

## [DR Congo: Flaring tensions could 'plunge Kasai region into new violence,' UN warns](#)

The United Nations refugee agency warned Tuesday that ongoing instability in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) poses a grave risk to civilian safety, including for several hundred refugees recently returned there from Angola.

Congolese Government forces have regained control of large areas of the Kasai, but there is sporadic fighting between the armed forces and militia groups, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

"Tensions remain high between different ethnic groups, threatening to plunge the region into [new violence](#)," said UNHCR spokesperson Aikaterini Kitidi told reporters in Geneva.

Last month alone, more than 11,000 people fled the conflict. This is in addition to the roughly 900,000 Congolese who have already been internally displaced since the Kasai crisis erupted in 2016. Some 35,000 Congolese have sought refuge in Angola.

UNHCR believes that returns are not yet safe or sustainable, since peace and security are lacking.

However, some 530 Congolese were forced to return from Angola between 25 and 27 February.

"The returns were carried out despite UNHCR's requests to the Angolan authorities to undertake joint screening of the unregistered group," the spokesperson said.

UNHCR urges the Angolan authorities to refrain from further forcible returns of Congolese to their country. Should conditions change, UNHCR stands ready to assist the authorities in DRC and Angola in voluntary repatriation discussions.

Support for the returnees to rebuild their houses is often absent, as humanitarian funding does not at present allow for a major rebuilding programme.

For 2018, UNHCR has requested \$368.7 million to help those affected by the crisis in the country. So far, just one per cent of this has been received.

---

# 'Instead of responding to crises, we need to invest far more in prevention,' says UN chief

The imbalance between spending on conflict, and spending on peace, must be tackled head-on, Secretary-General António Guterres said Monday, urging the United Nations to rally all international actors “for our efforts across the peace continuum – from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustainable long-term development.”

“Two years ago, the General Assembly and the Security Council came together to send a clear joint message: while Member States have primary responsibility for building and maintaining peace, we can all do more to strengthen the foundations of stability, wellbeing and cohesion,” he [told](#) an informal gathering of the Assembly where he presented his report on [Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace](#).

Noting that the UN must offer “coherent, comprehensive and integrated support, working with Member States and other partners, before, during, and after conflict,” he informed the room that his report puts these messages into practice.

He discussed how inclusive and sustainable development makes a critical contribution to conflict prevention.

“Sustaining peace is both a goal and a process that relies on building a common and cohesive vision of a society that takes the needs of all into account,” he stated, noting that “the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) is our global path to a safer, more sustainable and resilient world.”

Sustaining peace is both a goal and a process – *Secretary-General Guterres*

Mr. Guterres stressed that gender considerations must remain front and centre in all efforts to sustain peace, noting that the importance and effectiveness of women’s leadership and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding are not in doubt.

“We need to increase women’s representation in a systematic and meaningful way that goes far beyond tokenism. Women must be in decision-making roles at all levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict,” he said.

The UN chief underscored that national efforts to build and sustain peace are more effective if they are inclusive.

“This must start from a shared understanding of the risks that a country or region faces, and of how we can support efforts by Member States to build resilience against these risks,” he stated.

He also argued that a failure to adequately finance peacebuilding would undermine other efforts to save lives, stabilize countries in crisis, alleviate suffering and protect the vulnerable.

Reminding the Assembly that the world is witnessing human suffering on a scale hard to comprehend, he noted that in the past 10 years, the international community had spent \$233 billion on humanitarian response, peacekeeping and hosting refugees.

“If the financial cost is unsustainable, the human cost is unbearable,” he maintained. “Instead of responding to crises, we need to invest far more in prevention. Prevention works, saves lives and is cost-effective.”

Mr. Guterres called the [Peacebuilding Fund](#) “a critical tool” to achieve this, urging all able to do so, increase the Fund’s resources to \$500 million annually.

He explained that other innovative financing solutions were also being explored, including web-based mechanisms and crowdfunding.

“These proposals should be seen firmly in the context of peace and security, and should not impact on funds for sustainable development in any way,” Mr. Guterres emphasized.

He expressed his hope the Assembly would consider the report at the [High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace](#) – from 24 to 25 April – and continue its efforts to make the UN system more effective.

Also addressing the informal meeting, General Assembly President Miroslav Lajčák, mentioned some of the calls made through 2016 resolutions.

“First, we called for a new approach,” he said. “For more capacity for peacebuilding and sustaining peace, on the ground.”

Second, he evoked the call for financing sustained peace, “Not for a month, or a year – but over the long-term.”

Thirdly, he turned to new partnerships in which national stakeholders are “in the driving seat.”

And, finally, for all to take place in a comprehensive, and integrated way.

Mr. Lajčák called the Secretary-General’s report “a strong guide on how we can go forward” and the High-Level Meeting an opportunity “to chart the course ahead.”

---

# UN chief appoints former New York Mayor as Special Envoy for Climate Action

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Monday appointed Michael R. Bloomberg, the former Mayor of New York City, as his Special Envoy for Climate Action.

“[\[Mr. Bloomberg’s actions have\] has made an enormous difference](#), and makes us believe that we will soon be running faster than climate change, that we will soon be starting to defeat climate change, that the [Paris Agreement](#) [on climate change] can be fully implemented but with an enhanced ambition,” Secretary-General Guterres told reporters at UN Headquarters in New York.

