

Assault on key Yemeni port would endanger 300,000 children and 'choke off' aid for millions more: UNICEF chief

Any attack on the key Yemeni port of Hodeida would deepen one of the world's worst malnutrition crises and put the lives of an estimated 300,000 children at risk, said the head of the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) on Tuesday.

UNICEF Executive Director, Henrietta Fore, said that she was "extremely concerned" about continuing reports that forces from the United Arab Emirates which are part of a Saudi-led coalition battling Houthi rebels who currently control Hodeida, are planning an imminent attack to recapture the city.

Conflict has escalated between the two sides since 2015, leaving around 75 per cent of Yemenis in need, including around 11 million children.

On Monday, [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#), told reporters in New York that "intense negotiations" involving his [Special Envoy for Yemen](#), Martin Griffiths, were taking place, which it was hoped could prevent military confrontation. "I hope that it will be possible to avoid a battle for Hodeidah," said the UN chief.

Also speaking on Monday, [UN relief chief](#) Mark Lowcock told correspondents at UN Headquarters that "dozens of UN staff" were still in the city. "While the UN and other humanitarian organizations are reconfiguring their presence, it is also our plan, intention and hope, to stay and deliver. We have dozens of staff still in Hodeidah," he added.

"Ninety per cent of the food and medicines that are consumed in Yemen are imported and seventy per cent of those imports go through Hodeida. Seven million people are completely reliant every month on food, and more than 7 million on other assistance, from humanitarian organizations," said Mr. Lowcock, who is also UN Humanitarian Coordinator.

He said that if the port were to close for any period of time, or "not to operate effectively, the consequences in humanitarian terms would be catastrophic".

In her statement, Ms. Fore said that apart from the 300,000 at risk in the city itself, "millions more children throughout Yemen depend on the humanitarian and commercial goods that come through that port every day for their very survival."

"Without fuel, critical for water pumping, people's access to drinking water will shrink further, leading to even more cases of acute watery diarrhoea and

cholera, both of which can be deadly for small children,” she added.

She urged all parties to the conflict “and all those who have influence over them, to put the protection of children above all other considerations” before concluding that: “Peace should be given a chance. The children of Yemen deserve nothing less.”

[Millions of young lives ‘at risk’ says UN labour chief, calling for an end to child labour](#)

No child under the age of 18 should be toiling in mines, fields, factories and homes, carrying heavy loads or working long hours, the head of the UN labour agency said on Tuesday, marking World Day against Child Labour.

“Many suffer lifelong physical and psychological consequences. Their very [lives can be at risk](#)”, said [International Labour Organization](#) (ILO) Director-General Guy Ryder in his message for the Day, calling for urgent global action to end common dangers associated with child labour.

About 73 million children are involved in doing hazardous work – almost half of the 152 million children aged 5 to 17 across the world, who are still forced into child labour.

“These children are toiling in mines and fields, factories and homes, exposed to pesticides and other toxic substances, carrying heavy loads or working long hours”, he said.

The [World Day](#), which was first marked under the auspices of the ILO in 2002, draws attention to the global extent of child labour and the efforts needed to eliminate it.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by world leaders in 2015, include a renewed global commitment to [ending child labour](#).

Although the overall number of children in hazardous work has decreased in recent years, progress has been limited to older children.

Between 2012 and 2016, according to ILO, the number of children aged 5 to 11, doing dangerous work in contravention international treaties, increased.

“This is unacceptable”, Mr. Ryder said.

Agriculture accounts for most of child labour

Nearly three out of every four children made to work, are in the [agriculture](#) sector, according to the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO).

After years of steady decline, child labour on farms and in the fields, has started to rise again, driven in part by an increase in conflicts and climate-induced disasters.

This worrisome trend, not only threatens the wellbeing of millions of children, but also undermines efforts to end global hunger and poverty, FAO warned.

“Children who work long hours are likely to continue to swell the ranks of the hungry and poor”, said FAO Deputy Director-General Daniel Gustafson. “As their families depend on their work, this deprives the children of the opportunity to go to school, which in turn prevents them from getting decent jobs and income in the future”.

ILO’s conventions on child labour, namely the Minimum Age Convention of 1973 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999, require governments to establish a national list of hazardous work, prohibited for children.

