

[Yemen: UN Security Council condemns Houthi missile attacks towards Saudi cities](#)

Reiterating the need for warring parties in Yemen to resume dialogue, the Security Council has condemned the latest missile attacks by the Houthi rebels targeting several cities of Saudi Arabia, including its capital, Riyadh.

The denouncement against such launches, including the use of ballistic missiles, came in a [Press Statement](#) issued late Wednesday by the Council, which said that the 25 March attacks ‘threatened civilian areas and resulted in at least one fatality.’”

The Statement said the 15-member body “underlined that such attacks pose a serious national security threat to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as well as a wider threat to regional security.”

Since the uprisings in Yemen broke out in early 2011, the UN has been engaged in helping Yemenis to find a peaceful solution. However, on 26 March 2015, a coalition of countries led by Saudi Arabia [intervened militarily](#) at the request of President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi to secure the return of the Government to Sana’a, which had been seized by Houthi militias and allied units of the armed forces.

Three years on, the fighting is raging and the ensuing humanitarian crisis has only deepened in a country that was already one of the region’s poorest.

In the Statement, the Council “reiterated the need for all parties to return to dialogue as the only means of delivering a negotiated political settlement and engage constructively with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, with a view towards swiftly reaching a final and comprehensive agreement to end the conflict and address the ongoing humanitarian crisis.”

[Facebook privacy debate shows most countries not ready for digital economy – UN](#)

Internet user growth is booming and with more people than ever purchasing

goods and services online, protecting their privacy must be a top priority, the United Nations has said.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Organization's main agency dealing with the economics of globalization, said Wednesday the privacy concerns raised after the discovery that a political data firm gained access to millions of Facebook without their consent "vividly illustrates that most countries are ill prepared for the digital economy."

This is all the more worrying given that about 90 per cent of new Internet users over the last five years live in developing countries – about half of which currently lack legislation to protect their privacy.

In addition, with global e-commerce estimated to have reached \$26 trillion in 2016, ensuring that no one is left behind in enjoying its benefits is vital.

"We know that the digital economy can bring great benefits to developing countries, but [we need to address some critical questions to ensure that digitalization leads to the future we want](#)," said Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

Mr. Kituyi's call coincides with the agency's [E-Commerce Week](#) – the leading forum for Governments, private sector, development banks, academia and the civil society to discuss development opportunities and challenges before the evolving digital economy.

Being held from 16-20 April, in Geneva, under the theme *Development Dimensions of Digital Platforms*, the E-Commerce Week will look into the role of evolving technologies to strengthen sustainable development.

Some of its highlights include a high-level dialogue on these platforms as well as Ministerial roundtable discussions.

The Week will also feature events on digital identities and protection of consumers online, conducting trade and e-commerce in the digital era; blockchain technologies; and role of regional banks.

[Revamped UN strategy aims to address root causes of Sahel crisis](#)

The United Nations has reset its action plan to address the root causes of the complex crisis in Africa's Sahel, a region now home to one out of five people worldwide requiring humanitarian assistance, the UN deputy chief said Wednesday.

“The Sahel is a [priority](#) for the Secretary-General and the entire United Nations system,” Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told a conference being held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, to discuss strategies to tackle the Sahel crisis, which leaves 24 million people in need of humanitarian assistance this year.

A largely semi-arid region, the Sahel stretches from Senegal on Africa’s Atlantic coast, through parts of Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Sudan to Eritrea on the Red Sea coast.

It is plagued by the increasing threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism and its spread in surrounding countries and regions. This is compounded – or caused – by weak development progress in the Sahel and the impacts of climate change on food supplies, migration flows and conflict over land and resources.

“The complexity and multi-dimensional nature of these challenges attest to the necessity to respond collectively to the Sahel crisis, and in a more coherent, comprehensive and integrated manner,” Ms. Mohammed explained.

These challenges promoted changes to the [UN Integrated Strategy](#) for the Sahel to better meet the needs of the 10 countries in the region.

The Deputy Secretary-General said five key priorities on addressing the root causes of the crisis are: inclusive and equitable growth; public good services, including access to basic service, governance and rule of law; climate and energy; gender equality and women’s empowerment; and security, including preventing violent extremism, transnational crime and human trafficking. Empowering youth is an overall priority, she added.

[UNICEF scales up psychosocial support for Papua New Guinea’s children after devastating quakes](#)

Children are suffering significant trauma and stress one month after a series of major earthquakes hit Papua New Guinea, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said on Wednesday, warning about the possible long-term negative consequences.

