

Peaceful conduct of elections 'historic moment' for Nepal, says UN chief

9 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has welcomed the holding of the two-phased State and Federal elections and congratulates the people of Nepal for the peaceful conduct of the polls.

These elections mark [a historic moment](#) for Nepal in implementing its federal structure as enshrined in the 2015 Constitution," said a statement issued Friday by Mr. Guterres' Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric, following Thursday's completion of the second phase of voting.

Media reports said elections were intended to complete the Himalayan country's transition to democracy under the 2015 Constitution, which declared Nepal a federal state.

The Secretary-General "hopes that all parties will maintain the same spirit in the next stages of the electoral process," the statement added.

The Secretary-General encouraged the Government, political parties and civil society leaders to continue their efforts towards furthering inclusive and representative governance, the statement said, expressing the UN's readiness to support such efforts.

According to UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on 22 November 2006 signaled [the end of a conflict](#) which had claimed over 16,000 lives, displaced large numbers of Nepalese and further strained the economy of one of the world's poorest nations.

From 2007 to early 2011, DPA provided oversight and support to the UN Mission in Nepal ([UNMIN](#)), which assisted the Himalayan nation's transition to peace following a decade of armed conflict.

UNMIN played an important support role in the successful holding, in April 2008, of an historic Constituent Assembly election that was a major milestone in the peace process. UNMIN withdrew from Nepal on 15 January 2011.

'Genocide should not be part of our

present or our future,' UN adviser says on day to honour victims

9 December 2017 – The United Nations office that coordinates efforts on genocide prevention has launched an appeal for Member States to ratify the 1948 genocide convention by the end of 2018 if they haven't done so.

Genocide [does not happen by accident](#); it is deliberate, with warning signs and precursors,” UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said Saturday in his message for the International Day of [Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide](#) and of the Prevention of this Crime.

Often it is the culmination of years of exclusion, denial of human rights and other wrongs. Since genocide can take place in times of war and in times of peace, we must be ever-vigilant,” he added.

The [International Day](#), which was established by the UN General Assembly in 2015, has since been observed annually on 9 December, the day when back in 1948 the [Convention](#) for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted.

To date, a total of 149 States, including one non-UN Member State, have ratified the treaty. With 2018 being the 70th anniversary year of the Convention, the appeal invites the remaining 45 States to ratify the Convention by the end of next year.

The Convention defines genocide as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group,” including killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Despite the clear definition of genocide in the Convention, as well as improved understanding of the risks, genocide has recurred, multiple times, Mr. Guterres said.

“We are still reacting rather than preventing, and acting only when it is often too late. We must do more to respond early and keep violence from escalating. This is the obligation of the State parties to the Convention, one and all,” the UN chief stated, calling upon all States to ratify the Genocide Convention by its 70th anniversary in 2018 and, in so doing, help liberate humanity from this cruel and odious crime.

In New York on Friday, the UN [Office on the Prevention of Genocide](#) and the Responsibility to Protect held an event on the eve of the sixty-ninth anniversary of the Genocide Convention.

Genocide should not be part of our present or our future. It is not an accident, nor is it inevitable. It is our inaction, or our ineffectiveness in addressing the warning signs, that allows it to become a reality," Adama Dieng, the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, said in his keynote speech to the event, which was held at UN Headquarters.

A reality where people are dehumanized and persecuted for who they are, or who they represent. A reality of great suffering, cruelty and of inhumane acts that have at the basis unacceptable motivations – the thirst for power or resources, distorted views of identity supremacy, extremist ideologies, selfish interests," he added.

The crime of genocide did not start with the Genocide Convention and, unfortunately, it also did not end with it, Mr. Dieng said.

Throughout history there have been many events that could have been qualified as genocide [...] and even now we are confronted with some situations that, if put to the test in a court of law, could also be labelled as such," he said, urging 20 States from Africa, 18 from Asia, and seven from the Americas to ratify the convention so that he will have good news to report at next year's event.

[Security Council considers measures to support regional force in the Sahel](#)

8 December 2017 – The United Nations Security Council today adopted a resolution clarifying the ways in which the international community, including the UN mission Mali – known by its French acronym MINUSMA – is expected to provide support to a multi-country joint military force conducting counter-terrorist operations in the Sahel.

The *Force conjointe du G5 Sahel* (FC-G5S) was established by the Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) – to jointly combat terrorism and transnational organized crime in the region.

In the resolution adopted today, the 15-member Security Council welcomed progress achieved in the operationalization of the FC-G5S and underlined the need for FC-G5S operations to be conducted in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee laws, as applicable.

The Council further stressed the need to ensure that the gender perspective is taken into account in implementing all aspects of the strategic concept of FC-G5S operations, including by ensuring that gender analysis and women's

participation are integrated into assessments, planning and operations.

Also in the resolution, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate steps to conclude a technical agreement between the UN, the European Union (EU) and G5 Sahel States, to provide specified operational and logistical support through MINUSMA to the FC-G5S.

The support provided pursuant to the technical agreement should “be conducted at the discretion of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, in close consultation with the Force Commander, and without affecting MINUSMA’s capacity to implement its mandate and strategic priorities, and be restricted to the areas of operations of MINUSMA where such support is compatible with its current level of capacities,” added the resolution.

