

# At Security Council, UN chief urges cooperation to tackle security challenges in Mediterranean

17 November 2017 – The Mediterranean is a confluence of civilizations, cultures, religions, trade and migration is facing multiple security challenges, such as terrorism, illicit trade in narcotics, environmental degradation and forced displacement, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said Friday.

The Mediterranean is a global junction of mutually enriching cultures, societies and economies. Yet violence and hatred are threatening that dynamism, to the detriment of the entire world, Mr. Guterres told a meeting of the UN Security Council chaired by Angelino Alfano, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, which holds the 15-member body's presidency this month.

Challenges facing the region include illicit trade in narcotics, weapons and petroleum products, large movements of [refugees and migrants](#), regrettably managed by human smugglers and traffickers, and maritime piracy.

The Mediterranean Sea provides immense economic resources such as hydrocarbons and fish stocks and invaluable trade routes. However, its benefits depend on stability and cooperation, the UN chief stressed.

Mr. Guterres went on to highlight difficulties in various parts of the region.

Libya's stability is vital for the region, but after years of prolonged transition, the country's institutions are deeply divided.

Instability in the Sahel region has contributed to an increase in irregular migration towards Europe.

**VIDEO:** Addressing the UN Security Council, Secretary-General António Guterres highlights the need for global solidarity to tackle the security challenges in the Mediterranean.

Egypt continues to face several security challenges, including from irregular migration and from the cross-border transit of weapons and fighters along its desert borders with Libya and Sudan and in the Sinai Peninsula bordering the Gaza Strip.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) will continue to thrive unless the deep political roots of the Syrian conflict are resolved through a credible and comprehensive political process.

Turning to the movement of refugees and migrants, Mr. Guterres said that so far this year, at least 2,800 refugees and migrants have perished in the Mediterranean, while countless others died on their way across the Sahel desert.

There is a clear need to create more regular and safe ways to protect those fleeing persecution, and address the drivers of displacement. We must also address the worrisome increase in xenophobia and discrimination against refugees, migrants and minorities, the Secretary-General said, stressing the need to re-establish the integrity of the refugee protection regime on both sides of the Mediterranean.

We should do our utmost to resolve the worst of the region so that it can continue to contribute its best.

All too often, responses to security challenges in the Mediterranean are undertaken largely or solely through traditional security arrangements or ad hoc solutions, he noted.

Such approaches carry the risk of prolonging unacceptable status quos or worsening situations if not backed by efforts to address the underlying root causes, he said, noting that efforts to achieve the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development have there an important role to play.

The Mediterranean is a global junction of mutually enriching cultures, societies and economies. Yet violence and hatred are threatening that dynamism, to the detriment of the entire world, the UN chief explained.

We should do our utmost to resolve the worst of the region so that it can continue to contribute its best, he said, adding: I count on countries in the Mediterranean and beyond to reaffirm their proud tradition of openness and solidarity.

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## **[Bonn: UN conference closes with renewed urgency for greater ambition to tackle climate change](#)**

17 November 2017 – The United Nations Climate Change Conference ([COP23](#)) wrapped up on Friday in Bonn, Germany, with delegations expressing a renewed sense of urgency and a need for greater ambition to tackle climate change.

Participants focused on how to maintain momentum two years after the adoption of the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change in the context of the recent

announcement by the United States of its decision to withdraw from the accord. At COP23, cities and local governments, including American cities and states, intensified their push to achieve the goals set out in Paris.

The Conference, which ran from 6 to 17 November, was chaired by Fiji, an island State particularly affected by the impacts of climate change. The Fiji Presidency announced an agreement on a Gender Action Plan, highlighting the role of women in climate action.

Apart from negotiations among Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), several new climate action initiatives, commitments and partnerships were announced by States and non-State actors in the areas of energy, water, agriculture, oceans and coastal areas, human settlements, transportation, industry, and forests. Climate finance and climate resilience were also at the center of the discussions at the conference.

More than 20 countries, including the Canada, Finland, France, Mexico, and the United Kingdom, launched a new global coal alliance aimed at achieving the rapid phase-out of existing traditional coal power and at placing a moratorium on any new traditional coal power stations without operational carbon capture and storage.



### **COP23: Concrete Climate Action Commitments**

As the UN Climate Change Conference comes down to the last day and governments work to complete the final negotiation decisions, it's good to be reminded of the new wave of climate action that has been announced during COP23 from countries, cities, states, regions, business and civil society

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Businesses and other non-government partners have in turn made commitments to focus on powering their operations without coal.

The 19 Member countries of the 'Biofuture Platform,' including Brazil, China, Egypt, France, India, Morocco, Mozambique, also announced on Thursday formal agreement on the development of targets for biofuels and to construct an action plan to achieve them.

“Sustainable biofuels can provide solutions to the energy transport nexus. This partnership offers us that chance,” said Rachel Kyte, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and CEO, Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All).

