

Cyclone, monsoon seasons threaten half a million Rohingya children in overcrowded camps – UNICEF

16 January 2018 – As the Bay of Bengal region gears up for cyclone and monsoon seasons, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) is warning that more than 500,000 Rohingya children already living in “horrific” conditions in makeshift settlements in Bangladesh may face compounded risks of disease and displacement.

“What is already a [dire humanitarian situation risks becoming a catastrophe](#),” Edouard Beigbeder, the head of UNICEF programmes in Bangladesh said Tuesday, warning on the impact of the approaching cyclone and monsoon seasons.

“Hundreds of thousands of children are already living in horrific conditions, and they will face an even greater risk of disease, flooding, landslides and further displacement,” he added.

More than 4,000 suspected cases of diphtheria have been reported among the refugees – with 32 deaths, including at least 24 children.

UNICEF and partners have launched a diphtheria vaccination campaign, and are working to provide access to safe water and sanitation facilities, but overcrowding and the growing risk of extreme weather increases the risk of further outbreaks.

“Unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene conditions can lead to cholera outbreaks and to Hepatitis E, a deadly disease for pregnant women and their babies, while standing water pools can attract malaria-carrying mosquitos. Keeping children safe from disease must be an absolute priority,” Mr. Beigbeder added.

In addition to the increased threat of disease outbreaks, cyclones can cause flooding and landslides. With little time to prepare before the cyclone season begins in March, even a moderate storm could have a devastating impact.

Tropical cyclones generally strike Bangladesh from March through July, and September through December – with the greatest number of storms arriving in May and October.

In May 2017, Cyclone Mora caused widespread damage when it barrelled through the region, including destroying some 25 per cent of Rohingya refugee camp shelters.

Additionally, June monsoons threaten landslides and floods, which may also render severe damage on shelters, water systems, latrines and other infrastructure.

Since 25 August, widespread violence in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state has forced over 650,000 members of the Rohingya community to flee their homes and seek shelter across the border in Bangladesh. A number of UN agencies, together with humanitarian partners and the Bangladesh Government have been providing them with life-saving support.

[UN condemns twin suicide attacks in Baghdad](#)

15 January 2018 – Strongly condemning two terrorist attacks in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has underscored the Organization's support for the country in its fight against terrorism.

In a [statement attributable](#) to his spokesperson, Secretary-General Guterres reiterated that the "UN will continue to stand by the Government and people of Iraq in their efforts to fight terrorism and rebuild their country."

According to media reports, at least 35 individuals were killed and another 90 injured when suicide bombers detonated two explosives in a busy square in the city during the morning rush hour.

Earlier today, Jan Kubis, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and the head of the UN Assistance Mission in the country ([UNAMI](#)) also denounced the attack and said that despite a defeat on the battlefield, terrorist groups continue to pose a threat, in particular to ordinary citizens.

"I urge greater vigilance by the authorities and unity among the Iraqi people to thwart the aims of terrorists like Da'esh [the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or ISIL] who seek to derail the country's recovery after a long conflict," said Mr. Kubis in a [tweet](#) by UNAMI.

Both the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Iraq expressed their sympathies to the families of the victims and wished those injured a speedy recovery to those injured.

[PODCAST: Tea and empathy – Refugee](#)

ZamZam Yusuf's extraordinary journey

15 January 2018 – Somali refugee ZamZam Yusuf has a message for any neighbours who think she doesn't have the right to call Leicester, in the English Midlands, home.

"I would like to offer you a cup of tea" at my house, says the 30-year-old mother-of-four, who came to United Nations Headquarters in New York in January, as world leaders prepare to debate the first-ever [Global Compact for Migration](#).

Her university, De Montfort, in the United Kingdom, has taken the academic lead in furthering the UN's [Together](#) campaign on behalf of the millions who are on the move, whose basic rights are being denied.

A summit in New York on 9 January aimed to raise awareness and encourage debate on the current challenges faced by refugees in local communities. Led by De Montfort, the universities shared ideas for practical ways they can use skills, experience and voluntary power on their campuses to support those in need in their local areas.

Too often, said UN chief António Guterres – launching his 2018 report, [Making Migration Work for All](#) – their positive contribution is being overshadowed by the plight of a "desperate minority" forced to live in the shadows by countries that violate their rights.

ZamZam came in to our the [Lid is on](#) studio in New York to describe her extraordinary journey – just one of the millions that are being taken each year, in search of a better life.

OECD-UN forum on strengthening collection and use of migration data kicks off in Paris

15 January 2018 – International organizations, policy experts, statisticians and civil society came together on Monday at a United Nations-supported forum in Paris to answer the global call for more accurate and timely information on migration flows and examine how improved data collection can feed into better policymaking.

[Organized jointly](#) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the

first [International Forum on Migration Statistics](#) will also explore innovations in data collection and strengthening capacity in developing countries to produce and improve migration statistics.

“It is important that we speak today about the fundamental need for better migration data,” said William Lacy Swing, the Director-General of the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM), at the Forum.

