

# Security Council hears calls for 'all of UN' approach to stop destruction, smuggling of cultural heritage

30 November 2017 – The United Nations Security Council today focused its attention on global efforts to stop the traffic in and destruction of cultural property, with the head of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) laying out steps to protect cultural heritage and ensure that it can serve “as a source of belonging and peace for all people in times of conflict.”

In her briefing, newly-appointed UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, spotlighted the Secretary-General’s first report on the adoption by the Council of resolution 2347 (2017), which, among others, condemned destruction of cultural heritage and the looting of cultural property.

The landmark text also encouraged Member States to take preventive measures to safeguard cultural property in the context of armed conflict and “take appropriate steps to prevent and counter the illicit trade and trafficking in cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific, and religious importance originating from armed conflict areas, notably from terrorist groups.”

“The adoption of [resolution 2347 \(2017\)](#) represents a major breakthrough, and it testifies to a new awareness on the importance of culture to respond to conflicts, to prevent radicalization and fight violent extremism,” Ms. Azoulay told the Council, noting that she has been encouraged by Member States’ strong actions to implement it and other Council measures that together provide key aspects responding against terror and hatred.

“In a very short span of time, 29 Member States shared information on new actions taken to protect cultural heritage, strengthening tools and training of specialized personnel, reinforcing international cooperation and information sharing,” she stated, mentioning some notable initiatives underway in several countries.

While calling these “positive signals of deep change,” Ms. Azoulay added: “We need to do more.”

The UN cultural agency chief pointed out that of the 82 UNESCO [World Heritage](#) sites in the Arab region, 17 are on the [List of World Heritage in Danger](#) due to armed conflict.

“Over 100 cultural heritage sites across Iraq have been damaged,” she explained. “All six Syrian World Heritage sites have been severely affected, including [Palmyra](#), and the fabled city of Aleppo, one of the oldest cities in the world, now reduced to rubble.”

Ms. Azoulay underscored that the UN response must step up efforts in several key areas that encompassed raising awareness of the resolution to strengthen its implementation by all Member States; facilitating data collection and information sharing, on trafficking routes, on damage assessment; and training peacekeepers in the protection of cultural heritage and integrate this issue into peacekeeping mandates and missions.

“In all this, I pledge today once again UNESCO’s determination to support Member States with the necessary tools and policy advice,” she concluded.

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For his part, Vladimir Voronkov, the Under-Secretary-General of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office, explained how terrorists, particularly in armed conflict situations, destroy not only lives and property but in targeting World Heritage Sites, they attack historical roots and cultural diversity.

“The goal is obvious – to undermine national identity and international law,” he said. “Because heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion not only for particular communities but the world community as such.”

He also linked the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects with the financing of terrorism, noting a number of resolutions and legal frameworks to address these crimes.

“Protecting our cultural heritage requires us to make every effort to implement this international legal and normative framework by strengthening international cooperation,” he asserted, suggesting the ‘All of UN’ approach as being key for an effective action.

He advocated for a stronger focus on investigation, cross-border cooperation and exchange of information, and for including private and public-sector partners to promote supply chain integrity and stop the illicit sale of cultural property.

“We can and must do more,” he stated.



Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office briefs the Security Council meeting on Maintenance of international peace and security. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)) briefs the Security Council meeting on Maintenance of international peace and security via video. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

Via video link from Vienna, Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) told the Council that countries must be helped detect stolen cultural property as part of the work to dismantle criminal networks.

“We must take the opportunity to further [strengthen efforts](#) to better safeguard vulnerable cultural property in various areas of conflict, as well as pursue longer-term measures to prevent terrorists and criminals profiting from trafficking,” he said.

He said there was a need to help countries detect stolen cultural property and improve international cooperation in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases related to trafficking in cultural property.

“Only in this way can we protect precious cultural heritage from being lost forever,” he said.

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## [Antalya: South-South Development Expo closes with strengthened cooperation to achieve Global Goals](#)

30 November 2017 – The [Global South-South Development Expo 2017](#) wrapped up on Thursday in Antalya, Turkey, with delegations from dozens of countries, key international organizations, and United Nations agencies reaffirming their commitment to strengthen partnerships and cooperation agreements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“We are extremely happy with the results of the Expo, we organize this event every year to create a space for the countries of the south, partnering institutions and other States including from the global north, to join together and establish new relationships to get more and better South-South cooperation,” underscored Jorge Chediek, the Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation ([UNOSSC](#)).

