

# 'Unity, solidarity and collaboration' can turn tide on terrorism, bolster human rights, says UN chief

16 November 2017 – Noting that at least 11,000 terrorist attacks occurred in more than 100 countries last year, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres stressed on Thursday that “terrorism is fundamentally the denial and destruction of human rights.”

“Terrorism has been unfortunately with us in various forms across ages and continents,” Mr. Guterres said in a lecture on counter-terrorism and human rights at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.

“But modern terrorism is being waged on an entirely different scale, and notably its geographic span. [No country can claim to be immune](#),” he added.

Last year, more than 25,000 people died and 33,000 injured in at least 11,000 terrorist attacks in more than 100 countries.

In 2016, nearly three-quarters of all deaths caused by terrorism were in just five states: Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Nigeria and Somalia. The global economic impact of terrorism is estimated to have reached \$90 billion in 2015. That year, terrorism costs amounted to 17.3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in Iraq and 16.8 per cent in Afghanistan.

Recalling how the *Magna Carta* 800 years ago established the principle of the rule of law, the Secretary-General said that at its core, human rights are a true recognition of common humanity.

“When we protect human rights, we are tackling the root causes of terrorism. For the power of human rights to bond is stronger than the power of terrorism to devastate,” he said.

## ***Priority actions in counter-terrorism***

He went on to underscore five key counter-terrorism priorities.

First, he stressed the need for much stronger international cooperation, announcing that he intends to convene the first-ever UN summit of heads of counter-terrorism agencies next year to forge new partnerships and build relationships of trust.

Second is a sustained focus on prevention, which includes addressing the factors that radicalize young people and make terrorism a fateful option for them.

Terrorists are losing physical ground in Syria and Iraq, but gaining virtual

ground in cyberspace. Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube have launched an anti-terror partnership, the 'Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism,' aimed at thwarting the spread of extremist content online.

When terrorists portray violence as the best way of addressing inequality or grievances, we must answer with non-violence and inclusive decision-making UN chief Guterres

"This is a start. We need to keep the momentum," he said.

Third is to uphold human rights and the rule of law.

Facing threats of an unprecedented nature, States are scrambling to enhance efficiency of their counter-terrorist legislation. Without a firm basis in human rights, counter-terrorism policies can be misused and abused, for instance, to suppress peaceful protests and legitimate opposition movements.

Fourth, the battle of ideas must be won. "We should never shrink from pointing out the cynicism and errors of terrorism. At the heart of darkness, we should build a new age of enlightenment," Mr. Guterres said.

"When terrorists portray violence as the best way of addressing inequality or grievances, we must answer with non-violence and inclusive decision-making," he added.

The Secretary-General's fifth priority is to lift up the voices of the victims of terrorism. Some of the best guides are the victims and survivors of terrorist attacks, who consistently call for accountability and results – not blanket measures or collective punishments.

He urged young people to become clear-thinking and enlightened citizens.

*Learn more about the UN's range of counter-terrorism efforts, including victims' support, [here](#)*

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## **Bonn: Climate engineering is risky, but should be explored, experts say at UN conference**

16 November 2017 – Climate engineering, or climate intervention, is risky but needs to be explored as a supplement – not as a 'Plan B' – to greenhouse gas emissions reduction, said experts at the United Nations Climate Change Conference ([COP23](#)), in Bonn, Germany.

Climate engineering, also referred to as geoengineering, is the deliberate and large-scale intervention in the climate system with measures including carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere or solar radiation management.

“We can do a lot, we have to do a lot, we have to try much harder at cutting our emissions, but there will remain certain emissions, especially in the land use sector, which are not going away. So we actually need to start talking about this removal of greenhouse gases inevitably,” said Matthias Honegger, research scientist with the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, at a press conference.

Different approaches are being discussed. Some already exist, like planting trees. Other ideas include dispersing certain minerals in the oceans to enhance the growth of algae, which then as they sink to the ocean floor, would create a net flux of carbon from the atmosphere into the oceans.

“Business as usual is a little worrying,” said Dr. Hugh Hunt, from the Department of Engineering at Cambridge University. “The concept of not doing anything is full of danger. Now the concept of cooling the planet is full of danger as well.”

“We need to have full-on public engagement, full-on societal involvement. The reason is that the risks of climate change are huge, the risks of doing nothing are huge; but the risks of geoengineering are huge as well. We’ve got to explore those risks, because who knows, we may end up entering a very risky world without understanding it,” he added. “Geoengineering risks are not well understood and need to be explored.”

### ***Stratospheric aerosol injection***

Due to the great uncertainties over effectiveness and side effects of climate engineering including the risk of disrupting natural systems experts think that there is a need to discuss climate engineering governance, especially as it relates to stratospheric aerosol injection.

Stratospheric aerosol injection consists of injecting sulfate aerosols into the stratosphere with aircraft or balloons to create a global dimming effect.