Also in the resolution, the Council expressed its deep concern over the “persistent delays” in the full implementation of key provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and renewed its “urgent call” on the Government of Mali and the *Plateforme* and *Coordination* armed groups to take immediate and concrete action to fully and expeditiously deliver on their remaining obligations under the Agreement.

[UN agency begins assisting thousands of West African migrants to leave Libya](#)

8 December 2017 – The United Nations migration agency and the Government of Niger welcomed the first 504 people from Libya to Niger, kicking off a voluntary mass evacuation of nearly 4,000 migrants.

“After the discussions at the [African Union-European Union] summit in Abidjan, the government has demonstrated its commitment to making this [evacuation a priority](#) and a reality,” Alberto Preto, the International Organization for Migration’s ([IOM](#)) Migrant Resource and Response Mechanism (MRRM) Programme Manager, declared on Friday.

Organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Niger with the Embassy of Niger in Libya, and under the initiative of President of Niger Mahamadou Issoufou and Prime Minister Brigi Rafini, the migrants registered for voluntary return at Niger Embassy in Tripoli.

On Wednesday, the first of eight charter flights carrying 504 migrants, including women and young children, arrived at the Diori Hamani International Airport in Niamey.

IOM is providing technical and logistic support for the registration, profiling, reception and onward transportation of the returning migrants, under the MRRM financed by the European Union.

“The success of the operation is a stepping stone in strengthening the partnership between IOM and the Government of Niger,” said Mr. Preato.

The migrants were received by the Ministers of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Health and Humanitarian Action, along with more than 50 IOM staff – including from operations, protection, medical, logistics, finance, reintegration and communication – and other senior officials.

In addition to welcoming the returnees, IOM registered, profiled, provided them with food and water, and facilitated transportation to their villages of origin.

The UN migration agency and Niger are also exploring possibilities for the socio-economic reintegration of migrants arriving in the weeks ahead.

After the successful reception of the first charter last night, Niger’s Foreign Minister officially confirmed plans for seven additional charters – carrying 500 migrants each, one per day, from Wednesday onwards – to transport the total 3,850 Nigerian migrants now registered in Tripoli.

Mohamed Bazoum, Niger’s Minister of Interior praised in his speech the fruitful partnership with IOM, and complimented the Organization for making possible the dignified return of Nigerien migrants under the best possible conditions.

The teams left the airport early Thursday morning, ensuring that all 504 returning migrants were on their way home. IOM staff is fully prepared to welcome the second charter due Friday.

Moreover, in close collaboration with IOM staff in Libya, the mission in Niger is preparing to receive additional groups of migrants now in detention centres across Libya.

Meanwhile, IOM staff in Agadez are now assisting the 10th convoy of migrants arriving from Algeria as they prepare themselves for possible mass evacuations of stranded migrants from its northern borders.

“IOM is proud to be part of this operation and to be able to bring back hope to those who had long lost it,” Mr. Preato concluded.

Human Rights Day: UN to launch

campaign for 70th anniversary of Universal Declaration

8 December 2017 – The United Nations will on Sunday kick off in Paris, France, a year-long campaign to honor the foundational human rights document, which next year marks its 70th anniversary.

Since the proclamation of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) in 1948, “[human rights](#) have been one of the three pillars of the United Nations, along with peace and development,” said [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in his message for [Human Rights Day](#), annually observed on 10 December.

As “one of the world’s most profound and far-reaching international agreements,” the Universal Declaration proclaimed the inalienable rights of every human being regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.

Mr. Guterres noted that while human rights abuses did not end when the Universal Declaration was adopted, the instrument has helped countless people to gain greater freedom and security, and has also helped to prevent violations, obtain justice for wrongs, and strengthen national and international human rights laws and safeguards.

“Despite these advances, the fundamental principles of the Universal Declaration are being tested in all regions,” he said, citing rising hostility towards human rights and those who defend them by people who want to profit from exploitation and division.

“We see hatred, intolerance, atrocities and other crimes. These actions imperil us all,” he said, urging people and leaders everywhere to stand up for all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural – and for the values that underpin hopes for a fairer, safer and better world for all.

The [year-long campaign](#) will start at Palais de Chaillot in Paris on Sunday, with an event also to be held on Monday at UN Headquarters in New York. UN Information Centres around the world will also launch commemorative activities.

For his part, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein said that thanks to the Universal Declaration, the daily life of millions has been improved, untold human suffering has been prevented and the foundations for a more just world have been laid.

“While its promise is yet to be fulfilled, the very fact that it has stood [the test of time](#) is testament to the enduring universality of its perennial values of equality, justice and human dignity,” he said.

The period leading up to 10 December 2018, the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration, will be “a year of intense and profound reflection on the continuing and vital importance of each and every one of the 30 articles contained in this extraordinary document.”

Today, as World War II and the Holocaust grow distant, that awareness appears to be evaporating at an alarming rate, and the enormous progress that has been achieved through progressive enactment of human rights principles, as laid out in the Universal Declaration, is being increasingly forgotten or willfully ignored, Mr. Zeid said.

He said it is right to honour its achievements and pay tribute to its inspired architects on the 70th anniversary year, but “we should be under no illusions: the legacy of the Universal Declaration is facing threats on many fronts.”

“We must organize and mobilize in defence of human decency, in defence of a better common future... We must take a robust and determined stand: by resolutely supporting the human rights of others, we also stand up for our own rights and those of generations to come,” he said.

VIDEO: In his annual Human Rights Day message, Secretary-General António Guterres calls for translating the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into action.