

## One in 10 medicines in developing countries substandard or falsified – UN health agency

29 November 2017 – Substandard or fake medicines that fail to prevent and cure disease – and could even cause death – are becoming more and more prevalent, the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned, calling on Governments to take urgent actions to tackle this global problem.

“Substandard and falsified medicines particularly affect the most vulnerable communities,” Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, [said](#) during the launch of the Global Surveillance and Monitoring System report and a study on the Public health and socioeconomic impact in Geneva.

“These products do nothing but prolong sickness, waste money and erode hope. At worst, they kill, cause serious harm, and fan the flames of drug resistance,” Mr. Tedros Adhanom underscored.

According to the reports, anti-malarials and antibiotics are the most common substandard or falsified products. Others range from cancer treatment to contraception.

While most cases received are from Africa, WHO said the data is the tip of the iceberg as many more are unreported.

“Substandard or falsified medicines not only have a tragic impact on individual patients and their families, but also are a threat to antimicrobial resistance, adding to the worrying trend of medicines losing their power to treat,” said Mariângela Simão, Assistant Director-General for Access to Medicines, Vaccines and Pharmaceuticals at WHO.

Progress has been made since 2013, with 550 regulators from 141 countries having been trained to detect and respond to this issue. As more people are trained, more cases are reported to WHO.

Substandard and falsified medicines not only have negative health impact, but they also cause socioeconomic problems due to the absence of good governance and weak technical capacity.

Globalization also makes it harder to regulate medical products, and online pharmacies can easily avoid quality control.

Calling it an “all-too-common” reality, Mr. Tedros Adhanom urged Governments to set prevention, detection and response into action.

“These commitments are not costs; they’re investments that protect businesses and markets, and the integrity of health systems,” he said, adding that “but more importantly, they’re investments in human capital.”

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## [South Sudan: UN envoy condemns 'horrific' killings of civilians in Jonglei](#)

29 November 2017 – The most senior United Nations official in South Sudan has condemned the “horrific” killing of some 45 civilians in the Jonglei region on Tuesday when a Murle ethnic group attacked a Dinka village.

“I [utterly condemn these killings](#) and the abduction of some 60 women and children which accompanied these attacks,” said David Shearer, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and head of the UN Mission in the country, known as UNMISS.

The attack left 19 people wounded.

“I urge the leaders of both communities to reign in the youth, show restraint and to put an end to the cycle of revenge killings. It is crucial that the national and local authorities support the community leaders and work to bring the perpetrators of all attacks to account,” he added.

Since 2013, the Murle and Dinka communities in Jonglei, which is in the central part of the country, have been engaged in long-standing inter-ethnic violence that has operated outside the wider political conflict in South Sudan.

“The perpetrators of this violence have undermined the ongoing peace and reconciliation efforts that [UNMISS] has supported in Jonglei,” Mr. Shearer said.

“The engagement that UNMISS has had with both communities has shown that the vast majority of people want to end the destructive pattern of revenge attacks,” he underscored.

The dead included humanitarian workers who, according to Mr. Shearer, were “working selflessly for the people of Jonglei.”

Their deaths, he added, are “pointless and utterly contemptible.”

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## [Libya's planned transit centre would](#)

## keep migrants from risky Mediterranean crossing – UN agency

29 November 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency has welcomed the decision by the Libyan authorities to set up a “transit and departure facility” in Tripoli for [refugees and migrants](#) in need of international protection – an initiative that offers viable alternatives to their dangerous journeys along the Central Mediterranean route.

“We hope that thousands of the most vulnerable refugees currently in Libya will benefit from this [forward-looking initiative](#),” said Roberto Mignone, Libya Representative of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

The initiative, which is supported by the Italian Government, will facilitate the transfer of thousands of vulnerable refugees to third countries.

Mr. Mignone added that the main objective is to speed up the process of securing solutions in third countries, particularly for unaccompanied and separated children and women at risk. These solutions will include resettlement, family reunification, evacuation to UNHCR-run emergency facilities in other countries, or voluntary return.

At the facility, UNHCR staff and partners will provide registration and life-saving assistance such as accommodation, food, medical care and psychosocial support.

In September, UNHCR called for an additional 40,000 resettlement places to be made available for refugees located in 15 countries along this route. So far, only 10,500 pledges have been made.

“We now need EU member States and others to step up with offers of resettlement places and other solutions, including family reunification slots,” said Mr. Mignone. “Together, these will be an important platform for securing solutions for these vulnerable people, based on shared responsibility.”

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## On Day of Solidarity, UN reaffirms two-state solution as only answer to ‘question of Palestine’

29 November 2017 – The Question of Palestine is inextricably linked with the

history of the United Nations and is one of the longest-standing issues on the Organization's agenda, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António said in his message commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

The Question of Palestine is inextricably linked with the history of the United Nations and is one of the longest-standing issues on the Organization's agenda, United Nations Secretary-General António said in his message commemorating the International Day of [Solidarity with the Palestinian People](#).

