

## Feature: Six months after ISIL, life is returning to Mosul despite hidden bomb threats

27 November 2017 – Mosul's Al Qasoor Water Treatment Plant is on the eastern bank of the Tigris River which bisects the city that was, until about six months ago, one of the last strongholds of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The water treatment facility – which looks from the air like two dark-green turn tables – today holds about 12,000 cubic metres of fresh water pumping to 300,000 people in 24 neighbourhoods; but shortly after ISIL fell, no one wanted to go near the site for fear that it was riddled with explosives.

"The explosive contamination [in Iraq] is very extensive. It is on an industrial scale," Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager for United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), told UN News by phone from Iraq. "I've worked in 14 countries, I've worked with this my whole life, but I've never seen the complexity or the variety."

He described improvised explosive devices combined with the ammunition that has been fired but failed to detonate.

"All the improvised explosive devices are with homemade explosives, different types of switches, ranging from pressure plates, anti-lift devices, infrared devices and even remote-control devices," he said, adding that there are also belts that go on for kilometres with tens of thousands of attached explosives that will set off like dominos.

The water treatment plant was, unlike the hospital in west Mosul or the University of Mosul, without explosives. Once UNMAS confirmed it was safe, the facility was rebuilt – most of the plant's pumps, valves, switches and control panels were destroyed, as was its chlorination system and filtration pools. It opened this past August.

Despite this danger, life is returning to Mosul and services are being re-established – school classes are resuming, hospitals are starting to treat patients, people play football in open areas.

This return to life was captured through the lens of Jarvis Yar, a documentary photographer based in the Middle East and on assignment for UNMAS in Mosul.

See the photos and hear from Mr. Yar and Mr. Lodhammar in the video below.

**VIDEO:** Six months after ISIL, life is returning to Mosul despite hidden bomb threats. Jarvis Yar, a documentary photographer, and Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager for United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), narrate.

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## 'No preconditions' accepted from Syrian parties, UN envoy says ahead of Geneva talks

27 November 2017 – Ahead of fresh [intra-Syrian talks](#) on Tuesday in Geneva, the United Nations mediator said Monday that the crisis now has the potential to move towards “a genuine political process.”

“International players are [clearly looking for some common ground](#) based on the implementation of Security Council [resolution 2254 \(2015\)](#), and are urging Syrians to begin to find some common ground too,” UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura told a Security Council meeting in New York via video link from Geneva.

As mandated by resolution 2254, the talks focus on governance, a schedule and process to draft a new constitution and the holding of elections as the basis for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned process to end the conflict.

Mr. de Mistura said that in preparing for the eighth round of intra-Syrian talks, he called for “real” diplomacy, with his messages focused on several points, such as that the Government and a united opposition should engage in negotiations in Geneva without any preconditions and that all other initiatives should support this UN mediation process.

He noted that some important meetings have recently taken place in Viet Nam’s DaNang, Russia’s Sochi, and Saudi Arabia’s Riyadh that might help the Geneva process.

In DaNang, Russian President Vladimir Putin and United States President Donald Trump affirmed that the political process “must include full implementation of Council resolution 2254.

In Sochi, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad expressed, after meeting President Putin, his intention to “talk with anyone who is really interested in a political settlement.”

Mr. de Mistura, however, noted the Government has not yet confirmed its participation in the new round of the UN-facilitated Geneva talks.

In Riyadh, an expanded opposition conference was convened last week, with all three groups mentioned in resolution 2254 present. The Syrian Negotiations Commission formed in Riyadh is travelling to Geneva.

***United support of international community and Security Council, vital for progress***

“Assuming that both parties arrive in Geneva, we will be looking to move them

into beginning serious discussions and hopefully negotiations. Let me make one thing clear: we will not accept any preconditions from either party,” he said.

He also stressed that more than 200 civil society actors will be engaged in the UN-led political process in Geneva over the next weeks.

He said he is invited to participate in a preparatory meeting on Tuesday that France organized to bring together representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council – China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States – in Geneva.

As for a large gathering on Syria in the near future that Russia is planning, Mr. de Mistrua said it is premature for him to say anything about that initiative.

“I will continue to view this proposal and all other initiatives through the same prism: does it contribute to effective UN-led intra-Syrian negotiations in Geneva to implement resolution 2254,” he said.

Syria has been at war for the last six years. Half of its population have fled their homes, and, [according](#) to the UN’s relief wing, some 13 million people require humanitarian aid, including nearly three million trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Reconstruction will cost at least \$250 billion.

“We see the emergence of international consensus, and we must begin to stitch the process into concrete results, enabling Syrians to determine their own future freely,” Mr. de Mistura said. “The united support of the international community, centred on this Council, will be vital if negotiations are to move forward in a concrete way.”

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## **Antalya: Solutions to today’s development challenges exist in the Global South, stresses UN official**

27 November 2017 – Solutions to today’s critical development challenges exist in the Global South, and every country – large or small, emerging economy or least developed – has something to offer to the world, a senior United Nations official said today, as the 2017 Global South-South Cooperation Expo opened in Antalya, Turkey.

“The beauty of South-South cooperation – first and foremost – is that this modality of international relations relies on solidarity expressed in concrete and demonstrable sharing of technical know-how, experience and

resources among developing countries,” said Jorge Chediek, the Secretary-General’s Envoy on South-South Cooperation and Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), at the opening ceremony.