These treaties have been ratified by 171 and 181 ILO member States respectively, reflecting a near global commitment to end child labour in all its forms.

[US-North Korea summit ‘an important milestone’ towards denuclearization, says Guterres](#)

Tuesday’s historic summit between the leaders of the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has been hailed as [“an important milestone”](#) by the UN Secretary-General.

US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un concluded their meeting in Singapore by signing a statement covering issues that included a pledge from North Korea to complete the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and end its nuclear weapons programme.

In a statement issued by his Spokesman, UN chief António Guterres urged the parties “to seize this momentous opportunity”.

For the Secretary-General, the summit was “an important milestone in the

advancement of sustainable peace and the complete and verifiable denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula.”

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)) has also welcomed the outcome of the talks that took place over the course of several hours in Singapore, which was the first time that a sitting US President had sat down face-to-face, with a leader of DPRK.

IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said the agency [stands ready](#) to undertake any nuclear verification activities in North Korea, if requested.

Last September, the IAEA established a team in its Department of Safeguards to enhance its ability to monitor the country’s nuclear programme.

At the time, Pyongyang had just launched its sixth and largest nuclear test since it began its programme, in 2006.

[With realities shifting in Darfur, operations on the ground ‘must change’, urges UN official](#)

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur “must change” in accordance with the shifting realities on the ground, the Organization’s top peacekeeping official said on Monday, highlighting the need to “closely link” the mission’s drawdown to the scaling up of both peacekeeping and development activities.

“The peacekeeping mission ([UNAMID](#)) should be directed to the area where it is most needed, namely at the site of continued conflict in the Jebel Marra,” Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the UN Under-Secretary-General for peacekeeping operations, told the Security Council on Monday.

“In the rest of Darfur, the UN system should leverage the capabilities of the agencies, funds and programmes best suited to tackling the problems that remain there.”

Presenting a [special report](#) from the UN Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson, Mr. Lacroix outlined two “central concepts” behind a new two-year strategy – each supporting the other.

The first, dealing with peacekeeping, would focus on protection of civilians, humanitarian support and mediation of local conflict.

The second central tenet, would, in effect, bridge the evolution from peacekeeping to early recovery and development, in collaboration with the UN

country team serving Darfur, he added.

“The whole-of-system transition concept focuses on addressing the critical drivers of conflict and preventing relapse,” explained Mr. Lacroix.

For the roadmap to be realized, the senior UN official underscored the need to have longer-term funding arrangements in place and increase voluntary contributions from donors.

In addition, funds from the assessed budget would need to be used during the transition and in close collaboration with the Peacebuilding Support Office, to access sufficient resources, he added.

Also vital is the need for continued engagement and partnership with the AU and backing of the Government of Sudan and UN Member States, he said.

“We believe that, working together, this new approach can help establish a future of UN and AU support to Darfur that will help to improve the lives of the Darfuri people now and in the long-term,” concluded Mr. Lacroix.

Central African Republic: UN chief condemns killing of peacekeeper; the second in a week

The United Nations chief has strongly condemned Sunday’s attack that killed a peacekeeper in the Central African Republic (CAR); the second ‘blue helmet’ to lose his life there in the space of a week.

“This brings to five, the number of peacekeepers killed in targeted attacks in the Central African Republic since January 2018, with [two attacks occurring in the span of a week](#),” UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said in a statement issued on behalf of [Secretary-General António Guterres](#).

The latest attack by armed insurgents on the UN peacekeeping mission in CAR, known by its French acronym MINUSCA, resulted in the killing of a peacekeeper from Burundi and the wounding of another while they were on patrol in Bambari, in the centre of the country.

On 3 June, [an attack](#) by armed insurgents killed a UN peacekeeper from Tanzania and injured seven others while they were patrolling in the country’s west.

The Secretary-General “urges the Central African Republic authorities to spare no effort in investigating and identifying the perpetrators so that they can be swiftly brought to justice,” Mr. Dujarric said, recalling that

attacks against UN peacekeepers may constitute a war crime and that sanctions can be applied against perpetrators who are brought to justice.

In the statement, the Secretary-General offered his deepest condolences to the family of the deceased as well as to the Government of Burundi, and wished a swift recovery to the injured.