

Global youth must be empowered to combat terrorism, UN forum declares

Young people are prime targets of extremist recruiters but they can also play leadership roles in fighting terrorism and creating greater opportunities for all, said speakers at a United Nations forum on Thursday called 'Investing in Youth to Counter Terrorism.'

"I do not agree that young people are the leaders of tomorrow. More and more, they are the [leaders of today](#)," [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) told the event.

"I thank all the young women and men who are stepping up and assuming those responsibilities," he added.

"Nearly half the world's population – 46 per cent – is 24 years-old or younger," Mr. Guterres said. "Africa and the Middle East have the highest proportions of young people."

The radicalization of young people is a source of deep concern in rich and poor countries alike, as poisonous ideas flow across borders at the touch of a button or the tap of a tweet.

Terrorist groups exploit social, economic and political injustices to entice young people through false propaganda that glorifies distorted ideologies, while unscrupulous recruiters using social media to lure unsuspecting teenagers down dangerous roads.

Mr. Guterres observed that "violent extremist groups target and invest in young people because they are aware of their potential and their strong desire for change."

For her part, the Secretary-General's [Envoy on Youth](#), Jayathma Wickramanayake, asserted, "the fact is, the vast majority of youth are peaceful, and are not in danger of participating in violence."

"On the contrary," she continued, "young people's resilience is transforming local communities while combating extremist movements."



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Jayathma Wickramanayake, Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, addresses the special event on "Investing in Youth to Counter Terrorism."

Discussions at the event at UN Headquarters in New York centered on meeting the needs of youth at risk of disempowerment and alienation – making them susceptible to extremist narratives and recruitment.

"If we are serious about prevention, and particularly about preventing conflict, we need to be serious about engaging with and investing in young women and men," underscored the UN chief.

"We need their involvement and commitment, if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), take effective action on climate change, and create a safer and more peaceful world," he continued.

Both the [Security Council](#) and the [General Assembly](#) have also recognized the importance of engaging youth, and continue seeking ways for their inclusive representation in decision-making in local, national, regional and international institutions.

A place at the table

An overarching theme of Thursday's meeting was the need to include young people in efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, including violent extremism.

In calling for the engagement of young people, Mr. Guterres described their main needs as: "Education, jobs, and vocational training. Investment, interest, role models and goals. Meaningful participation in decisions that affect them."

He emphasized that youth have a voice and a place at the table, adding: "More than that, we must be prepared to go to their table, sit down and listen."

The joint event was sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Norway and Pakistan and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism ([UNOCT](#)). That office assists Member States in strengthening their capacities to combat terrorism and ensures that counter-terrorism remains a priority across the Organization, in accordance with the [UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy](#).

South Sudan: UN migration agency and partners reach more than 140,000 people with vaccination campaigns

The United Nations migration agency and its partners are set to begin a second round of an oral cholera vaccination campaign in Malakal and Wau, South Sudan, after the initial round reached more than 60,400 people in March of this year.

Following an outbreak in February, the [International Organization for Migration](#) (IOM) has also been leading a reactive measles vaccination campaign in Aweil East, which reached more than 83,700 children last month.

“Children are extremely vulnerable to outbreaks of measles and other contagious diseases,” [explained](#) Derebe Tadesse, IOM Migration Health Officer. “The measles vaccine will save lives. With just one dose, 85 percent of children over nine months and 95 percent of children over twelve months of age are immune.”

Since the start of the conflict in 2013, protracted displacement and poor health conditions have contributed to yearly cholera outbreaks in South Sudan.

In 2017, IOM reached more than 469,800 people with oral cholera vaccination campaigns in Unity, Warrap, and Eastern Equatoria. With an estimated 5.1 million people in need of emergency health care assistance, IOM continues to work country-wide to provide aid to vulnerable populations affected by the conflict.

Afghan conflict causes more than 2,000

[civilian casualties in first quarter of 2018, UN mission reports](#)

Armed conflict in Afghanistan killed 763 civilians and injured 1,495 in the first three months of this year, the United Nations mission there said Thursday.

“All parties to the conflict in Afghanistan must do everything in their power to protect civilians from harm,” said Ingrid Hayden, the Secretary-General’s Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan. “Afghan [civilians continue to suffer](#), caught in the conflict, in ways that are preventable; this must stop now.”

The 2,258 civilian casualties, documented from 1 January to 31 March by the UN Assistance Mission in the country, known as UNAMA, are at the similar levels recorded in the first three months of 2017 and 2016. Anti-Government elements caused 1,500 civilian casualties, up six per cent from the same period last year.

