

[Colombia: UN food relief agency seeks urgent funds to help 350,000 Venezuelan migrants](#)

The United Nations emergency food relief agency has issued an urgent appeal for nearly \$46 million to feed some 350,000 impoverished migrants who crossed the border from Venezuela into Colombia, as well as host communities with pre-existing vulnerabilities.

“We [urgently need funds](#) so that we can bring vital aid to migrant families who have left their homes behind, and don’t know where their next meal is coming from,” said Miguel Barreto, the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean at the UN [World Food Programme](#) (WFP).

“We also need to support host communities, many of them already poor, who have shown great generosity as they bear the brunt of this crisis,” he added, referring to the deepening socio-economic turmoil inside Venezuela.

In a news release Thursday, WFP announced that as part of an eight-month response, it will provide food assistance to migrants – especially women and children – living in temporary shelters; emergency support for school meals; as well as help Venezuelan families trying to integrate.

These efforts are part of a larger integrated response plan, drawn up by UN agencies in Colombia – at the request of the Government – to help address the crisis.

Support will be extended to vulnerable indigenous communities coping with the influx, where in some areas migrants now make up more than half of the population, said WFP.

At present, the UN agency is working with temporary shelters or community kitchens run by religious organizations and other partners, purchasing the food needed to prepare hot meals for newly arrived migrants.

[Israel must address excessive use of force and deaths in Gaza protests – UN rights chief](#)

With over 40 Palestinians killed and more than 5,500 injured during protests

in Gaza over the past month – many by live ammunition – the top United Nations human rights official on Friday called on Israel to ensure that its security forces do not resort to use of excessive force amid the ongoing demonstrations.

[“Every week, we witness instances of use of lethal force against unarmed demonstrators,”](#) said Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in a news release Friday.

“Warnings by the UN and others have seemingly gone unheeded, as the approach of the security forces from week to week does not seem to have changed.”

According to the High Commissioner’s Office, OHCHR, 35 of those killed were taking part in the ‘Great March of Return’ demonstrations. Most of them appear to have been unarmed or not presenting an imminent threat to the Israeli Security Forces (ISF) at the time of their killing or injury. 1,739 individuals were injured by live ammunition fire by ISF.

“The loss of life is deplorable, and the staggering number of injuries caused by live ammunition only confirms the sense that excessive force has been used against demonstrators – not once, not twice, but repeatedly,” added the High Commissioner.

Also concerning is that over the last four weeks of protest, four children were shot dead by Israeli forces, three of them by a bullet to the head or neck. A further 233 were injured by live ammunition, with some sustaining injuries that will result in lifelong disabilities, including through the amputation of limbs, stated the news release.

“The use of excessive force against any demonstrator is reprehensible, but children enjoy additional protection under international law,” Mr. Zeid said.

It is difficult to see how children, even those throwing stones, can present a threat of imminent death or serious injury to heavily protected security force personnel – *High Commissioner Zeid*

“It is difficult to see how children, even those throwing stones, can present a threat of imminent death or serious injury to heavily protected security force personnel [...] Images of a child being shot as he runs away from Israeli security forces are downright shocking.”

According to OHCHR, a 14-year-old boy, Mohammad Ayyoub, was killed by a bullet to the head on 20 April.

“It is difficult to see how tire-burning or stone-throwing, or even Molotov-cocktails thrown from a significant distance at heavily protected security forces in defensive positions can be seen to constitute such threat,” read the news release.

High Commissioner Zeid also underscored the obligation of every country to

ensure that all loss of life and serious injury is investigated and those responsible held to account. Any investigations into the events in Gaza “must fulfil this purpose,” he stressed.

He also voiced concern that continued lack of accountability could lead to future human rights violations in relation to the protests.

“By the end of today – and next Friday, and the Friday after that – more unarmed Palestinians who were alive this morning will have been killed, simply because, while exercising their right to protest, they approached a fence, or otherwise attracted the attention of the soldiers on the other side,” Mr Zeid said.

“Israel’s failure to consistently prosecute violations committed by members of its security forces, encourages them to use deadly force against their fellow unarmed human beings, even when they present no threat.”

[UN chief encourages Korean leaders to act swiftly on agreements at ‘historic’ summit](#)

Following Friday’s summit between the leaders of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres expressed his hope that the two countries swiftly implement all agreed actions, including ridding the Peninsula of nuclear arms.

“The Secretary-General applauds today’s [truly historic summit](#),” said Mr. Guterres’ Spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric, in a statement. “Many around the world were moved by the powerful imagery of the two leaders coming together to advance harmony and peace on the Korean Peninsula.”

According to the declaration signed by both leaders and released after the summit, the two nations agreed on a number of measures, including realizing the common goal of “complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula,” and pursuing phased military arms reduction and talks to declare an official end to the Korean War, which devastated the Peninsula from 1950 to 1953.

An armistice brought about a ceasefire to the Korean War in 1953, but the conflict never officially ended because the parties could not agree to a formal peace treaty.