“We need that enhanced ambition in order to make sure that we reach the end of the century with an increase in temperature of about 1.5 and below 2 [degrees Celsius],” he added, referring to the central aim of the three-year-old Paris Accord, which set the stage for all countries to take ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so.

According to the UN chief’s spokesperson, Mr. Bloomberg – who earlier served as the UN Special Envoy on Cities and Climate Change – will [support](#) the Secretary-General’s climate strategy and efforts toward the planned 2019 Climate Summit at UN Headquarters, which seeks to mobilize stronger and more ambitious action towards 2020 climate targets.

The Special Envoy will leverage efforts in key areas of the Climate Summit to encourage rapid and enhanced implementation of the Paris Agreement in the context of sustainable development.

The note further stated that Secretary-General will be engaging and inviting leaders from Governments, businesses, finance and civil society organizations with a view to bending the emissions curve by 2020 and accelerating the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

“The Secretary-General and Mr. Bloomberg share the perspective that the emissions gap needs to be closed soon to limit global temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius. Climate Action, including those by cities and sub-national actors, play an essential role in driving ambition on climate change,” it added.

In addition to having served as the former UN Special Envoy on Cities and Climate Change, Mr. Bloomberg was appointed by the Chair of the Financial Stability Board Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures.

The Task Force – which has finished its work – has developed voluntary, climate-related financial disclosures for use by companies in providing

information to lenders, insurers, investors and other stakeholders.

From 2002-2013, Mr. Bloomberg served as the 108th Mayor of the City of New York. He began his career in 1966 at Salomon Brothers, and launched the financial news and information company Bloomberg LP in 1981.

---

## [Senegal: Partnering for peace with the UN in some of the most challenging places](#)

More than 100,000 United Nations peacekeepers are serving in the cause of peace around the world today. They do so at great personal risk and in harsh conditions. In places such as the Central African Republic and South Sudan, peacekeepers save thousands of lives, protect civilians against violent attacks and support the delivery of crucial humanitarian assistance.

Senegal has partnered with the UN Peacekeeping to participate in peace operations in numerous hotspots. Currently, the country is the eighth largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping, with more than 3,000 troops and police across six missions. Over the years, 79 Senegalese personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice, losing their lives in service to peace.

Among the most notable Senegalese heroes is Captain Mbaye Diagne of Senegal, who saved hundreds of lives in 1994 while serving as a peacekeeper in Rwanda before succumbing to a fatal injury incurred while on duty.

In May 2014, the UN Security Council created the [Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal](#) to honour military, police and civilian United Nations or associated personnel who demonstrate exceptional courage in the face of extreme danger. Two years later, the inaugural medal was awarded to Captain Diagne's family at a ceremony at UN Headquarters in New York.

---

## [Urgent need to step-up protection of children in crises – UN rights wing](#)

Children in crisis situations face a raft of challenges – from family separation and forced recruitment to sexual exploitation and abject poverty –

the deputy United Nations human rights chief said Monday, urging immediate action to protect children from the consequences of “all too adult failings.”

“In 2016 alone, 43 million children across 63 countries required [humanitarian assistance](#),” Kate Gilmore, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the annual day-long meeting on the rights of the child, *Protecting the Rights of the Child in Humanitarian Situations*.

“And, today, 357 million children live in conflict zones – up by some 75 per cent since last century’s last decade and accounting for one in six children globally,” she added.

From floods, earthquakes and hurricanes to man-made political and economic instability, and armed conflicts between and among State and non-State parties globally, the costs of adult misconduct and the consequences their misbehaviour as political, social and economic guardians have let down millions of children.

Countless unknown children have lost their lives in terrified transit on the Mediterranean sea; thousands have been violated in Myanmar’s Rakhine state; girls have been subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation by Blue-helmeted troops; and others violated by numbers of religious and secular aid-workers.

“The tragedy of these all-too-adult failings are borne by children, but the shame is surely not children’s to bear,” she stated, pointing out that children are the vast majority of the populations most affected by conflict, most afflicted by abject poverty, most exposed to climate change.

“In flight, children face additional sexual abuse and exploitation, child labour and trafficking. In transit, they meet further abuse, neglect and deprivation of essential services,” she continued.

“At reception, they more often meet unlawful detention, xenophobia and an absence of care for the physical and mental trauma to which they have been subjected,” she maintained.

Recalling that children make up half of the world’s displaced people and more than half of its refugees, Ms. Gilmore emphasized: “No matter where they are, nor the status of their movement within or across borders – irregular as that may be – a child’s rights never abandons them.”

However, the tolerance for children’s abuse appears so high that no matter what is learned of its scale, breadth, or long-lasting damage, the world struggles to put its responsibilities to children front and centre.

Questioning why, in 2018, the Secretary-General should need to confirm the UN’s zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse of children and adults, Ms. Gilmore stated: “The UN must own its shame.”

“International human rights law applies at all times, in all settings for all peoples of all ages,” she underscored, noting that in the seventh decade of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), “we must strongly affirm that

human rights hold and human rights persist, even in humanitarian settings and specifically for children.”

Children’s interests be put at the forefront of decision-making processes.

“We must bring children in – bring children to sit at the tables of decision making and participation and specifically so for the design, implementation and monitoring of our humanitarian assistance activities,” she urged.