Suicide improvised explosive devices (IED) and complex attacks were the leading cause of civilian casualties – a new trend. The Mission found that combats on the ground were the second leading cause, followed by targeted and deliberate killings, explosive remnants of war, and aerial operations.

The full report is available in English, Dari and Pashto [here](#).

[UN launches initiative to improve road safety worldwide](#)

Some 1.3 million drivers, passengers and pedestrians die each year on the world’s roads, the United Nations took a major step to address this tragedy by launching on Thursday a trust fund to spur action that could save lives and prevent the loss of opportunity associated with road accidents.

Speaking at the UN General Assembly where the launch was announced, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed highlighted the opportunities offered by the UN Road Safety Trust Fund.

“We have [a chance to save the lives of millions of people](#) around the world, and to prevent injuries, suffering and the loss of opportunity associated with road accidents,” she said, urging all stakeholders to contribute to the

Trust Fund and to step up their efforts to achieve global road safety targets.

[According](#) to the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Organization's development arm in the continent, which is also the secretariat for the Trust Fund, every \$1,500 contributed to the Fund could save one life; prevent 10 serious injuries; and leverage \$51,000 towards investments in road safety.

"The Road Safety Trust Fund will serve as a catalyst for much-needed progress towards the road safety targets of the Sustainable Development Goals," said Olga Algayerova, the head of UNECE.

Dealing specifically with road safety, SDG targets [3.6](#) and [11.2](#) aim to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents; and to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems as well as improve road safety for all, respectively.

"[We] are committed to working with all stakeholders to multiply the impact of global action to improve road safety," added Ms. Algayerova.

Echoing these words, Jean Todt, the President of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile and the UN [Special Envoy for Road Safety](#), also underlined the importance scaling up of resources to achieve global road safety targets.

"[The Trust Fund] has the potential to galvanize our global efforts to address the road safety situation, building on the progress made and experience gained over the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020," he expressed.

The [Trust Fund](#) will support efforts along the five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety, which include strengthened road safety management capacities; improved safety of road infrastructure and broader transport networks; enhanced safety of vehicles; improved behaviour of road users; and improved post-crash care.

General Assembly urges effective measures to improve road safety

Also today, the UN General Assembly – the UN body with universal membership of all 193 Member States – adopted a resolution on road safety in which it called for a host of measures to prevent road accidents and to minimizing the resulting damage.

One of the measures, it urged, the adoption policies and measures to implement vehicle safety regulations to ensure that all new motor vehicles meet "applicable minimum regulations for the protection of occupants and other road users, with seat belts, airbags and active safety systems fitted as standard equipment."

DPR Korea: UN says \$111 million needed to provide life-saving aid, tackle malnutrition

The United Nations and its partners are urgently requesting \$111 million in humanitarian funding to assist millions of people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), including children whose growth has been stunted because they are not getting enough to eat.

"Humanitarian assistance is a vital lifeline for [millions of ordinary people](#) living in DPR Korea," UN Resident Coordinator in the north Asian country, Tapan Mishra, said Thursday.

"However, funding has been rapidly declining every year, with less than one-third of the amount required for humanitarian programmes raised in 2017," he added.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), amidst political tensions, chronic food insecurity, early childhood malnutrition and nutrition insecurity are widespread in DPRK.

More than 10 million people, or 40 per cent of the DPRK's population, are believed to need humanitarian assistance. Insufficient intake of nutrition continues to be a serious concern with more than one-quarter of children stunted.

OCHA cited many complex, intertwined reasons for the high rates of undernutrition in DPRK, including, mountainous terrain, with only 17 per cent of land good for cultivation, and farming largely reliant on traditional farming methods. Further, changing weather patterns have left the country vulnerable to droughts and floods, which often result in low agricultural production.

People also struggle to access basic services, with a large portion of the population living without a reliable source of safe water and almost a quarter without basic sanitation facilities, contributing to serious health concerns.

The [Needs and Priorities Plan](#) 2018, released on Wednesday in Pyongyang, outlines the financial needs to cover roughly six million people, including funding for activities to enhance access to nutritious food, healthcare, water and sanitation services, as well as to make communities resilient to natural disasters.

Mr. Mishra said that last year's programme reached more than six million

people with aid.

“Yet, without adequate funding, agencies will be forced to scale-down their life-saving work, with serious impacts on the lives of ordinary people,” he stressed.