

[UN chief calls for end to all armed clashes, airstrikes in Yemen](#)

3 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has called on the parties to the conflict in Yemen to cease all air and ground assaults, expressing deep concern about the “sharp escalation” of armed clashes and airstrikes in the capital, Sana’a, and other parts of the war-torn country over the past several days.

A [statement](#) issued by Mr. Guterres’ Spokesman Sunday evening said the fighting has already resulted in dozens of deaths and hundreds of injuries, including civilians, and is also restricting the movement of people and life-saving services within Sana’a city.

“Ambulances and medical teams cannot access the injured and people cannot go outside to buy food and other necessities. Aid workers are unable to travel and implement critical life-saving programmes at a time when millions of Yemenis rely on assistance to survive,” said the statement.

This latest outbreak of violence could not come at a worse time for the Yemeni people, who are already caught up in the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. The [conflict and blockade](#) that was put in place on 6 November and is still not fully lifted have caused significant shortages of critical supplies, especially food and fuel, and resulted in price hikes, curtailing access to food, safe water and healthcare.

“The Secretary-General calls for the urgent resumption of all commercial imports, without which millions of children, women and men risk mass hunger, disease and death,” the statement underscored.

The UN chief went on to call on all parties to the conflict to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, with the statement emphasizing: “It is paramount that civilians are protected, that the wounded are afforded safe access to medical care, and that all sides facilitate life-saving humanitarian access.”

More than two years of relentless conflict between the Government and Houthi and allied rebels in Yemen, already the Arab world’s poorest country, has devastated the lives of millions of people. An alarming 20.7 million people in Yemen [need some kind of humanitarian or protection support](#), with some 9.8 million in acute need of assistance. This man-made disaster has been brutal on civilians.

“The Secretary-General reiterates that there is no military solution to the Yemen conflict. He urges all parties to the conflict to engage meaningfully with the United Nations to revitalize inclusive negotiations on a political settlement,” the statement concluded.

RELATED: [UN Special Envoy for Yemen calls on the parties to urgently come to](#)

[the negotiation table and to engage in the peace process](#)

Remove physical and cultural barriers; build inclusive societies 'for, by and with persons with disabilities' – UN

3 December 2017 – Persons with disabilities, as both beneficiaries and agents of change, can fast track the process towards inclusive and sustainable development, and for the [2030 Agenda](#) to truly live up to its promise to 'leave no one behind,' all physical and cultural barriers must be removed to create societies that provide real opportunities for everyone everywhere, the United Nations has said.

The theme of the 2017 edition of the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) is 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all,' and the UN is urging governments, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, academic institutions and the private sector to work as a 'team to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

In his [message](#) on the Day, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development embodies a commitment to building the capacities of those who face marginalization and exclusion to reduce their vulnerability to economic, social and environmental shocks.

In recent years, the international community has achieved notable progress in advancing the rights of the world's one billion persons with disabilities. Disability is recognized as a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda, the [New Urban Agenda](#), which sets a new global standard for sustainable urban development, and the [Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction](#).

“Yet, persons with disabilities remain too often excluded from the design, planning and implementation of policies and programmes that have an impact on their lives. Too often they face discrimination in labour markets and in access to education and other services,” stated Mr. Guterres.

To overcome this challenge, the UN chief said, the path towards inclusive, accessible, usable facilities, technologies, infrastructure, services and products must be ensured by, for and with persons with disabilities.

“We must build on their agency, working together to design, develop and implement affordable and innovative solutions to realize equality for all,” he underscored, adding: “On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, let us remove physical and cultural barriers, build

resilient societies and create opportunities that truly leave no one behind.”

RELATED: [What Disability Means – Facts & Figures](#)

Echoing that call, Audrey Azoulay the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), said in her message that persons with disabilities are [on the frontlines of a world changing quickly](#) and societies transforming, and they are especially vulnerable to the impacts of humanitarian crises and environmental challenges.

“This cannot go on. We must integrate persons with disabilities into all decision-making and policies,” she emphasized, explain that UNESCO will continue acting across the board, starting with, among others, inclusive education, leading the Education 2030 Framework, drawing on UNESCO's Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education to bolster educational systems that provide opportunity to all.

“UNESCO's message is clear today. Building sustainable and resilient societies requires the inclusion, participation and empowerment of every woman and man, including persons with disabilities,” stressed Ms. Azoulay, adding: “This is about equal rights and dignity – this is about the better future we seek to build for all.”

[Yemen: As threat of famine looms, UN urges Saudi-led coalition to fully lift blockade of Red Sea ports](#)

2 December 2017 – Top officials from across the United Nations system called on Saturday for the Saudi-led coalition to fully lift its blockade of Yemen's Red Sea ports, warning that unless commercial imports are resumed, “the threat of widespread famine in a matter of months is very real.”

The officials also announced that the United Nations is sending a team to Riyadh to discuss any concerns the coalition and Saudi Arabia may have in relation to these ports. “But we need the coalition to urgently grant unimpeded access for imports that are a lifeline for millions of people.”

