

[UN report documents horrors faced by thousands held in arbitrary detention in Libya](#)

Armed groups in Libya are holding thousands of people in detention where they are being submitted to torture and other human rights violations, according to a United Nations [report](#) published on Tuesday.

The study by the UN human rights office, [OHCHR](#), and the UN Support Mission in the country, known as [UNSMIL](#), estimates that some 6,500 people are being held in official prisons while thousands more are in facilities nominally under the authorities or that are directly run by armed groups, some of which are affiliated with the State.

“This report lays bare not only the appalling abuses and violations experienced by Libyans deprived of their liberty, but the sheer horror and arbitrariness of such detentions, both for the victims and their families,” said Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

One facility, believed to be the largest of its kind in western Libya, houses 2,600 people who face torture, unlawful killing, denial of adequate medical treatment and poor detention conditions.

“Men, women and children across Libya are arbitrarily detained or unlawfully deprived of their liberty based on their tribal or family links and perceived political affiliations,” the report stated.

“Victims have little or no recourse to judicial remedy or reparations, while members of armed groups enjoy total impunity.”

The report’s findings are based on first-hand accounts and other information gathered from sources inside Libya.

Some detainees have been held since 2011 in relation to the armed conflict that led to the overthrow of former President, the late Muammar Gaddafi, and a surge in armed groups.

The report further stated that since renewed hostilities broke out in 2014, armed groups on all sides have rounded up suspected opponents, critics, activists, politicians and others, while hostage-taking for prisoner exchanges or ransom is also common.

“Rather than reining in armed groups and integrating their members under State command and control structures, successive Libyan governments have increasingly relied on them for law enforcement, including arrests and detention; paid them salaries; and provided them with equipment and uniforms,” the report said.

The authors are calling on the Libyan authorities to condemn torture, ill-treatment and summary executions of those detained, and to ensure accountability for these crimes.

“These violations and abuses need to stop – and those responsible for such crimes should be held fully to account.”

[UN Security Council urges an end to recurring cycles of instability in Africa's Great Lakes region](#)

The United Nations Security Council on Tuesday called for an end to the recurring cycles of violence and instability in Africa's Great Lakes region, as a senior UN official reported that some armed groups are continuing attacks on civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“The negative forces, including the Allied Democratic Forces, continue to attack and terrify the population, causing suffering and displacement, and fuelling mistrust between the countries of the region,” said the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes, Said Djinnit.

The UN has long been engaged in efforts to bring peace and stability to the vast region, stretches across Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

It has been plagued by decades of political instability and armed conflicts, porous borders and humanitarian crises, as well as tensions over natural resources and other potentially destabilizing factors.

A key step has been the adoption of a UN-brokered accord in February 2013 aimed at stabilizing the DRC and the region.

In today's briefing, Mr. Djinnit told the Council that while implementation of this accord, formally known as the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, has been slow and requires greater political will, it remains a vital tool to bring stability to the region.

One of the root causes of conflict in the region is exploitation of natural resources from the DRC.

“Continued illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources from the DRC contributes, as we know, to financing negative forces and deprives the country of critical sources of growth and development,” he said.

He also said that in the DRC, tensions persist between the Government and the

opposition despite progress in preparations for the elections.

Mr. Djinnit noted that in Burundi, the political and human rights situation remains of great concern as the country heads towards a referendum for constitutional changes.

Further, human rights violations and impunity remain central to the instability across the region, he added, stressing that the humanitarian situation there also requires greater attention.

In a press statement issued after the briefing, the Council reaffirmed that the accord “remains an essential mechanism to achieve durable peace and stability” in the DRC and the region, and called on all signatories to fulfil their respective commitments to address the root causes of conflict and promote lasting regional development.

The accord was signed by 11 countries, namely Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the DRC, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The UN, the African Union (AU), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) act as guarantors of the accord. In early 2014, Kenya and Sudan became the 12th and 13th signatories of the accord, respectively.

[UN-backed campaign to protect nearly a billion people in Africa from yellow fever by 2026](#)

Amid a resurgence of yellow fever outbreaks, the United Nations together with partners, has begun an ambitious campaign to vaccinate close to one billion people against the deadly disease across 27 high-risk African countries.

“With one injection we can protect a person for life against this dangerous pathogen,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the [UN World Health Organization](#) (WHO), launching the [Eliminate Yellow Fever Epidemics \(EYE\) in Africa strategy](#) in Nigeria’s capital Abuja alongside the country’s Health Minister, Isaac Folorunso Adewole.

The goal is to rid the continent of [yellow fever](#) – a viral disease with potentially fatal consequences – by 2026.

“This unprecedented commitment by countries will ensure that by 2026 Africa is free of yellow fever epidemics,” added Mr. Tedros.

