

UN chief welcomes second anniversary of 'Implementation Day' for Iran nuclear deal

17 January 2018 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Wednesday welcomed the second anniversary of the day when Iran was confirmed to have taken a series of nuclear-related actions under the nuclear agreement reached with key countries in 2015.

“This marks another [significant milestone](#)” in the historic agreement, said UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric in a statement, noting that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – reached by Iran, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union – constitutes a major achievement of nuclear non-proliferation and diplomacy, and has contributed to regional and international peace and security.

The day, known as “Implementation Day,” occurred on 16 January 2016 when the Security Council received the report from the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)) confirming that Iran has taken a series of nuclear-related actions specified in the JCPOA’s annex.

“The Secretary-General remains convinced that the JCPOA is the best way to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear programme and to realize the promised tangible economic benefits for the Iranian people,” Mr. Dujarric said.

“The Secretary-General calls for concerns regarding its implementation to be addressed through the mechanisms established by the agreement,” and “believes that issues not directly related to the JCPOA should be addressed without prejudice to preserving the agreement and its accomplishments,” Mr. Dujarric added.

US funding cuts for UN Palestine refugee agency put vital education, health programmes at risk

17 January 2018 – The decision by the United States to withhold more than half its annual funding commitment to the United Nations relief agency providing aid for Palestine refugees threatens “one of the most successful and innovative human development endeavours in the Middle-East,” the head of the body said Wednesday, warning that the rights and dignity of an entire

community are at stake.

In a [statement](#) Wednesday, Pierre Krähenbühl, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, said that US government announced a contribution of \$60 million for the UN agency, down from \$350 million total contribution by the country in 2017.

The reduction has endangered the agency's programmes across the region, he added.

"At stake is the access of 525,000 boys and girls in 700 UNRWA schools, and their future. At stake is the dignity and human security of millions of Palestine refugees [and] access of refugees to primary health care, including pre-natal care and other life-saving services," added Mr. Krähenbühl in the statement.

He further noted that the reduced contribution "also impacts regional security at a time when the Middle East faces multiple risks and threats, notably that of further radicalization."

In the statement, the Commissioner-General called on the agency's partners, including host countries and donors to continue to support UNRWA and in creating new funding alliances and initiatives to ensure the continued effectiveness of its programmes.

He also noted that a global fundraising campaign will be launched in the days to come to seek commitment for UNRWA initiatives, including its schools and clinics throughout 2018 and beyond.

Also in the statement, Mr. Krähenbühl assured Palestine refugees in all of the agency's fields of operations that UNRWA would continue to work with "absolute determination" to ensure that its services continue.

"UNRWA stands for hope, for respect of rights and for dignity. When things are difficult, our determination grows. When the way seems lost, we invest all our energy in search of new paths, keeping our eyes on the horizon and looking for different solutions," he stressed.

UNRWA programmes important as a factor of stability – UN chief

[Speaking to the press](#) Tuesday at UN Headquarters in New York, prior to the announcement by the US of reduction in its funding to UNRWA, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres underlined the importance of the UN agency's support programmes, not only for the well-being of the refugees but also its importance as a factor of stability, something which he noted is the "opinion shared by most international observers, including some Israeli ones."

"So, if UNRWA will not be in a position to provide the vital services and the emergency forms of support that it has been providing, this will create a very, very serious problem. And we'll do everything we can to avoid the situation to occur," said Mr. Guterres.

UN poised to scale up support for Libya's post-conflict transition, Security Council told

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17 January 2018 –

The United Nations is implementing its Action Plan for Libya to create the necessary conditions for the completion of the North African country's post-conflict transition, the head of UN mission there said Wednesday.

"The United Nations is poised to increase its presence in Libya," Ghassan Salamé, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya ([UNSMIL](#)), told the Security Council [via video link](#), noting that more staff will be working in the capital, Tripoli, and they will visit more communities across the nation.

"It is only by truly understanding the country that we can succeed in the implementation of the Action Plan for Libya and help its citizens put an end to a too long transition," he added.

Following six months of armed conflict in Libya in 2011, the UN established UNSMIL, a political mission, to support the country's transitional authorities in their post-conflict efforts.

Mr. Salamé said that the second anniversary of the [Libyan Political Agreement](#), on 17 December 2017 passed peacefully due in no small part to the unity of the Security Council, which, in its recent [Presidential Statement](#) declared that the international community stands behind the Agreement and will not accept attempts to undermine it.

However, the specter of violence remains present; clashes occurred recently between forces affiliated with two rival communities in the area at the eastern vicinity of Tripoli. Tension has also heightened around the city of Derna.

The efforts of UNSMIL have been pivotal to the relative quiet Libya has enjoyed over the last months. These extremely time-consuming conflict prevention efforts must continue if hope in the political process is to be maintained, he stressed.

"Libya needs a competent and efficient government," he said, "One which can deliver the public services the people desperately need. One that is able to unify the institutions of the country. One which can provide order and

justice. One that will preside over the elections that will end the transition.”

Mr. Salamé said that the Mission’s work focused on supporting efforts to adopt a new constitution, achieve national reconciliation and hold elections.

“The transition cannot definitively end until Libya stands upon a true constitution,” he said, noting that the draft constitution is undergoing judicial review.

The fabric of Libyan society is frayed, and requires meaningful reconciliation if it is to be mended. The UN has successfully facilitated numerous dialogues between representatives of local communities formerly in conflict while seeking to include the major players and groups previously marginalized in the political process.