Among other initiatives announced during the Conference, a global initiative was launched Tuesday with the aim of providing insurance to hundreds of millions of vulnerable people by 2020 and to increase the resilience of developing countries against the impacts of climate change. The 'InsuResilience' Global Partnership is a major scaling-up of an initiative

started by the G7 in 2015 under the German Presidency.

The Conference took place one year after the entry into force of the Paris Agreement. The Agreement, which was adopted by the 196 Parties to the UNFCCC in December 2015, calls on countries to combat climate change by limiting the rise of global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius and strive not to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius. Today, 170 Parties have ratified the treaty.

The Conference, which was attended by some 27.000, took place in a sobering context of alarming scientific reports of climatic changes. A week before the opening of the Conference, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) announced that the levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere surged at record-breaking speed to new highs in 2016.

COP23 will be followed by a series of summits and conferences on climate change which are scheduled ahead of the UN Climate Summit in September 2019, including the 'One Planet summit' to be convened by France next month and focusing on financing, a gathering in California, bringing together non-State actors, and the COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018. Brazil has offered to host COP25 in 2019.

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## [New UN funding to help sustain critical aid programmes for nearly 150,000 in Chad](#)

17 November 2017 – The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)) – a pool of funding which supports critical relief operations in crises around the world – has allocated \$11 million to help meet the life-saving needs of some 147,000 people in southern Chad, where aid operations are faltering in want of resources.

[These funds well] help us meet urgent needs of refugees, returnees and local populations when our humanitarian appeal is seriously underfunded," [said](#) Stephen Tull, the Humanitarian Coordinator in the African nation.

To date, less than 40 per cent of the requirements have been met at national level [and the allocation will] support a new joint programme of assistance," he added.

The latest allocation follows an earlier release of \$10 million in September last year in the same region to cover the priority needs of the most vulnerable communities. In 2017, the provinces of Moyen-Chari, Mandoul, Logone Oriental and Logone Occidental witnessed several new populations influxes, compounding the crisis.

The situation was further complicated by the gradual withdrawal of humanitarian partners due to an increased lack of funding.

The latest batch of resources will help provide multi-sectoral emergency assistance through multi-purpose cash transfers, and contribute to strengthening basic social services, food security, protection, shelter and livelihoods. Funds will also support nutrition, health and education programmes.

About 14 per cent of the allocation will also be used by the UN Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) services to maintain humanitarian access throughout the country.

However, in spite of the additional funds, the needs remain daunting.

According to Florent Méhaule, the head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) in Chad, further support remains critical to help the 866,000 people in need of emergency assistance.

“This funding will only cover a fraction of the needs,” he added, underscoring that increased involvement of development actors and of the Government to support and complement the efforts of the humanitarian community and help reinforce the resilience of affected populations.

Established by the UN General Assembly in 2006, CERF is a humanitarian funding mechanism managed by OCHA, on behalf of the UN Secretary-General. It enables a faster and more effective response to vital needs of people affected by natural disasters, armed conflicts, or under-funded crises.

Since 2006, the Fund has provided \$173 million to aid programmes in Chad and is the third largest humanitarian donor in the country.

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## [Famine may be unfolding ‘right now’ in Yemen, warns UN relief wing](#)

17 November 2017 – The United Nations relief wing on Friday warned of famine-like conditions unfolding in Yemen, as a blockade on aid and other essential goods by a Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels there enters its 12th day.

Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), sounded the alarm during the regular bi-weekly news briefing in Geneva.

He was responding to a question from a journalist who asked him to clarify a [warning yesterday from UN aid chiefs](#) that the closure of air, sea and land

ports in Yemen threatened millions of vulnerable children and families.

It means that these are the number of people in areas where there's an IPC4 Integrated Phase Classification 4 which is the last step before obviously 5, which is famine [...] But you are correct, there may be as we speak right now, famine happening, and we hear children are dying. I mean, there's excess mortality as a cause and consequence of undernourishment.

Yemen imports up to 90 per cent of its daily needs, including fuel, which has now reached crisis levels.

Reserves are in such short supply that three Yemeni cities have been unable to pump clean water to residents in recent days, according to UN partner the Red Cross.

This has left one million people at risk of a renewed cholera outbreak, just as the country emerges from the worst epidemic in modern times.

RELATED: [Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen](#)

Other diseases are also a threat, including diphtheria, a serious infection of the nose and throat, that's easily prevented with a vaccine.

It is spreading fast and has already claimed 14 lives, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which said that a vaccination campaign is planned in nine days' time.

In addition to water and sewage problems in Hodeida, Sa'ada and Taiz, the Red Cross warned that the capital Sana'a and other cities will find themselves in the same situation in two weeks – unless imports of essential goods resume immediately.