They acknowledged that the partial lifting of the blockade of Yemen's Red Sea ports in recent days is allowing humanitarian organizations to resume the provision of life-saving assistance to people in desperate need.

“But given the massive scale of Yemen's humanitarian crisis, [all this does is slow the collapse towards a massive humanitarian tragedy](#) costing

millions of lives. It does not prevent it,” said the UN leaders, who added: “Without the urgent resumption of commercial imports, especially food, fuel and medicines, millions of children, women and men risk mass hunger, disease and death.”

The appeal came in a joint statement by the Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Administrator of the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), Achim Steiner, The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, the Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) Anthony Lake, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)), David Beasley, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), William Lacy Swing, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock.

RELATED: [More on the Yemen crisis](#)

More than two years of relentless conflict between the Government and Houthi and allied rebels in Yemen, already the Arab world's poorest country, has devastated the lives of millions of people. An alarming 20.7 million people in Yemen [need some kind of humanitarian or protection support](#), with some 9.8 million in acute need of assistance. This man-made disaster has been brutal on civilians.

In their statement today, the UN leaders said that the current ongoing commercial import restrictions have led to shortages of fuel, food and other essentials, driving up prices and wrecking lives and livelihoods. The price of wheat flour has risen by 30 per cent, while the price of fuel has doubled and that of trucked water has skyrocketed by 600 per cent in some locations.

Urban water networks in seven cities have run out of fuel and now depend on humanitarian organizations to fill in the gap. Other cities will shortly be in a similar situation if the blockade is not lifted, which would leave 11 million people without safe water.

Yemen remains on the cusp of one of the largest famines in modern times

In other areas, people are reducing their food consumption to dangerous levels in order to pay for the rising cost of water trucking, or are turning to contaminated water sources to meet their basic needs. This further compounds the risk of disease, especially among children.

Less than half of the health facilities are functioning, and more hospitals and health centers will close should fuel and water supplies not improve. Sewage networks in six main cities are compromised, threatening a renewed spike in the country's cholera outbreak, which has reached almost 1 million suspected cases and killed over 2,200 people.

“Yemen remains on the cusp of one of the largest famines in modern times,” says the statement, explaining that nearly 400,000 children

suffer from severe acute malnutrition and face an increased risk of death. In addition, some eight million people could starve without urgent food assistance coming into Yemen.

With 90 per cent of the country's food imported, the lack of commercial imports through Red Sea ports would alone push a further three million people into starvation. "The threat of widespread famine in a matter of months is very real," the statement warns.

"This imminent catastrophe is entirely avoidable, but it requires immediate action by the coalition," says the statement, noting that while three ships carrying food have been granted permission to berth at Hudaydah port in recent days, four fuel tankers and 10 ships carrying food have all been waiting for permission to enter port.

"Together, we call on the coalition to urgently open up all Yemeni Red Sea ports fully and to facilitate the entry and free-flow of humanitarian and vital commercial goods."

[UN chief condemns terrorist attack against college dormitory in Pakistan](#)

1 December 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Friday condemned the terrorist attack against a university dormitory in northern Pakistan that killed at least nine people and injured many others.

"The Secretary-General extends his condolences to the bereaved families and to the Government and people of Pakistan. He wishes a speedy recovery to the injured," said a statement issued by his Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric, following the attack that took place in the city of Peshawar when dozens of people gathered to celebrate Eid al Milad-un Nabi, a sacred Muslim holiday.

[Migration compact must balance regional, global realities, says UN envoy](#)

1 December 2017 – A Global Compact on migration has to be "truly global" but it also has to take into account the regional specificities given the very

diverse nature of the phenomenon, a senior United Nations official on international migration has said.

“There are some 250 million migrants in the world and they move and settle in very different circumstances,” said Louise Arbour, the UN Special Representative for International Migration, told *UN News* ahead of a [meeting](#) on the Global Compact, to be held Monday in Mexican city of Puerto Vallarta.

“If you look at Asia for instance, even within the continent there are lots of different configurations of migrant workers: people who move permanently, others who move temporarily but sometimes for decades with the expectation of coming back home,” she explained.

At the three-day [stocktaking meeting](#), UN Member States, civil society and other stakeholders will jointly shape a vision for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

They will review the outcomes and recommendations gathered during the consultations phase of the Global Compact, held between April and November this year, as well as look at the process going forward.

Enumerating her hopes from the meeting, Ms. Arbour said that the Puerto Vallarta is the “last opportunity” for Member States to “express clearly to each other” what their expectations are.

“We will probably be in a better position coming out of this meeting to understand where the work has to be done were there still room for potential disagreements or more problematic area. So I think it’s a critical really important step towards a Global Context.”

Full UN News interview below:

AUDIO: Migration compact needs to be ‘truly global,’ says UN Special Representative Louise Arbour