The UN has been able to provide extensive technical support for voter registration, with six hundred thousand Libyans newly registered to vote in just over six weeks. The number of people on the electoral register now exceeds two million, and continues to rise.

Humanitarian crisis

The political crisis in Libya has been accompanied by an equal humanitarian crisis. The UN will launch a humanitarian response plan next week.

A matter of great humanitarian concern is the dire situation many migrants in Libya continue to face. In just the last weeks of 2017, thousands of migrants have been voluntarily returned for humanitarian purposes from Libya to their countries of origin, but thousands more migrants remain arbitrarily detained in centres, many of them in inhumane conditions.

Individual predatory agendas continue to dominate at the expense of the collective good, he said.

“Conflict over resources is indeed at the heart of the Libyan crisis,” he said, pledging that the Mission will not spare any effort to advocate that national wealth be directed toward the provision of public services rather than to special interests.

Mr. Salamé said that UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, who visited Libya from 9 to 12 January, urged Libyan interlocutors to truly commit to working together and implement the Action Plan to create the necessary conditions to end the transitional period.

World cannot stand idle as millions in DR Congo 'suffer in silence,' says UN agency

17 January 2018 – The dramatic deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic over the past year has been further complicated by recent floods and health crises, the United Nations migration agency said Wednesday, appealing for urgent funding to ensure continued assistance and protection for millions in need.

“The humanitarian [situation in the DRC is at breaking point](#) as is our capacity to respond due to extremely limited funding,” said Jean-Philippe Chauzy, said the head of operations for the UN International Organization for Migration in the country.

“The stories that Congolese, who have been forced from their homes, are telling us are bone-chilling. They have been through so much already – torture, rape and murder of their loved ones – we cannot stand idly by as they suffer in silence,” he added.

Speaking exclusively to *UN News*, Mr. Chauzy said: “If we don’t get that level of funding then, there are people who will die. I have to be clear with this. People will die.”

He said that the severe malnutrition rates in the Kasai have increased by 750 per cent largely because the people in the region have been displaced so often, three planting seasons have been missed.

“[So] if you don’t provide that kind of food assistance now – to kind of bridge that gap – people who have been living off foraging in the forest, they will suffer, and the most vulnerable will die first. Children will die first. And that’s a fact,” he warned.

Across the country, some 4.3 million remain displaced, of them 1.7 were forced from their homes last year. In 2018, over 13 million are feared to be in need of humanitarian assistance throughout the country. Children, young men, women and ethnic minorities are among the hardest hit, and nutrition, food-security and protection greatest needs.

Particularly worrying is that an estimated 4.7 million women and girls could be exposed to gender-based violence in crisis stricken areas.

However, in face of such daunting challenges, [IOM’s](#) response appeal is severely underfunded. Since the release of its appeal, only \$3.5 million was received in 2017 and only 47 per cent of the overall inter-agency [Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (for 2017) was funded.

“Funding levels are at their lowest for many years, with DRC seeming to have ‘fallen off the map’ for many donors, at a time when we are facing vastly

increased humanitarian needs,” added Mr. Chauzy, hoping that the same does not continue through 2018.

The UN agency has [appealed](#) for \$75 million to urgently meet the growing needs of displaced Congolese and the communities hosting them in the eastern and south-central provinces of North and South Kivu, Tanganyika and the Kasai.

Its interventions in 2018 will focus on camp coordination management; displacement tracking; shelter and non-food items (NFIs); water, sanitation and hygiene; health; and protection.

According to IOM, a revised inter-agency Humanitarian Response Plan is to be released Thursday, 18 January.

[Somalia: UN, partners seek \\$1.6 billion to protect millions of lives from drought](#)

17 January 2018 – While Somalia, with the international community’s help, averted famine last year, long-term solutions for drought, conflict and displacement must still be found, the United Nations office in the country said Wednesday, launching the 2018 humanitarian response plan, which calls for \$1.6 billion to protect the lives of 5.4 million people.

“I am proud that we averted a possible famine last year. Lasting solutions [...], however, out of our reach, and much more must be done to eliminate the [looming threat of famine](#) in this country,” said the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Peter de Clercq, in the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

With that in mind, he called for tackling humanitarian needs while simultaneously looking at longer-term solutions. “If we do not continue to save lives and in parallel build resilience, then we have only delayed a famine, not prevented one,” warned Mr. de Clercq.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), the plan prioritizes immediate relief operations in areas with significant numbers of people living in crisis and emergency situations, and now includes a strategy to address protection gaps for those most vulnerable, such as the internally displaced, women and children.

In 2017, displacement reached unprecedented levels, with food security needs nearly doubling the five-year average. The number of Somalis on the brink of famine has grown tenfold since this time last year. An estimated 1.2 million children are projected to be malnourished in 2018, 232,000 of whom will face life-threatening severe acute malnutrition.

To mitigate future crises, humanitarians are working with development partners and Somali authorities to address the underlying causes of recurring crises, including food insecurity and mass displacement.

“With important progress made on the political and governance fronts, Somalia is on a positive trajectory, despite ongoing crises. The country has more effective institutions than it has for decades,” said Mr. de Clercq.

However, he noted that these gains are reversible and must be protected. “With continued international support, we can break the cycle of recurrent crises that undermine the peacebuilding and State-building process in Somalia,” he concluded.