

## UN agencies scale up work in Bangladesh as Rohingya refugee crisis enters fourth month

19 December 2017 – As the Rohingya refugee emergency in Bangladesh enters its fourth month, United Nations agencies are scaling up their relief work to respond to a range of issues, including outbreak of diphtheria, lack of access to sanitation and sexual violence.

The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) has released \$1.5 million from its [contingency fund](#) to deploy additional staff and resources to combat a rapidly spreading outbreak of diphtheria among Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar. The disease has killed 21, with more than 1,500 probable cases reported.

“The Rohingya refugees are an extremely vulnerable population, with low routine vaccination coverage,” said Roderico Ofrin, Regional Emergency Director, WHO South-East Asia Regional Office. “The funds released will be crucial to sustaining our efforts until we receive more support from donors for this response.”

For 2018, the health sector will request additional funding to help 1.2 million people living in refugee camps and temporary settlements.

Meanwhile, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), people are continuing to arrive in Bangladesh from Myanmar.

However, the agency reports that the pace of the influx has now slowed, with estimated average arrival rates having dropped from 745 per day in November to 100 per day so far this month.

In a UNHCR-supported [quick assessment survey](#), refugees expressed numerous worries, including feeling unsafe at night given weak shelters and a lack of lighting, and concerns about general safety.

Access to sanitation is still insufficient, leading sometimes to long queues for latrines. Women and girls are anxious about the shortage of private bathing spaces, forcing some to wash outside their shelters in the early morning hours.

The survey also found that some children have to walk longer distances to fetch water and bring firewood. Parents and children want access to education and more safe places for children to play.

Health services are also a wide concern. Increased mental health support for those who have witnessed the killings or suffered torture or rape remains crucially needed.

Refugees cite continued feelings of depression and rejection, especially among the elderly and disabled. Many young people are worried about their

uncertain future.

Some refugees said that irregular food distributions and long queues had meant going hungry for days.

Drawing upon the findings of this latest assessment, UNHCR will further refine and reinforce its protection and assistance.

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## [Over 130 civilians killed in 11 days in airstrikes in Yemen, reports UN rights office](#)

19 December 2017 – Voicing deep concern over the surge in civilian casualties in Yemen in airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition, following the killing of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh earlier this month, the United Nations rights office has urged all parties to the conflict to ensure that civilians are protected.

According to Rupert Colville, the spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 136 civilians and non-combatants – including women and children – have been killed and another 87 injured in airstrikes in Sana'a, Sa'ada, Al Hudaydah and Taizz governorates in the period from 6 to 16 December.

"We urge all parties to the conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including their obligation to respect the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution," Mr. Colville told the press at a regular [media briefing](#) in Geneva Tuesday.

"They should take all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimise, the impact of violence on civilians," he stressed.

Among the incidents verified by OHCHR, four civilians were killed and four injured on 9 December when coalition airstrikes hit the official Yemen TV channel, Qanat Al Yemen, which has been under the Houthis control since September 2014.

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OHCHR spokesperson Rupert Colville

At least another seven civilians were killed when airstrikes struck a hospital in Al Hudaydah on 10 December. Some Houthi military vehicles were reported to be next to the hospital compound at the time of the airstrikes.

On 13 December, coalition airstrikes struck a prison building and a prison yard at a military police compound in the Shaub district of Sana'a, killing at least 45 people and injuring 53. All victims were reported to be detainees and said to belong to resistance forces loyal to President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

The airstrikes also claimed the lives of a number of children.

On 16 December, nine children and one woman – returning home from a wedding party – were killed in coalition airstrikes in Marib governorate and another 14 children died when airstrikes hit a farmhouse in Al Hudaydah governorate.

***OHCHR 'greatly concerned' over reported violations by Houthis***

Also at the briefing, the OHCHR spokesperson expressed concern over reported recent violations by Houthis against members of former President Saleh's political party, the General People's Congress (GPC) including attacks and arbitrary detentions.

There have also been unconfirmed reports of summary killings and detention of people affiliated to the GPC, although verification of these reports by our Office has been difficult as witnesses fear possible repercussion from the Houthis, said Mr. Colville.

