

Security Council further tightens sanctions against DPR Korea

22 December 2017 – The United Nations Security Council today imposed new sanctions on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), increasing the depth of measures imposed on the country in the wake of its continued nuclear and ballistic weapons programme, including the ballistic missile launch on 28 November.

In a unanimously adopted resolution, the 15-member Council also decided that all UN Member States shall “prohibit” the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to the DPRK of crude oil, refined petroleum products, and various types of equipment and raw materials.

The restrictions also applied with respect to the Member States’ territories, nationals, flagged vessels, aircraft, pipelines, rail lines, or vehicles and whether or not originating in their territories.

The Security Council also decided that Member States shall repatriate all DPRK nationals earning income in that Member State’s jurisdiction and all DPRK government safety oversight attachés monitoring DPRK workers abroad “immediately but no later than 24 months,” unless the Member State determined that the national’s repatriation is prohibited under applicable national and international law, or if that national is a national of that Member State.

Further, in relation to maritime interdiction of cargo vessels, the Council decided that Member States shall seize, inspect, and impound any vessel in their ports if the Member State has reasonable grounds to believe that the vessel was involved in activities, or the transport of items, prohibited by relevant UN resolutions.

On the political side, the Security Council expressed its “deep concern” at the grave hardship that the people in the DPRK are subjected to and condemns the country for pursuing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles instead of the welfare of its people.

Also in the resolution, the Council affirmed that it shall keep the country’s actions under “continuous review” and that it is determined to take further “significant measures” in the event of a further nuclear test or launch.

UN chief welcomes unity in the Security Council

Following the adoption of the resolution, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres welcomed the continued unity of the Security Council and noted that it is essential to achieve the goal of denuclearisation and create the space for diplomatic initiatives aimed at achieving it in a peaceful manner.

In a statement attributable to his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres supported the Council’s desire for a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the

situation, as well as its urging of further work to reduce tensions.

“The only way forward for a comprehensive peaceful and political solution requires de-escalation and open communication channels, now,” read the statement.

“[The Secretary-General] reaffirms his commitment to working with all parties to this end [and] calls upon all Member States to ensure the full implementation of the relevant resolutions and to redouble efforts to make 2018 a pivotal year for the achievement of sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula,” it added.

[Suspected cholera cases in Yemen surpass one million, reports UN health agency](#)

22 December 2017 – The total number of suspected cholera cases in Yemen has crossed one million, the United Nations World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) reported today, urging greater efforts to tackle the outbreak and deal with the deteriorating health situation in the war-torn nation.

“The epidemic is not yet over and more concerted efforts need to be deployed to ensure that it is controlled in the immediate term and prevented from reoccurring in the near future,” WHO spokesperson Tarik Jašarevic told a press briefing in Geneva.

Responding to the deadly outbreak in late April, WHO set up treatment centres, provided supplies, trained health workers, and worked with local communities on ways to prevent the disease.

These efforts resulted in tens of thousands of lives being saved.

According to WHO, 99.7 per cent of the people who became sick with suspected cholera and who could access health services survived.

The UN agency continues to support dehydration treatment centres across the country as well as collect stool samples for lab testing, transport them to labs, meet operational costs and make available supplies and reagents.

It also continues surveillance, detection and treatment work.

One outbreak after another

With its health and sanitation systems in near ruin, Yemen is also now experiencing a rapidly spreading diphtheria outbreak, which has affected 18 of its 22 governorates. About 333 clinically diagnosed cases (mostly in Ibb

and Hodeida governorates) have been confirmed.

Diphtheria – a highly-infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Corynebacterium diphtheria* that infects the throat and upper airways, and produces a toxin affecting other organs – can be prevented with vaccines and treated with antitoxins and antibiotics.

But lack of medicines in the country mean the number of cases could rise.

UN response amid ongoing challenges

Responding to this latest outbreak, the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) [airlifted](#) some 6 million doses of essential vaccines for children, include inoculations for diphtheria.

WHO has also delivered antibiotics and 1,000 vials of life-saving diphtheria antitoxins to affected governorates.

Similarly, the UN International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) has also upped its response, providing more than 20,000 medical consultations to internally displaced people and other conflict-affected Yemenis via 22 mobile health teams and two permanent health facilities.

If [we] cannot bring in medicines and medical supplies, we cannot save lives
WHO spokesperson

But the fact that the outbreak is occurring amid a complex emergency setting with violent clashes and restrictions of transport of supplies, including medical supplies, means response efforts are extremely difficult.

Underscoring the need for unhindered and sustained access to all areas of Yemen to save lives, the WHO spokesperson asked the Yemeni authorities and all parties to the conflict to facilitate the importation and distribution of medicines and medical supplies, as well as clearances for health partners to reach and treat affected communities.

“If [we] cannot bring in medicines and medical supplies, we cannot save lives,” he stressed.

