, “Your Story is Moving,” UNESCO, in partnership with the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA), is calling on everyone to showcase personal and family archives.

“Bringing them out of lofts and cellars, sharing slices of life, moments captured on film or videotape, can bring alive, with emotion, an existence that has become a thing of the past,” continued Ms. Azoulay in her message.

“Heritage is not an inanimate object; it is full of meaning, significance and all the emotions that have accompanied the lives of past generations,” she added.

Alongside [events](#) globally to mark the World Day, UNESCO is also appealing on everyone to share their stories with the hashtag #AudioVisualheritage to bring their own “moving stories” to the world.

Preserving world history at the UN

In this special video, take a peek into the work of our expert UN archivists, as they protect tens of thousands of records documenting the history of diplomacy from the last century, preserving them for future generations.

Marked annually, on 27 October, the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage aims to raise awareness of the importance of audiovisual documents, redouble efforts to safeguard them and promote greater access to archives.

The World Day is a [commemoration](#) of the adoption, in 1980, of the Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images by the 21st UNESCO General Conference.

[Syrian Government's 'different understanding' of UN role in peace](#)

process a 'very serious challenge' says world body's negotiator

The difficulties of “keeping everyone onboard” an agreed path to peace in Syria highlights that “radically different” approaches are likely doomed to failure, the out-going United Nations Special Envoy for the war-torn country warned on Friday.

[Briefing](#) the Security Council on his meeting with the Syrian Foreign Minister, held in Damascus on Wednesday, [Staffan de Mistura](#) said that an impasse had been reached over a proposed new constitution for Syria, with the UN playing a major role, as directed by the Council.

The veteran envoy, who recently announced he would be stepping down at the end of next month, said that the sticking point revolved around the Syrian leadership's view that constitutional reform, was an internal matter.

He said Foreign Minister Walid al-Moualem had “strongly underlined” the principle of non-interference in Member States' affairs, adding that the constitution was “a highly sensitive matter of national sovereignty.”

The key sticking point, Mr. de Mistura told the Council, was over the so-called “Middle Third List” of 50 names that the UN is backing to serve on a Constitutional Committee, to create a more democratic post-war Syria.

Credibility, balance and international legitimacy must be maintained

He said the UN was not opposed to “constructive and moderate suggestions” so long as “spirit of credibility, balance and international legitimacy of the Middle Third List is maintained,” he said.

“It is important to ensure the minimum 30 percent [participation of] women in the constitutional committee and this requires at least 24 out of the 50 in the Middle Third List to be women,” stressed the UN negotiator.

The Middle Third List refers to a third of the delegates to the constitutional committee, representing Syrian experts, civil society, independents, tribal leaders and women. The other delegates would be drawn from the Government and opposition.

He further said that Minister Moualem proposed that the suggested list, which was drawn up by the UN in consultation and with inputs from all actors, be withdrawn.

Mr. de Mistura reiterated that the UN “could withdraw” its proposal, only if there is an agreement on a new credible, balanced and inclusive list, consistent with Security Council [resolution 2254](#) and final peace talks led by

Russia, Iran and Turkey.

I wil spare no effort to address these challenge – UN envoy

In response, the Minister indicated that he would get respond after instructions from the Syrian leadership and that the Minister “preferred at this stage” to await the outcome of the UN Special Envoy’s upcoming consultations with the Astana Guarantors, said Mr. De Mistura.

The UN Special Envoy further said that given the “different understanding” by the Syrian Government of the role of the UN and other on-going diplomatic efforts, a “very serious challenge” ahead. But he said he would “spare no effort to address these challenge in the forthcoming weeks.”

Addressing the Council in New York via tele-conference from Lebanon – he told members he would also brief the Presidents of France, Germany, Russia and Turkey, in Istanbul, on Saturday, on the latest developments.

While the “window of opportunity” to find lasting peace for the more than seven-year conflict remains open”, he said, “it needs to be seized urgently.”

FROM THE FIELD: Photos highlight agony of West African civil wars, and UN peacekeeping effort

The role of two photographers who raised global awareness of civilian suffering during Liberia’s brutal civil war, is being celebrated in a new photographic exhibition which opens on Friday night in New York, supported by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Tim Hetherington and Chris Hondros took photographs from both sides of the front line documenting the destruction and chaos of the conflict in the West African country in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Nigerian police officers with the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia, UNMIL, leave the country in March 2018. UN Photo/Albert González Farran

✘ The United Nations established its first peacekeeping mission in Liberia in 1993 with the goal of implementing a peace agreement, and missions followed in Sierra Leone and Côte d’Ivoire which were also suffering from conflict.

A quarter of a century later all the peacekeeping operations in this region

of West African known as the Mano River Basin successfully completed their mandates to maintain peace and stability and have closed down.

[Read more here](#) on 25 years of peacekeeping in the Mano River Basin and to find links to the exhibition, which runs until 16 December, at the Bronx Documentary Center.