The 2017 Expo, which opened Monday, was hosted by the Government of Turkey and coordinated by UNOSSC. It focused on solutions ‘for the South, by the South, throughout the week. It drew more than 800 participants from 120 countries, and more than 30 media representatives who engaged in over 37 plenary and side events.

The theme “South-South Cooperation in the Era of Economic, Social and Environmental Transformation: The Road to the 40th Anniversary of the

Adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA+40),” aimed to engage stakeholders to scale up concrete solutions from the Global South to achieve the landmark UN [2030 Agenda](#) and its 17 Global Goals.

During the closing ceremony, Mr. Chediek conveyed warm greetings from UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, who attached great importance to South-South cooperation as a key ingredient of the efforts to achieve the [SDGs](#) and to combat climate change.

In his message, the UN chief thanked Expo participants for their commitment to sharing the knowledge, best practices and successes of the South.

“Many of the achievements of the expo are not reflected in these very impressive numbers themselves, they are reflected in the partnerships that are being established, in institutional friendships and agreements that have been developed and that will certainly generate results,” stressed Mr. Chediek.

Six publications were launched during the Expo, and over 90 institutional and individual partners expressed interest in nine initiatives covering issues that range from youth empowerment to rural development.

Earlier today, the first Steering Committee meeting of the South-South Global Thinkers initiative took place at the Expo launching a brand new online platform that will connect think tank networks from across all regions to exchange, share knowledge and collaborate on joint research.

A High-Level Forum of National Directors-General for Development Cooperation was also held today, to discuss insights and proposals for the preparatory process of the Second UN High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation to be hosted by the Government of Argentina in March 2019, marking 40 years of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

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## [\*\*New funding provides much needed boost for Yemen aid operations, but needs outstrip means\*\*](#)

30 November 2017 – A United Nations-managed humanitarian emergency fund has allocated \$70 million to strife-ridden Yemen, enabling critical life-saving relief operations across large parts of the country.

“Through this new allocation, [humanitarians] will respond to the immediate causes of food insecurity and malnutrition; improve access to food, nutrition, health, water and sanitation services; and continue to support the

ongoing cholera response,” said Jamie McGoldrick, the Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, in a [news release](#) issued by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

“It will also provide a minimum package of assistance including shelter, non-food items and protection services to the most vulnerable individuals among internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities,” he added.

Approved Wednesday, the latest allocation by the OCHA-managed Yemen Humanitarian Fund has prioritized 95 districts across 15 of the country’s 22 governorates, including Aden, Al Bayda Al Dhale’e, Hadramaut, Hajjah, Lahj, Sa’ada Shabwah and Taiz.

It will also assist national non-governmental organizations which will implement more than 40 per cent of the total grant through some 33 projects run by 26 national relief actors (amounting to about \$31.3 million).

Even before the eruption of violence in 2015, Yemen had been suffering chronic poverty and under development.

However, close to three years of [relentless conflict](#) has left more than three-fourths of Yemenis in need of some kind of humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs and over 17.8 million people food insecure – 8.4 million among them severely food insecure and at risk of starvation.

Basic social services in Yemen have virtually collapsed  
Humanitarian coordinator Yemen

The latest, much-needed allocation – made possible through [contributions](#) from 18 donors – will help many, but more resources are urgently needed to ensure that the \$1 billion funding gap in the [2017 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan](#) can be closed and all those who need assistance can be reached.

“Basic social services in Yemen have virtually collapsed, therefore the continued provision of humanitarian assistance remains a lifeline for millions of people who continue to struggle in a crisis that does not make many headlines,” Mr. McGoldrick added.

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## [Global blueprints on refugees, safe migration should include protections for children – UNICEF](#)

30 November 2017 – The rights, protection and wellbeing of uprooted children should be central commitments of global migration policies, the United

Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said on Thursday, as it released a new report prior to a meeting next week on safe, regular and orderly migration.

