

[Afghanistan: UN envoy urges further extension of ceasefire with Taliban, as Eid al-Fitr gets underway](#)

Expressing solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, the United Nations envoy in the country has expressed hope that the temporary ceasefires marking the final days of the holy month of Ramadan in the war-battered nation, will lead to the lasting peace that Afghans so badly “want and deserve.”

In a [statement](#), issued on Thursday, Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan urged “all parties to the conflict to honour the announced ceasefires and respect this time of reflection, tolerance and solidarity.”

Earlier this month, the Government of Afghanistan had [announced](#) a temporary ceasefire, starting on the 27th day of Ramadan, 12 June, and running through the end of Ramadan on Thursday, into the third day of the Eid-ul-Fitr festival, which begins on Friday.

A few days later, the Taliban also [announced](#) a three-day partial ceasefire during Eid al-Fitr.

The “historic” announcements ahead of Eid, Mr. Yamamoto said, “will allow Afghan families across the country to come together peacefully in the days ahead, in what is, for now, a temporary respite from war.”

“I sincerely hope the sense of solidarity marked by this joyful occasion will continue well into the future, enabling the extension of the ceasefires and leading to the peace that all Afghans want and deserve,” he said.

[Financial abuse of elderly ‘rampant, but invisible’, says UN expert](#)

Older people are increasingly subject to financial abuse, in many cases by their own family members, a United Nations human rights expert warned on Thursday.

“Financial [abuse of older persons](#) is rampant but largely invisible, and the problem is expected to grow dramatically with the ageing of our societies”, said the UN-appointed independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights

by older persons, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, in a statement to mark [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#) on 15 June.

She says most abuse goes undetected, and it is impossible to say how big the problem is, as data is scarce because of under-reporting.

“Sadly, most abusers are family members”, said Ms. Kornfeld-Matte. “This is a particularly delicate matter”, she added, explaining that even experienced professionals have difficulty distinguishing an unwise but legitimate financial transaction, from an exploitative one that was the result of undue influence, duress, fraud, or a lack of informed consent.

Sadly, most abusers are family members – UN expert Rosa Kornfeld-Matte

Financial abuse reflects a pattern of behaviour rather than a single event, and occurs over a period of time.

She said that older people may even tacitly acknowledge it, or feel that the perpetrator has some entitlement to their assets.

“Some older people also have a desire to compensate those who provide them with care, affection, or attention”, she said.

Ms. Kornfeld-Matte urged older people to report cases of abuse to the authorities, even though they feel embarrassed or fear retaliation, including withdrawal of affection and care.

“One of the few ways to stop financial abuse of older people is to report it. If you suspect that someone you care about has been or is being abused, I can only urge you to speak up”, she said.

[UN rights chief calls for international inquiry into Kashmir violations](#)

Decades of rights violations on both sides of the Line of Control in Kashmir have “claimed or ruined numerous lives” and should be the subject of a high-level international probe, the UN’s [human rights chief](#) said on Thursday.

Flagging the launch of the first UN human rights [report](#) on the disputed territory separating India and Pakistan, Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein noted his intention to ask the [Human Rights Council](#) in Geneva to set up a commission of

inquiry at its next session, beginning on Monday.

The High Commissioner – whose mandate ends this summer – highlighted what he called the “chronic impunity for violations committed by security forces” and said that the political nature of the conflict had masked the “untold suffering” of millions of people.

The main focus of the 49-page report is the use of reported “excessive force” by soldiers in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, although it also examines a range of rights violations in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir.

In Indian-Administered Kashmir, the report details how large demonstrations erupted in Jammu and Kashmir two years ago after Indian security forces killed the leader of an armed group.

It notes how “excessive force” led to the deaths of an estimated 145 civilians from mid-2016 to April this year.

Victims’ lack of access to justice remains a key challenge in Jammu and Kashmir, the report from the UN human rights office, [OHCHR](#), continues.

It details how bespoke legislation gives security personnel “virtual immunity” against legal redress unless the Indian government authorizes it, and says that “there has not been a single prosecution” in the nearly 30 years that the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act has been in force.

This “almost total impunity” has also hindered inquiries into enforced or voluntary disappearances, the report continues, citing allegations of mass graves in the state and the alleged mass rape of 23 women by soldiers in Kunan-Poshpora nearly three decades ago.

Turning to Pakistan-Administered Kashmir, the OHCHR report describes rights violations there as being “of a different calibre or magnitude”.

It details restrictions on freedom of expression and people’s right to peaceful assembly in two territories – Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and in Gilgit-Baltistan – and expresses concern at the “very broad definition of terrorism” amid reports that hundreds of people have been detained under Pakistan’s anti-terrorism legislation in Gilgit-Baltistan alone.

Any resolution of the political situation in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and Indian-administered Kashmir “must entail a commitment to end the cycles of violence and ensure accountability for past and current abuses by all parties”, Zeid said.

FROM THE FIELD: Finding refuge in the 'beautiful game'

Teenage refugees from East Africa have discovered that participating in the 'beautiful game' as football is often referred to, can level the playing field and help them to integrate into new homes and new cultures.

The teenagers are part of a team based in Utah in the United States. Their participation in the sport allows them to meet other Americans helping them to make friends and integrate into their new communities.

According to the UN migration agency, [IOM](#), there are currently over 65 million refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people around the world.

The power of football or soccer to inspire and unite people globally is due to be played out in the World Cup which begins in Russia on Thursday.

The host of the "A Way Home Together," a podcast which was inspired by a UN campaign to promote safety, dignity and respect for refugees and migrants travelled to Utah to speak to the young men.

For more click here: <http://features.iom.int/stories/true-colours/>

UNICEF urges all countries to provide 'Super Dads' with paid leave

Almost two-thirds of the world's children under the age of one live in countries where fathers are not legally entitled to any paid paternity leave, according to a new analysis by the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)).

There are 92 countries which lack national policies ensuring that new fathers get adequate paid time off, to spend with their newborn babies.

"Positive and meaningful interaction with mothers and fathers from the very beginning, helps to shape children's brain growth and development for life, making them healthier and happier, and increasing their ability to learn," said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore.

It's all of our responsibility to enable them to fill this role," she added.

Evidence suggests that when fathers bond with their infants, they are more

likely to play an active role in their child's development. Research also suggests that when children positively interact with their fathers, they have better psychological health, self-esteem and long-term satisfaction in life.

UNICEF is urging governments to implement national family-friendly policies that support early childhood development, including paid paternity and maternity leave, free pre-primary education, and paid breastfeeding breaks.

Earlier this year, UNICEF modernized its approach to parental leave provisions, with up to 16 weeks of paid leave for paternity across all of its offices worldwide – the first UN agency to extend the benefit, beyond the standard four weeks.

“We cannot be ‘For Every Child,’ if we are not also ‘For Every Parent.’ We have to ask more of governments and more of employers if we’re going to give fathers and mothers the time and resources they need to nurture their children, particularly during the earliest years of a child’s life,” said Ms. Fore.

Around the world, momentum for family-friendly policies is growing. However, with nearly 90 million children living in countries without paid paternity leave, much work remains to be done, said UNICEF.

The new analysis forms part of UNICEF’s Super Dads campaign, now in its second year, which aims to break down barriers and allow fathers to play an active role in their children’s’ development.

The campaign is also recognizing Father’s Day at this time, which is celebrated across more than 80 countries during June, and focuses on the importance of love, play, protection and good nutrition for the healthy development of young children’s brains.