“Children are still being confronted by [fear, loss, confusion](#), family separation, deteriorated living conditions and disruption of social and school activities,” said Karen Allen, UNICEF Representative for Papua New Guinea.

“Psychological damage among children should not be overlooked. It can have a negative impact on children’s brain development, mental health and overall wellbeing in the long-run,” she added.

Ms. Allen elaborated that children who have suffered from trauma have an increased risk of delayed development, mental health disorders, depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide.

Before the earthquakes, available data indicated that children in Papua New Guinea experience some of the highest rates of violence in Asia-Pacific region.

About 80 per cent experience emotional abuse in their lifetime, with some 75 per cent having reported physical abuse.

A recent Médecins Sans Frontières report showed that 12,000 cases of family and sexual violence are treated each year in Tari Family Support Centre in Hela Province, where the worst earthquake damage occurred.

The Government estimates 270,000 people need urgent assistance, including 125,000 children, some 15-20 per cent of whom, according to the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), require psychological support.

Supported by UNICEF Australia, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund and the Government of Australia, UNICEF in Papua New Guinea is currently setting up 26 child-friendly spaces to provide psychosocial support services for more than 14,000 children in the severely-affected areas of Hela and Southern Highland provinces.

These spaces safe places where children can play, learn life skills and regain a sense of normalcy.

Outreach teams will also be dispatched to affected communities to organize recreation activities, such as music and sports, and identify those in need of psychosocial support.

To date, UNICEF has already delivered 23 metric tons of relief supplies to the country, including tents and tarpaulins, water purification tablets and hygiene kits. Additionally, some 12,000 packets of therapeutic food and vaccines to protect 31,700 children against the increasing risk of disease outbreak and malnutrition have been delivered.

Over the next year, UNICEF needs \$14.6 million to help children and families affected by the earthquake.

Unrealistic demands on UN peacekeeping costing lives and credibility – Guterres

As the United Nations continues to send peacekeepers to difficult or war-torn environments like Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, those ‘blue helmets’ will need more and better coordinated support among the actors who authorize and deploy them, Secretary-General António Guterres said on Wednesday.

“UN peacekeepers are often under-equipped, under-prepared and unready [and] there are gaps in command and control, in culture, in equipment and in training,” Mr. Guterres told a Security Council [debate on improving UN peacekeeping operations](#).

“Our peacekeepers are vulnerable, and they are targeted for attack,” he added.

Last year, 59 peacekeepers [lost their lives](#) as a result of malicious act – highest number ever and a sharp increase over the year before when the figure was 34.

Calling UN [peacekeeping operations](#) “a remarkable enterprise of multilateralism and international solidarity,” the UN chief underscored that they nevertheless also suffer as a result of unrealistic demands, and as a result, both lives and credibility are being lost.

“A peacekeeping operation is not an army, or a counter-terrorist force, or a humanitarian agency. It is a tool to create the space for a nationally-owned political solution,” emphasized the Secretary-General.

Please put an end to mandates that look like Christmas trees.
Christmas is over, and [a UN mission] cannot possibly implement 209 mandated tasks – *Secretary-General Guterres*

“Put simply, peace operations cannot succeed if they are deployed instead of a political solution, rather than in support of one.”

He cited the need to concentrate on three key areas: refocusing peacekeeping with realistic expectations; make missions stronger and safer; and mobilize greater support for political solutions and for well-structured, well-equipped, well-trained forces.

“These efforts are critical – but action by the Secretariat alone is not enough [...] our chances of success increase dramatically when we work together with Member States and share burdens, risks and responsibilities,” added Mr.

Guterres.



UN Photo/Loey Felipe

Mark Rutte (centre), Prime Minister of the Netherlands, and President of the Security Council for the month of March, chairs the Council's meeting on UN peacekeeping operations. Secretary-General António Guterres (left), and Jeffrey Feltman (right), Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, attended the meeting.

"We urgently need a quantum leap in collective engagement," he said, announcing the launch of a the Action for Peacekeeping initiative which will mobilize all partners and stakeholders to support peacekeeping efforts.

"As peacekeeping marks its 70th anniversary, I hope we can develop a set of mutually-agreed principles and commitments to create peacekeeping operations fit for the future," he said.

The high-level open debate was convened by the Netherlands in its capacity as the President of the Security Council for the month of March. The meeting was chaired by the country's Prime Minister, Mark Rutte.

[Alongside](#) the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and Fatimata Touré, Director of the Groupe de Recherche d'Etude de Formation Femme Action (GREFFA), a Malian non-governmental organization, also briefed the Council.