Since the eruption of violence in Yemen in March 2015 and as of 14 December, the UN rights office has documented total of 5558 civilians killed and 9,065 injured.

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## **UN chief highlights need for Internet governance to support innovation, prevent criminal use**

18 December 2017 – Adequate governance is critical to realizing the vast promise of the Internet for a better world for all, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres told the annual United Nations forum on Internet governance on Monday.

"The Internet, and new technologies in general, have [an immense role](#) to play in helping us address global sustainable development challenges," Mr. Guterres said in his video message to the opening of the 12th UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Geneva, Switzerland, which runs through 21 December.

"But there is a growing danger that the Internet can be used for

polarization, division and criminal activity,” he added.

This year’s theme is [Shape your digital future!](#)

Mr. Guterres noted the Internet must serve to improve the human condition, which means bridging digital divides based on locality, means and gender.

“And it means establishing governance that supports innovation while respecting human rights and protecting society,” he said.

The IGF is recognized as the widest-reaching international forum on Internet governance, and is at the forefront of identifying and debating critical issues that shape international agenda. Its mandate was renewed for 10 years at the World Summit on the Information Society (

This year’s theme is [WSIS](#)) in December 2015.

The 12th IGF will discuss some of the most pressing Internet Governance issues today: Connectivity and Access; Impact of the Internet on Sustainable Development and Economic Growth; Human Rights Online; Gender Issues; Cybersecurity; Multistakeholder Collaboration at National, Regional and Global Levels; and Emerging Technologies, and Trends such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Fakenews and Virtual Reality; and many others. These discussions will act as inputs toward the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#), which relies on robust and strategic use of ICTs and sound Internet policies.

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## [Perpetrators of attack on church in Pakistan must be brought to justice, stresses UN chief](#)

18 December 2017 – Denouncing Monday’s attack on a Methodist church in western Pakistan, United Nations Secretary-General called for those behind the incident be held accountable.

In a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson, [Secretary-General](#) Anthony Guterres “strongly” condemned the attack which occurred in the city of Quetta, which is also the capital of the Balochistan province in the country.

“He calls for the perpetrators of the attack to be brought to justice,” the statement added.

According to reports, at least nine people were killed in the suicide attack and many have been wounded.

In the statement, Mr. Guterres also expressed his condolences to the families of the victims and wished a speedy recovery to those injured.

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## [UN envoy welcomes new Somali policy on role of youth in peacebuilding](#)

18 December 2017 – Welcoming the launch of a national policy for young people in Somalia, the United Nations Youth Envoy expressed hope that with the new policy, young Somalis will be able to contribute to peacebuilding efforts in the country.

“I want to [congratulate](#) the federal Government of Somalia, the federal member states, the UN and all stakeholders, especially young people, who were part of this process for your successful formulation of this youth policy,” Jayathma Wickramanayake said at the opening of the country’s second National Youth Conference, where the policy was launched.

“I hope that you will make those extra steps to enable youth organizations and young people to meaningfully engage in the implementation and review of this policy,” she added.

The UN had been supporting the Somali Ministry of Youth and Sports with the development of the policy since 2014. It was endorsed by the federal cabinet last month. Among its key features, the policy will promote youth participation in peacebuilding efforts and other key initiatives.

Also speaking at the Conference, Peter de Clercq, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, highlighted UN support for programmes fostering youth development in the country.

“We have contributed so far \$38 million to 18 programmes that are dedicated to youth employment, youth empowerment and more youth influence in politics, and we will continue to support the youth and the government of Somalia in this very important objective,” he said.

With many of the world’s 1.2 billion young people affected by the hardship of war, UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has made empowering youth a priority for Organization, and flagged the key role that they play as agents of change and critical actors in preventing conflict and building peace.

Similarly, in 2015, the UN Security Council [adopted a resolution](#) in which it recognized the positive contribution of youth in the promotion of peace and security and supported efforts aimed at advancing their development.



Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth addresses participants during the Somali National Youth Conference in Mogadishu on December 17, 2017. UN Photo / Ilyas Ahmed