

UN chief welcomes ‘first concrete step’ in normalizing Eritrea-Ethiopia relationship

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has welcomed the high-level visit of a delegation from Eritrea to neighbouring Ethiopia which began on Tuesday, as “a first concrete step” in the process of normalizing relations between the two countries.

“The Secretary-General notes that [diplomatic overtures](#) to ease tensions and resolve the longstanding dispute between the two countries will have a far reaching positive impact on the whole region,” said his spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric in a statement on Thursday.

“The Secretary-General once again reiterates the readiness of the United Nations to play a role in support of the two countries in the implementation of the boundary decision or in any other area they would deem useful for the United Nations to assist,” Mr. Dujarric concluded. Last week, Ethiopia under its new Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, announced its readiness to finally accept and implement a 2002 border agreement with Eritrea, that ended two years of bloody conflict in which thousands died. Since then, the countries have remained on a war-footing.

Mr. Guterres responded to the 21 June thaw in relations by welcoming the “positive step” and commended efforts by the leaders of both countries “to achieve sustainable peace and good neighbourly relations which, in turn, will have positive repercussions in the entire Horn of Africa region.”

This week’s diplomatic initiative to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, was led by Eritrean Foreign Minister, Osman Saleh, and according to news reports, Prime Minister Ahmed announced that Ethiopian Airlines would restart flights to Eritrea, for the first time since 1998.

‘Agile’, multilateral response vital to combat terrorism – UN chief Guterres

The complex and evolving nature of terrorism necessitates a response that is as agile and multifaceted as the threat itself, the United Nations Secretary-General said on Thursday.

Addressing a [high-level conference on counter-terrorism](#), [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) underscored that working together must be the “top priority.”

“We must [strengthen the capacities of our counter-terrorism structures](#) and institutions and we must complement our counter-terrorism efforts in the security realm with concerted efforts to identify and address the root causes.”

He also highlighted the need to strengthen resilience and build cohesion in societies.

“Communities and the State need to be joined with the common purpose of rejecting terrorist ideologies and challenging those who espouse them,” stated the UN chief.

Terrorism is a grave and complex threat. Ending it demands that we work together flexibly, intelligently and openly – *Secretary-General Guterres*

Support should also be provided to civil society which has a major role to play in preventing violent extremism and there should be more engagement with women and young people, so they can play “meaningful roles” in combatting the scourge, he added.

Mr. Guterres also cautioned that the “frontline” against terrorism is increasingly in cyberspace, with terrorists exploiting social media, encrypted communications and the so-called “dark web” to spread propaganda and coordinate attacks.

There has also been a shift towards “less sophisticated attacks” against “softer targets” that are more difficult to detect and prevent, he said; noting that following military defeat in one region of the world, foreign terrorist fighters are likely to move elsewhere – either returning home or relocating to other conflict zones.

The transnational nature of terrorism “means we need multilateral cooperation,” he highlighted.

Convened by the Secretary-General on 28-29 June, under the overarching theme of “strengthening international cooperation to combat the evolving threat of terrorism”, the high-level conference aims to forge a new partnership for multilateral cooperation to strengthen the international community’s counter-terrorism efforts.

“[Terrorism is a grave and complex threat](#). Ending it demands that we work together flexibly, intelligently and openly,” said Mr. Guterres.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General outlined the goals of the conference.

These include:

- A strengthened international counter-terrorism cooperation.
 - A renewed and sustained focus on preventing terrorism.
 - Full respect for human rights while tackling terrorism.
 - The need for “strategic investment” in young people to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.
 - Recognizing the “tragic human cost” of terrorism.
 - And strengthening the role of the United Nations in assisting its Member States to tackle terrorism.
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Action needed to end deadly clashes between African herders and farmers: UN chief

The United Nations stands ready to support efforts to resolve deadly clashes between farmers and nomadic herders in areas of West and Central Africa, the head of the global organization said on Thursday.

More than 80 people in central Nigeria were killed in land disputes between the two sides this week. However, this has been a long-standing issue with similar incidents occurring in other countries in Africa, causing more than 1,000 deaths over the past year alone, according to media reports.

In a statement issued by his spokesperson, [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#) expressed deep concern over the mounting violence, as well as the resulting banditry, extortion and cattle rustling.

“He condemns the resulting loss of life, property and livelihoods, as well as population displacement, which undermines peaceful coexistence between communities in many of the affected countries. It is also detrimental to regional stability,” the statement said.

The UN chief urged all concerned governments, regional organizations, civil society and other parties to work together to find solutions to the conflicts.

He underlined the readiness and commitment of the UN to support national and regional efforts in this regard.