Also at the briefing, Alessandra Vellucci, for the UN Information Service (UNIS) recalled yesterday's statement in New York from Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General regarding a letter the UN chief sent to the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations.

In the letter, the Secretary-General said that the blockade imposed by the coalition since 6 November is already reversing the impact of humanitarian efforts. While he welcomed the reopening of Aden port, the Secretary-General noted that this alone will not meet the needs of 28 million Yemenis.

As such, the Secretary-General called on the Saudi-led coalition to enable the resumption of UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights to Sana'a and Aden airports, and the reopening of Hodeida and Saleef ports so that fuel, food and medical supplies could enter Yemen.

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# [Photo Story: World pushing for faster climate action at Bonn conference](#)

17 November 2017 – The international community has been meeting in Bonn, Germany, for the past two weeks to tackle climate change. One year after the entry into force of the Paris Climate Agreement, the annual Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) is an opportunity for nations around the world to show their ambition for climate action and their determination to keep their promises under the theme of “Further, Faster – Together.”

The gathering, known as COP23, started last Monday, with technical discussions over the [Paris Agreement](#), and featured high-level events this week, including an address by UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres.

In his address on 15 November, Secretary-General Guterres called climate change “the defining threat of our time,” adding that “our duty – to each other and to future generations – is to raise ambition.” He called for lowering emissions and doing more to adapt to the changes, including through investment in climate-friendly developments, building partnerships, and strengthening political leadership. Pictured: UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, Secretary-General Guterres, and Ovais Sarmad, UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary.

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While senior officials addressed the international community, one of the most reported stories was of 12-year-old Timoci Naulusala, whose village in Fiji’s Tailevu province was hit by a cyclone last year. “My once beautiful village is now a barren and empty wasteland,” he told the thousands of participants. “Climate change is here to stay unless you do something about it.”

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At the heart of the conference in Bonn is the Paris Agreement, which was adopted by the 196 parties to the UNFCCC in December 2015. It calls on the international community to combat climate change by limiting global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius and strive not to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius. Above, children at the welcoming ceremony at COP23 on 6 November.

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“While Paris represented one of those moments where the best of humanity achieved an agreement so important to our collective futures, Bonn represents how we will move forward to fulfil its promise,” said the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa. “We are running out of time to turn things



around. To do so, we must significantly increase our efforts to reduce emissions and our carbon footprints.” Ms. Espinosa is pictured above on one of the bicycles ferrying people between venues for the conference, along with electric buses.

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Fijians performing a traditional ceremony at the opening of COP23. The president of the conference is Fiji – the first time a small island country on the frontlines of climate change holds that honour. Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama said the world can no longer ignore phenomena such as extreme storms and rising sea levels: “It’s hard to find any part of the world that is unaffected by these events.”

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Above, protesters at one of the COP venues in Bonn. They are among the thousands of delegates from 193 countries – as well as scientists, environmentalists and advocates – estimated to be participating in the two-week event. Given the high turnout, the event is being held in Germany, where logistics are a lesser strain on the country’s resources, rather than in Fiji, which officially holds the presidency.

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Among the side events scheduled at COP23 are several focusing on the power of cities, regions, private sector companies and investors, in implementing the Paris Agreement in the areas of energy, water, agriculture, oceans and coastal areas, human settlements, transportation, industry, and forests. Pictured above are signs from an alliance that calls itself “America’s Pledge.” Led by California Governor Jerry Brown and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the group says it is committed to the Paris Agreement after President Donald Trump said in June that the United States would withdraw from it.

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*Credit: Jose M. Correa/UNDAC*

Among the initiatives launched at the climate conference is the InsuResilience Global Partnership, which aims to offer insurance against climate risks to an additional 400 million poor and vulnerable people in developing countries by 2020. At the start of the initiative, only around 100 million poor and vulnerable people in Africa, Asia and Latin America were insured against climate-related risks. [Read more about the initiative from our team in Bonn.](#)

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A week before the opening of the Conference, the UN World Meteorological



Organization (WMO) announced that the levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) surged at “record-breaking speed” with levels in 2016 higher than anything seen in at least 4.5 million years – before humans existed. The findings coincide with WMO data showing that 2017 is likely one of the hottest years on record.

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Climate change is a threat to rich and poor alike, wrote Ms. Espinosa, UN Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner and the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Robert Glasser in an [opinion piece](#) published in October. They talked about the devastation that Category 5 hurricanes brought to the Caribbean and the United States, and warned that the severity and frequency of such weather events will escalate, unless something is urgently done. Pictured, damage on 8 September from Hurricane Irma in Antigua and Barbuda.

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Our team in Bonn has been filing stories for two weeks. [Here is our first.](#) We speak to UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Ms. Espinosa, and revisit the Marrakech Climate Conference, which set the stage for this month’s event. Next year’s climate conference will take place in Poland. Pictured: Aerial view of the Bonn Campus, Germany.