Seventy years since General Assembly Resolution 181 was adopted, a sovereign and independent State of Palestine has yet to emerge alongside the State of Israel.

"I remain convinced that the [two-state solution is the only one](#) for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The resolution of this conflict would also create momentum for greater stability throughout the region," stated Mr. Guterres.

Recalling his August visit to Israel and Palestine, the UN chief said leaders on both sides restated their commitment to a negotiated peace.

"I encourage them to tangibly challenge this commitment and create conditions for a meaningful negotiation. The recent positive developments in intra-Palestinian unity should be taken up by the leadership," he asserted.

The Secretary-General also reiterated his readiness "to work with all stakeholders, including the Middle East Quartet and countries in the region, to support a serious political process, drawing on all under UN resolutions, international law and agreements, that will achieve a two-State solution, end half a century of occupation and resolve all final status issues."

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed read Mr. Guterres' message at a Special Meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, before adding her own words.

Ms. Mohammed observed that for 70 years the UN has gathered on 29 November to support the Palestinian right to self-determination and independence and the establishment of a Palestinian State.

"Ending illegal Israeli settlement activity and demolitions in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is [crucial to the viability of a future Palestinian state](#) and to realizing the legitimate national and historic aspirations of both people. Eliminating violence and incitement is essential to building trust," she told the participants.

Ms. Mohammed stressed that with crumbling infrastructure, chronic unemployment and a paralyzed economy, Gaza is in a state of constant humanitarian emergency.

"This unsustainable reality demands urgent humanitarian, economic and political measures to support the Palestinian population. We must not leave

women, children and youth behind,” she asserted.

“Ending the occupation and achieving a two-state solution is the only path to enduring peace between Israelis and Palestinians. There is no other option,” emphasized Ms. Mohammed. For his part, General Assembly President Miroslav Lajčák underscored that the situation needs full-time attention that extends beyond humanitarian support, to facilitate a peaceful resolution.

“I firmly believe that a two-state solution is [the only answer](#) to what we call the question of Palestine,” he underscored.

According to Mr. Lajčák, the international community must support conditions conducive to a successful peace process. In addition to immediately halting settlement expansion, other actions encompassed the cessation and condemnation of all acts of violence, including terrorism, as well as the incitement to these acts.

“When it comes to the question of Palestine, we have a responsibility and we have an interest. Palestinian people do not need our sympathy – they deserve our solidarity,” he declared.

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## [UN aid chief spotlights challenges delivering relief inside war-torn Syria, urges continued support](#)

29 November 2017 – The conflict in Syria – now into its seventh year, longer than World War II – continues to ratchet up misery on its people, with millions living in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, a third of the country’s children out of school, and over half of its health facilities rendered inoperable, the United Nations top relief official said today.

The situation is [most dire in rural Damascus’ eastern Ghouta](#) (where 94 per cent of the besieged population is located), where fighting has seen a recent escalation and where, despite efforts of humanitarians, only about 100,000 out of an estimated population of 400,000 have received food assistance this year.

“The available evidence suggests severe acute malnutrition rates among children in eastern Ghouta have increased five-fold in the past ten months,” said Mark Lowcock, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, briefing the Security Council.

Deaths of people, especially children, from preventable can be prevented if aid convoys can be increased and made more regular, he expressed, adding: “Against this background, news over the last two days of a ceasefire in

eastern Ghouta would be – if true and if sustained – important.”



Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, briefs the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

In his briefing, the senior UN relief official also spoke of the recently released [2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Syria](#) as well as of increased displacement in north-west Syria, worsening fighting in north-east Syria, threats of explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices and the precarious humanitarian access as a result.

“At the same time, new restrictions on access and aid delivery in the north-east are limiting access to a number of people we had previously been able to reach with help,” said Mr. Lowcock, noting that since 9 November, the UN has faced a series of bureaucratic impediments imposed by the parties in the area resulting in the curtailment of humanitarian assistance for much of the past month.

Further, concerning delivery of aid, he also updated the Security Council of the efforts of UN actors to ensure aid reaches those that need it as well as of the challenges they face in the process.

“It is clear that each of the three modes of delivery [to Government-controlled areas, cross-line deliveries, and cross-border assistance] is critical for the people of Syria, and that there is complementarity between them. As needs remain high, it is important to preserve all means of access,” said the UN official, stressing that the renewal of the Security Council [resolution 2165 \(2014\)](#), which [authorized the UN and relief agencies to use the most direct routes for aid delivery](#) is “essential to save lives.”

Concluding his briefing, Mr. Lowcock also told the Security Council that following consultations with the authorities, he plans to visit Syria in early January 2018 to assess the situation and to discuss assistance to those in need can be improved.