The three pronged strategy focuses on protecting at-risk populations through preventive mass vaccination campaigns and routine immunization programmes; preventing international spread; and containing outbreaks rapidly.

The campaign is also critical to protect Africa's children – the group in which success is critical to stamp out the disease

“Almost half of the people to be vaccinated are children under 15 years of age [and] this campaign is critical to saving [their] lives,” said Stefan Peterson, the Chief of Health at [UN Children's Fund](#) (UNICEF).

With one injection we can protect a person for life against this dangerous pathogen – *WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus*

As an EYE strategy partner, UNICEF will make vaccines available, advocate for greater political commitment, and provide support in vaccinating children through routine immunization as well as during outbreaks of the disease.

A strategy that works – UN health agency

According to WHO, experience in West Africa demonstrates that the EYE strategy “can work.”

When yellow fever re-emerged as a public health issue in the early 2000s, countries in the region controlled the epidemics through preventive mass campaigns combined with routine immunization.

“No yellow fever epidemics have been recorded since in countries which successfully implemented this approach,” the UN health agency added.

Sustaining the vaccine supply chain

Ensuring sufficient supply of vaccine and sustaining the levels in the mammoth undertaking is critical to the overall campaign's success.

This is where Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, comes in.

Composed of UN agencies and the World Bank, as well as public and private health entities, Gavi has been working to improve global vaccine supply and to ensure there is enough to respond to outbreaks, allow preventive campaigns and that routine immunization functions at full capacity.

“This comprehensive, global strategy offers an unprecedented opportunity to end the devastating yellow fever epidemics that periodically impact Africa,” said Dr. Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi.

“Ensuring that the most vulnerable communities have access to the vaccine through routine systems plays a central role in making this happen.”

[At Asian forum, UN chief calls for more equitable globalization, urgent action on climate change](#)

The world must act to spread the benefits of globalization more fairly while avoiding the perils of protectionism, the United Nations chief said on Tuesday.

"I am deeply convinced that [globalization is irreversible](#)," UN Secretary-General [António Guterres](#) told an Asian forum that brought political, business and civil society leaders together in the southern Chinese town of Boao.

"It has brought many benefits – the integration of the world's economies, the expansion of trade, stunning advances in communications and technology," he said. But "vast numbers of people are being left behind," he added, and "inequality is systemic and growing."

"Our destination must be a fair globalization that leaves no one behind as a pathway to peace and sustainable development," Mr. Guterres told the annual Boao Forum for Asia.

"But one thing must be very clear: we won't make globalization fair by isolationism, protectionism or exclusion," he said. "Global problems need global multilateral solutions."

Mr. Guterres issued his plea as the specter looms of new trade disputes, with the United States planning to impose new tariffs on certain goods from China and other countries.

The Secretary-General also made an urgent call for the world to address the escalating threat of climate change, which he said is going to intensify other global problems such as poverty, humanitarian crises and conflict.

The [Paris Agreement](#), adopted by world leaders in 2015, set a goal of keeping the global temperature rise to below 2 degrees.

"But, let's be clear: climate change is still moving faster than we are," Mr. Guterres said, calling on world leaders to act to "bend the emissions curve." He commended China's global leadership on the issue, citing its ambitious targets on renewable energy.

The United Nations, Mr. Guterres told the forum, has laid out a path to a more prosperous, equitable and environmentally sustainable world with its [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

“With its 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#), the 2030 Agenda is our blueprint for peace, prosperity and partnership for people and the planet,” he said.

[UN migration agency rolls out regional response to ongoing Venezuelans exodus](#)

The United Nations migration agency on Tuesday launched a regional action plan to bolster its response to massive population outflows from Venezuela, amid the worsening political and socio-economic situation in the South American country.

As the exodus has considerably increased over the last two years, an estimated 1.6 million Venezuelans were abroad in 2017, up from 700,000 in 2015, with 1.3 million in the Americas, according to the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)).

“The plan is tailored to specific national contexts across 17 countries including eight South American countries, six Caribbean countries, two Central American countries and Mexico,” explained Marcelo Pisani, IOM Regional Director for Central America, North America and the Caribbean.

The exodus is not letting up. For instance, more than 800 Venezuelans are estimated to be entering Brazil each day, bringing the total arrivals to more than 52,000 since the beginning of 2017, according to the host Government.

IOM’s regional plan seeks to strengthen the response to the needs and priorities expressed by concerned governments and focuses on such activities as data collection and dissemination, capacity building and coordination, direct support and socio-economic integration.

Diego Beltrand, IOM Regional Director for South America, encourages host countries to consider adopting measures, such as regularizing the stay of Venezuelans, and called for the international community to contribute to the regional plan, which requires \$32.3 million to implement.