The meeting, taking place from 4 to 6 December in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, is a major step towards drafting the landmark intergovernmental [Global Compact for Migration](#), an agreement covering all dimensions of international migration.

Global leaders and policymakers convening in Puerto Vallarta can work together to [make migration safe for children](#), said UNICEF Director of Programmes Ted Chaiban.

It is the moment when world leaders will begin to forge consensus on political and financial commitments in line with the [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) and the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

The report, [Beyond Borders: How to make the global compacts on migration and refugees work for uprooted children](#), highlights best practices for the care and protection of refugee and migrant children and includes examples of governments, civil society partners and host communities working to support and integrate uprooted children and their families.

Our new report shows that it is possible, even in countries with stretched resources, to implement policies, services and investments that effectively support refugee and migrant children in their countries of origin, as they transit across borders and upon reaching their destinations, said Mr. Chaiba.

Refugee and migrant children are especially vulnerable to xenophobia, abuse, sexual exploitation and lack of access to social services. The report underscores the importance of having policies in place to protect them over the course of their journey.

It also presents successful case studies from around the world, including the implementation of minimum protection standards for refugee children in Germany, cross border child protection systems in West Africa, and finding alternatives to the detention of migrant children in Zambia. Other countries featured in the report include Afghanistan, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, South Sudan, Vietnam, Uganda and the United States.

Each of the initiatives can be replicated in different contexts and inform child-focused actions and policy change at national, regional and global levels to be agreed in the framework of the Compact.

The report also presents UNICEF's six-point agenda for action, as a basis for policies to protect refugee and migrant children, particularly those unaccompanied, and ensure their wellbeing from exploitation and violence.

It also calls for the end of detention for children seeking refugee status or migrating, by introducing a range of practical alternatives, and advocates for keeping families together as the best way to protect children and give children legal status.

The agenda stresses that all refugee and migrant children have access to education, health and other quality services, and presses for action on underlying causes of large scale movements of [refugees and migrants](#).

Finally, it promotes measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization in countries of transit and destination.

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## **Four billion people have no social security protection – UN labour agency**

29 November 2017 – More than half of the global population – some four billion people – have no social security protection, UN labour experts said on Wednesday.

In a new World Social Protection Report 2017-2019, entitled [Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals](#), the UN International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) highlights how this protection gap is an obstacle to reaching globally-agreed targets on promoting growth and development and protecting the planet.

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said that although many countries had improved social protection for their citizens in recent decades, much more investment and political is needed to extend coverage.

“The lack of social protection [leaves people vulnerable](#) to ill-health, poverty, inequality and social exclusion throughout their lifecycle. Denying this human right to four billion people worldwide is a significant obstacle to economic and social development,” he warned.

Indeed, speaking to journalists in Geneva, he said that social security protection is a basic human right, and “when people don’t have it, governments reap the benefits.” Today however, Mr. Ryder explained that only 45 per cent of the global population have access to at least one social benefit, and only 29 per cent have comprehensive protection.

“In 2017, this global lack of social protection, I think, should be regarded as being completely unacceptable [...] and that means that the aggregate level of public expenditure on social protection needs to be increased to extend social protection coverage particularly in Africa, in Asia and the Arab countries where marked under-investment in social protection prevails,” he said.

Despite a slight improvement in welfare coverage since 2015 around the world, much more investment by governments will be needed to extend protection to all; not least the 1.3 billion children who have no cover whatsoever.

ILO says this is particularly true in rural areas, where 56 per cent of people lack health coverage, compared to 22 per cent in towns and cities.

Some countries are already tackling the problem by offering simplified tax returns to workers previously in the informal sector.

Once on the government's books, contributions from these workers help pay for maternity leave, job-seekers' allowance, disabilities benefit and care for senior citizens. The evolving world of work and technology has also provided new opportunities to extend social protection, ILO says.

In Uruguay, for example, e-taxi provider Uber's drivers can download a phone application which automatically deducts their social security charges.

Elsewhere, ILO warns that progress in welfare protection risks being pushed back – the result of fiscal savings put in place after the global economic crisis.

This is likely to be the case in Europe, the agency's Isabel Ortiz warns, where pensioners in 19 countries face lower benefits by 2060.

"You have to balance equity with sustainability," she told journalists.