Hundreds of participants from over 120 countries, including government ministers, development agency directors, and international and civil society stakeholders, have gathered for the world’s preeminent forum for showcasing, sharing, and scaling up innovative local solutions to global problems.

The event, hosted by the Government of Turkey and coordinated by UNOSSC, will focus on solutions “for the South, by the South” throughout the week. 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),” aims to engage stakeholders to scale up concrete solutions from the South to achieve the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

“South-South cooperation has gained a new centrality with respect to the 2030 Agenda, and despite the challenges before us South-South approaches provide a window of opportunity for us to share hard-won lessons,” Mr. Chediek said.

“Your presence here is proof that you are ready to take up the challenge; that you are ready to build bridges and partnerships; that you believe that solutions to today’s critical development challenges exist in the Global South; and that every country, large or small, emerging economy or LDC, has something to offer to the world.”

Since its inception in 2008, the Expo has featured documented best practices from hundreds of partner countries, UN agencies, private-sector enterprises and civil society organizations.

“Turkey began providing development assistance to countries in the region in the 1920s,” said Mevlüt Çavusoglu, Foreign Minister of Turkey.

Today the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) operates in over 120 countries, he explained, adding that Turkey ranks second in the world for humanitarian aid as per percentage of its gross national income.

Earlier this year, Turkey signed an agreement with the UN to establish a Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries to strengthen the science, technology and innovation capacity in the world’s poorest countries toward achieving the 2030 Agenda. “Knowledge-sharing is a priority for Turkey,” the Minister said.

One of the highlights of the week is the Exhibition, which was inaugurated following the opening ceremony and boasts 58 booths and 3 photo exhibits showcasing tested development solutions from the South.

The Expo takes place in the lead up to the 40th anniversary of the historic adoption of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA).

The Plan of Action set the agenda for the innovative concept of South-South

cooperation and provided a foundation to build the institutional mechanisms and structures that have contributed to shaping the international development agenda and changing the landscape of the global South as it is seen today. Argentina will host Second High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation, marking the 40th anniversary of the BAPA, in March 2019.

This week's gathering will focus on a number of issues, including climate change partnerships; peacebuilding; private sector engagement; science, technology and innovation; public service innovation; big data; youth employment and skills development; and women's empowerment.

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## [UN chief strongly condemns attack that kills peacekeeper in Central African Republic](#)

27 November 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) Antonio Guterres has strongly condemned Sunday's attack allegedly perpetrated by the anti-Balaka group against a convoy of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, in which one peacekeeper from Egypt was killed and three others were injured.

The Secretary-General offers [his deepest condolences](#) and sympathy to the family of the victim and to the Government of Egypt. He wishes a swift recovery to the wounded, said a statement issued by his Deputy Spokesman Farhan Haq following the attack, which took place on the Bangassou-Kongbo axis in the country's southeast.

With this latest attack, hostile acts have claimed the lives of 13 peacekeepers in the Central African Republic since January 2017.

The statement said that the Secretary-General firmly recalls that attacks against UN peacekeepers may constitute a war crime and calls on the country's authorities to investigate the attack to swiftly bring those responsible to justice.

The Secretary-General reaffirms the determination of the UN to advance the implementation of the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)), recently renewed by the Security Council, in particular to protect civilians and to help advance the political process in the country, the statement added.

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# No man will reach full potential unless women reach theirs, UN says on Day of Eliminating Violence

25 November 2017 – Unless the international community tackles violence against women, the world will not eradicate poverty or reach any of the other Sustainable Development Goals, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said in his message today for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

“It is time to further our collective action to end violence against women and girls for good,” the Secretary-General [said](#) marking the Day, which on 25 November, highlights that around the world, more than 1 in 3 women in their lives have experienced physical violence, sexual violence, or both.

The Day also spotlights the work of women’s rights activists, who are being targeted at “alarming levels”, and violence against women politicians, which hamper women’s rights.

“It is time for united action from all of us, so that women and girls around the world can live free from harassment, harmful practices, and all other forms of violence,” Mr. Guterres said.

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against women, one of the ways that the UN is helping the international community fight this scourge, is a grant system that has given away more than \$129 million to groups and individuals supporting women’s rights.

The UN is also involved in the recently launched ‘Spotlight Initiative’ with the European Union to connect UN efforts with the work of national governments and civil society; and the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative.

Among other efforts, the UN launched a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and has said that it is committed to continuing the ‘UNiTE to End Violence against Women’ Campaign, under the new title ‘UNiTE by 2030’.

## ***Afghan women and girls***

In Afghanistan, the top UN official in the country stressed that “life free from all forms of violence is the right of every Afghan woman and girl.”

Calling for violence against women in Afghanistan to immediately stop, Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)), said that no Afghan man will achieve his full potential unless women and

girls in Afghanistan reach theirs.

“For Afghan women to achieve their full potential and their immense capacity in development, in peace and in security, the violations of the rights of women and girls, particularly through violence, must cease,” he said.

“Violence against women and girls is not inevitable,” said Rebecca Tavares, Country Representative ad interim for the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women ([UN Women](#)). “There are many ways to prevent violence in the first place, and to stop its recurrence.”

The UN family in Afghanistan stressed that alongside the effective legal and institutional mechanisms for access to justice, stopping violence against women requires an effort from all of us, from every individual, to speak out against violence in homes, workplaces and social settings.