'Global care crisis' set to affect 2.3 billion people warns UN labour agency

A "global care crisis" is looming which could affect 2.3 billion people by 2030, United Nations work experts warned on Thursday, highlighting the potential for greater inequality in a sector where women already perform "more than three-quarters" of all unpaid work.

In a call for sweeping policy changes regarding the care of children and the elderly, the report by the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) says that 269 million jobs could be created in the next 12 years, if Member States doubled current investment in education, health and social work.

The potential impact could be huge, with 16.4 billion hours per day already spent in unpaid care work, [according to the report](#), which cites data from 64 countries, representing two-thirds of all workers.

This is the equivalent of two billion people "working eight hours a day with no remuneration", it notes, explaining that of the 2.1 billion people in need of care in 2015, 1.9 billion were children under 15 and the remainder were older persons.

Across the world, women perform 76.2 per cent of the total hours of unpaid care work and over three times more than men – *Shauna Olney (ILO)*

The data also highlights a huge gender gap in the care sector, ILO's Shauna Olney told journalists in Geneva, explaining that "across the world, women perform 76.2 per cent of the total hours of unpaid care work and over three times more than men".

This equates to "606 million women, compared to 41 million men" being unavailable for employment, or not seeking a job, because of unpaid care work, Olney said – "a key factor" in determining whether women "enter into and stay" in employment, as well as important in determining the quality of paid jobs they get.

One of the report's other key findings is data showing that mothers of children under six years old have the most difficulty finding a job, with fewer than half of them able to secure paid work.

This tallies with the discovery that only 77 countries out of 184, with available data, met minimum maternity protection standards in 2016, while even fewer had any paternity leave provision for fathers.

This is linked to the "very much engrained" belief in many societies that men are the household's sole breadwinner, and that women are the principal

carers, the report says.

It also points to the regional finding that long-term care services “are close to non-existent” in most African, Latin American and Asian countries.

Insisting on the need for reform to address current “deficits in care work and its quality” – particularly in countries where women’s employment opportunities are growing – the ILO report finds that in the few countries where men’s contribution to care work is increasing, it is happening slowly, at a “glacial rate”.

“At this pace, it will take 210 years to close the gender gap in unpaid work”, even in the 23 countries where men’s contribution to the care sector has increased in the past two decades, Shauna Olney said.

[Top UN political official updates Security Council on Iran nuclear deal](#)

Notwithstanding “the continued adherence by Iran” to its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the agreement is “at a crossroads” the United Nations top political official said on Wednesday.

“On 8 May 2018, the United States announced its withdrawal from the agreement. The Secretary-General ... believes that issues not directly related to the Plan should be addressed without prejudice to preserving the agreement and its accomplishments,” Rosemary A. DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, told the Security Council.

“At the same time, the Secretary-General calls on Iran to consider carefully the concerns expressed by Member States about Iranian activities that are allegedly contrary to the restrictive measures contained in annex B,” she added.

Annex B of Security Council [resolution 2231](#), in which the Council endorsed the JCPOA, deals with the restrictions concerning Iran.

The JCPOA – reached by Iran, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the US and the European Union – sets out [rigorous mechanisms for monitoring restrictions](#) placed on Iran’s nuclear programme, while paving the way for the lifting of UN sanctions against the country.

In her briefing, Ms. DiCarlo updated the 15-member Council on the status of implementation of various JCPOA provisions, concerning nuclear verification, ballistic missile development and other armaments restrictions; as well as

assets freezes, and travel bans.

On the ballistic missile-related provisions, the UN official informed the Council that, since the last report, the Secretariat had been informed by Saudi authorities of “nine additional launches of ballistic missiles by the Houthis, which in their assessment were Iranian Qiam-1 missiles.”

“The Secretariat assesses that the debris of the five missiles launched at Yanbu and Riyadh since July 2017 share key design features with the Iranian Qiam-1 ballistic missile,” she said, adding: “It is also our assessment that some component parts of the debris were manufactured in Iran.”

She noted however, that at present, the Secretariat “is unable to determine whether such missiles, or parts thereof, or related technology, may have been transferred from Iran after 16 January 2016, the date when annex B provisions came into effect.”

She also informed Council members of information received from Israel regarding the possible presence of an Iranian drone in Syria, which was reportedly downed after entering Israeli airspace in February.

“The Secretariat did not have the opportunity to examine its debris, but images provided by Israeli authorities show that its wing configuration appears consistent with that of an Iranian drone unveiled in October 2016,” informed Ms. DiCarlo, adding that the Secretariat “has no information as to the owner and operator of those drones.”