“The Secretary-General salutes the courage and leadership that resulted in the important commitments and agreed actions outlined in the Panmunjom

Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula,” noted the Spokesman.

The UN chief “counts on the parties to build on their first meeting and swiftly implement all agreed actions to further inter-Korean trust-building and reconciliation; sincere dialogue; and progress towards sustainable peace and verifiable denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula,” Mr. Dujarric said, adding: The Secretary-General “looks forward to these gains being consolidated and advanced” at the US-DPRK summit expected to take place soon.

[UN rights experts voice concerns about ‘structural racism’ in United Kingdom](#)

United Nations human rights experts have expressed serious concerns about racism rooted in the fabric of the United Kingdom’s society, given the disproportionate number of people of African descent and of ethnic minorities dying due to excessive use of force by State security.

“The deaths reinforce the experiences of [structural racism](#), over-policing and criminalisation of people of African descent and other minorities in the UK,” they said.

The UK Government last month responded to the concerns of the experts, recognising that further improvements were needed to develop solutions on healthcare in police custody, inquests and legal aid and support to families.

Data disclosed by the Metropolitan Police in August 2017 found that people of African descent and those belonging to ethnic minority groups, in particular young African and Caribbean men were twice as likely to die after the use of force by police officers and the subsequent lack or insufficiency of access to appropriate healthcare.

According to the experts, these deaths occurred in many circumstances, following the use of force involving firearms, tear gas agents, long handed batons, electroshock weapons; physical restraint resulting in the inhibition of the respiratory system and asphyxia; restraint equipment; and denial of appropriate healthcare.

“Failure to properly investigate and prosecute such deaths results in a lack of accountability for those individuals and State agencies responsible, as well as in the denial of adequate remedies and reparation for the families of the victims,” they said.

The Government said it had commissioned the Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody to implement the recommendations set out in the Report of the

Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody, the experts said.

The UN experts include E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur on racism, who will visit the UK from 30 April to 11 May at the invitation of the Government; Michal Balcerzak, Chairperson of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; and Fernand de Varennes, Special Rapporteur on minority issues.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

[Make mine Darjeeling: Locally identified foods promote sustainable development, UN study finds](#)

Not just any peppers, but white Penja peppers, grown in volcanic soil in the Cameroon; not just any cabbage, but Futog cabbage, cultivated alongside the Danube in Serbia. The rising number of products with a specific and certified geographic origin, it turns out, not only have cachet among gourmards: they are also providing large economic and social benefits to rural areas and can foster sustainable development, according to a new study released by the UN agriculture agency.

Food products with trademarked geographical labels, which have specific qualities or reputations tied to their place of origin, already account for annual trade of more than \$50 billion worldwide, according to the report, [Strengthening sustainable food systems through geographical indications](#), by the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The concept is not new: products from Bordeaux wine to Parmigiano cheese have had protected labeling for decades or centuries. But the idea is spreading and such products are taking off throughout developing countries and regions.

“Geographical indications are an approach to food production and marketing systems that place social, cultural and environment considerations at the [heart of the value chain](#),” said Emmanuel Hidier, Senior Economist in FAO’s Investment Centre.

“They can be a pathway to sustainable development for rural communities by

promoting quality products, strengthening value chains, and improving access to more remunerative markets,” he added.

The report analyzes the economic impact of Geographical Indication registration in nine case studies: Colombian coffee, Darjeeling tea (India), Futog cabbage (Serbia), Kona coffee (United States), Manchego cheese (Spain), Penja pepper (Cameroon), Taliouine saffron (Morocco), Tête de Moine cheese (Switzerland) and Vale dos Vinhedos wine (Brazil).

For example, it reveals that by registering Penja pepper – grown in the Penja Valley’s volcanic soil in Cameroon and the first African product to receive the label – local farmers have increased their incomes six-fold.

“The process – from setting standards to registration and promotion – has benefited not only local farmers, but the whole local area in terms of revenues, productivity, the growth of other connected industries, and importantly, the inclusion of all stakeholders,” said Emmanuel Nzenowo, from the Penja Pepper producers’ association.

Gains from labeling surpass finances alone. The practice can also stimulate public-private sector dialogue, the report notes, as authorities are often associated closely with the registration and certification process.

While each country defines its own laws for registering their labels, they are regulated and protected under the [Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights](#), an international legal agreement among [World Trade Organization](#) members.

The report also recognizes potential pitfalls. Some small-scale or traditional producers may be excluded, for example, if specifications are overly complex. Environmental impacts must also be weighed and minimized.

But overall, the study finds, geographic labeling has had significant positive effects on prices of the trademarked goods, whether long-established or recently registered.

“The unique linkages of these products with their natural and cultural resources in local areas make them a useful tool in the advancement of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), in particular by preserving a food heritage and contributing to healthy diets,” said Florence Tartnac, Senior Officer in the FAO Nutrition and Food Systems Division.