[Secretary-General extends mandate of UN-backed Lebanon tribunal for three more years](#)

22 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres extended

for another three years the mandate of the tribunal set up to try those accused of carrying out the February 2005 attack in Beirut, which killed 22 people, including the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafiq Hariri, and injured many others.

The trial in absentia of four individuals indicted over the killing began in January 2014 at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which is based near The Hague in the Netherlands, and is currently ongoing.

The Tribunal's mandate has been extended from 1 March 2018 for a period of three years, or upon the completion of the cases before it if sooner.

"The United Nations looks forward to the completion of the mandate of the Special Tribunal in a timely manner," spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said in a statement.

The Tribunal also has jurisdiction over attacks carried out in Lebanon between 1 October 2004 and 12 December 2005 if they are connected to the attack of 14 February 2005 and are of a similar nature and gravity.

[Sharp rise in refugee arrivals to Uganda as fresh violence flares in DR Congo – UN agency](#)

22 December 2017 – Fresh violence in the Ituri province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) forced over 2,650 refugees to cross over into neighbouring Uganda this week, five times the usual number of arrivals, according to the United Nations refugee agency.

The new arrivals to Uganda, who are mostly women and children, are reportedly fleeing intercommunal violence in Djugu territory in Ituri province, Cécile Pouilly, spokesperson for the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters in Geneva.

"Since Monday, there were reports of [houses being scorched](#) in the area, and people attacked with machetes and firearms," Ms. Pouilly said.

"More than 20 villages were abandoned due to the fear of reprisals. Services have been paralysed and panic engulfed the population."

The majority of refugees cross Lake Albert on rickety fishing vessels to arrive to Sebagoro, a village some 270 kilometres northwest of the Ugandan capital, Kampala. About 650 refugees arrived in two boats this morning. This route is being used by a large number of refugees for the first time after a tragic shipwreck in 2014 that left over 200 dead.

“Refugees report that many more people are gathering on the Congolese side of Lake Albert waiting for their turn to cross, despite the journey’s high cost,” stated Ms. Pouilly.

UNHCR is stepping up its capacity inside Uganda to meet the refugees’ needs. “We are supporting the authorities to receive the new arrivals and transfer them to Kyangwali settlement, some 50 kilometers to the east. There, refugees are registered, medically screened and provided with hot meals and basic relief items,” Ms. Pouilly said.

However, the agency’s operation in Uganda is currently only 39 per cent funded, and more resources are urgently needed to upgrade the reception capacity and assist the new arrivals.

[New UN centre boosts use of real-time data to better respond to humanitarian crises](#)

22 December 2017 – With more than 135 million crisis-affected people across the globe in need of humanitarian assistance, the United Nations today opened a data centre that will give aid organizations and relief workers access to vital information they need to make responsible and informed decisions.

“Accurate data is the lifeblood of good policy and decision-making. Obtaining it, and sharing it across hundreds of organizations, in the middle of a humanitarian emergency, is complicated and time-consuming – but it is absolutely crucial,” said UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, speaking at the opening of the [Centre for Humanitarian Data](#) in The Hague in the Netherlands.

“This Centre will make that difficult task far easier, speeding up the flow of data from collection to application,” he added.

Managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), the Centre is focused on [four key areas](#): data services, to make data accessible; data policy, to ensure data is used responsibly; data literacy, to improve how data is used; and network engagement, to ensure human-centred approach.

Accurate data is the lifeblood of good policy and decision-making
Secretary-General António Guterres

One of the primary activities of the Centre is managing the data-sharing

platform, [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#) (HDX), and its data standard, the [Humanitarian Exchange Language](#) (HXL).

The goal of the HDX is to make humanitarian data easy to find and use for analysis. The HXL is based on spreadsheet formats (such as Excel or Comma-Separated-Values) and adds hashtags with logical information to allow software to validate, clean, merge and analyse data more easily.

“The idea of ‘a simple standard for messy data’ will appeal to anyone like me, who has worked with humanitarian statistics and not always very able to understand them,” expressed Mr. Guterres, highlighting the potential of the application of technologies on the ground.

SEE VIDEO: [Making the invisible visible, a short film about humanitarian data](#)

Recent examples of HDX deployment include the response to the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, where it provided visualizations to illustrate whether humanitarian programmes were meeting people’s needs. The exercise resulted in significant changes to the humanitarian response.

It was also used in preparation efforts during the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean region as well as in the response to the crisis caused by the arrival of over 600,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar into Bangladesh.

In his remarks, the UN chief also underlined the importance of keeping data secure and protected.

“Coming from UNHCR, I know exactly the value of sensitive data to be protected for the protection of people,” he said, noting that the Centre will make the work of humanitarians around the world easier.

The Centre is one of the major [initiatives](#) of the [Agenda for Humanity](#), unveiled ahead of the [World Humanitarian Summit](#) held in 2016 in Turkey.