“We also need urgently, however, to engage a dialogue on a Global Action Plan – a plan to ensure the availability to policymakers and others comprehensive national, regional and global data and statistical analysis of trends in migration – a phenomenon as old as humankind and, today, one of the defining phenomena of our time.”



IOM Director General William Lacy Swing (at podium) at the first International Forum on Migration Statistics in Paris, organized jointly by IOM, OECD and UNDESA. Photo: OECD

Running through Tuesday, the Forum will [explore](#) improvements the production and use of migration data and overcoming challenges in the sector, as well as also delve deep into specific themes.

Also on the agenda is a specific plenary session is devoted to exploring how public opinions on migration and migrants are formed, and how these can change by facing well-communicated facts.

Other topics include use Big Data for migration, as well as building the capacity for emerging economies and developing countries to produce migration statistics.

According to IOM, the Forum aims to become a bi-annual event for producers and users of migration-related data to share their views, identify gaps and highlight needs for training and capacity building.

Policies concerning migration must be grounded in data

In a related [statement](#), Mr. Swing also underscored that accurate and complete migration data is critical for sound policies concerning it.

“We are finding that without access to reliable, comprehensive and global data, managing migration policy becomes a game of blind man’s bluff,” he stressed. in a recent statement, underscoring the importance of data for sound policies.

However, he added, despite efforts by Governments and the international community, “significant gaps” in migration data remain globally.

National population censuses – traditionally the main source of data on migration – are infrequent and cannot therefore provide timely information. Furthermore, migrants, especially those on irregular status, often are absent

from household surveys, or are hard to track through administrative data sources.

In the statement, Mr. Swing noted that the volume of data available today is larger than at any point in human history. While there are incredible possibilities of the use of this so called “Big Data” – data generated, often inadvertently, by users on digital devices, web-platforms or other “smart” sources – there are also significant challenges, in particular those over privacy, ethical and human rights given the way they are generated or collected.

“Concerns over the use of Big Data for any purpose, including research, need to be identified and adequately addressed by policy-makers, for instance through the creation of a regulatory system setting out conditions and limits to access to and use of certain kinds of data,” suggested Mr. Swing.

The [Portal](#) aims to serve as a unique access point to timely, comprehensive migration statistics and reliable information about migration data globally.

[In Afghanistan, Security Council reiterates support for efforts to restore peace and progress](#)

15 January 2018 – The United Nations Security Council, during a weekend mission to Afghanistan, reiterated its support for the Central Asian country’s efforts to restore peace, stability and progress.

Council members aimed to get a first-hand account of progress made by the Afghan National Unity Government, with the assistance of the international community, in addressing a wide range of interconnected challenges and to learn how the Security Council could further assist efforts on the ground.

According to the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), despite assurances of continued international assistance for its security and development needs, Afghanistan remains [a country undergoing conflict](#), which threatens the sustainability of its achievements.

DPA says peace negotiations between the Afghan Government and armed opposition groups are the only alternative for ending the conflict and the region and the broader international community have a stake and a role to play to help to create the conditions for peace.

The Council’s visit, from 13 to 15 January, was the first one since 2010 and came ahead of the Kabul Process meeting, scheduled for February 2018, where

the Government is expected to present its plans for a more structured peace and security process, coordinated with the wider region.

In the capital, Kabul, the delegation held meetings with senior officials, including Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

The delegation also met with the leadership of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)) and the Resolute Support Mission of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

According to a note issued by UNAMA, discussions during the visit focused on the political, security, socio-economic and human rights situation in the country, with all parties underlining the importance of an inclusive Afghan-led and -owned peace process for long-term stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Council members also reiterated their support for the Government's reform initiatives, particularly to counter corruption and accelerate regional cooperation.

They expressed concerns about the security environment in Afghanistan, including the presence of Al-Qaeda, Taliban and ISIL-Khorasan Province-affiliated fighters, as well as about the nexus of terrorism and organized crime. All parties reiterated the need for greater international and regional security cooperation.

The delegation was briefed on the preparations for the upcoming parliamentary and district council elections in 2018. Council members underscored the importance of continued progress on electoral reforms and towards the holding of free and fair, as well as timely, credible and inclusive parliamentary and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019, respectively. They reiterated the need to increase women's participation in the election.

Need for regional and integrated security and development approach

Council members emphasized the need to adopt a regional and integrated security and development approach, which Kazakhstan is proposing as the path to sustainable development, durable peace and stability in the region.

Discussions in Kabul stressed the need to view Afghanistan not as a threat to security in the region but as an important partner. It is critical to integrate the economies of Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, including Central Asian States, through enhanced interaction and connectivity, by implementing regional infrastructure, trade, investment, transit and transportation projects.

Afghan authorities expressed hope for the rapid implementation of those projects.

Led by Kazakhstan, the delegation included representatives of the United States, Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and

China.

Kazakhstan, the first Central Asian country elected to the Security Council, holds the body's presidency in January 2018.