“This technology is absolutely terrifying. We may actually need it, but then, who do we want to decide. That’s where this society-wide discussion has to take place,” said Janos Pasztor, Executive Director of the Carnegie Climate Geoengineering Governance Initiative (C2G2), and former UN senior climate advisor. “It would require a level of international cooperation that we have not yet seen.”

“Who will decide whether we should make use of stratospheric aerosol injection and when that decision should take place? [...] Who will make that decision on behalf of the world? And then how far do we turn the thermostat of the global air conditioning system [...] to cool the planet?” he said.

“There are issues: the more temperature you want to reduce the higher the chance there will be negative impact and the higher the chance that some

of these impacts will not be the same across different geographical zones. You might end up in a situation where some people benefit from the reduced temperature but some people would have negative impacts. What do you do with those people? How do you compensate them? How do you take care of them?&#8221 he added.

Mr. Pasztor concluded that the highest priority should remain the gas emission reduction. &#8220But we have to consider these other options, as supplements, not as a 'Plan B,'&#8221 he warned.

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## [UN agency chiefs call for immediate lifting of humanitarian blockade in Yemen](#)

16 November 2017 – With much of Yemen's air, sea and land entry points closed, heads of three United Nations agencies on Thursday called for immediate lifting of such blockade in the conflict-ravaged southern Arabian country so that lifesaving humanitarian supplies can pass.

&#8220While the Saudi-led military coalition has partially lifted the recent blockade of Yemen, closure of much of the country's air, sea and land ports is making an already [catastrophic situation](#) far worse,&#8221 said a joint statement issued by World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) Executive Director David Beasley, UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) Executive Director Anthony Lake, and World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

&#8220The space and access we need to deliver humanitarian assistance is being choked off, threatening the lives of millions of vulnerable children and families,&#8221 the statement added.

Since 2015, Yemen has been in a conflict between forces loyal to President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi and those allied to the Houthi rebel movement.

The UN agency chiefs jointly appealed for the coalition to permit entry of lifesaving supplies to Yemen, describing the situation &#8220the worst humanitarian crisis in the world&#8221 in which more than 20 million people, including over 11 million children, are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, at least 14.8 million are without basic healthcare and an outbreak of cholera has resulted in more than 900,000 suspected cases.

&#8220Some 17 million people do not know where their next meal is coming from and 7 million are totally dependent on food assistance. Severe acute malnutrition is threatening the lives of almost 400,000 children. As supplies run low, food prices rise dramatically, putting thousands more at risk,&#8221 the statement said.

The statement said that all of the country's ports – including those in areas held by the opposition – should be reopened without delay, as that is the only way that UN-chartered ships can deliver the vital humanitarian cargo that the population needs to survive.

Flights from the UN Humanitarian Air Service – into and out of Yemen – should be given immediate clearance to resume.

The clock is ticking and stocks of medical, food and other humanitarian supplies are already running low, the statement said, warning that the cost of this blockade is being measured in the number of lives that are lost.

On behalf of all those whose lives are at imminent risk, we reiterate our appeal to allow humanitarian access in Yemen without further delay, it said.

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## Nearly a third of Darfur's people still displaced, despite drop in violence, Security Council told

15 November 2017 – The armed groups in Darfur have largely been defeated and the ferocity of intercommunal violence has declined, but anxiety over safety continues to keep many people from returning to their homes, a senior United Nations peacekeeping official told the Security Council on Wednesday.

"However, those positive developments have not led to the voluntary and sustainable return of internally displaced persons," said Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, noting that nearly one third of Darfur's population remained displaced.

Presenting the Secretary General's latest report on the African Union UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur ([UNAMID](#)), she said the slow returns reflected anxiety about security and lack of confidence about present and future prospects, as progress has been slow on addressing such issues as land, poor resource management, accountability, and security sector reform.

The political process to negotiate a settlement of the conflict in Darfur with non signatories to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur remains stalled, she said, adding that armed clashes between Government and non signatory forces have subsided.



Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations speaks to the Security Council on the Sudan and South Sudan & African Union-

## United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

Describing the Doha Document as integral to addressing underlying communal tensions, she said its full implementation is an entry point for sustaining peace because it touches on the causes of the decades long conflict, including land, displacement and relationships with nomadic herders.

The Government has begun the next stage of its disarmament campaign – the forced collection of weapons – which has raised tensions among militia groups not aligned with Government forces.

She went on to report that intercommunal violence also persisted. On 7 November, UNAMID prevented a group of armed Arabs from entering the internally displaced persons site, she said, adding that on 10 November, the mission intercepted a group of Arab nomads firing randomly on the outskirts of Sortony.

Emphasizing the importance of augmenting capacity to support longer term peacebuilding activities, she said UNAMID and the UN country team have finalized the integrated strategic framework for 2017 2019, which set out priorities on the rule of law and human rights, durable solutions, and peacebuilding for human security.

With the closure of 11 team sites and reduced numbers of military and police personnel, the mission's civilian staffing has been readjusted and its budget for 2017 2018 revised, she said.

Ms. Keita went on to report that the Jebel Marra Task Force is expected to become operational on 1 January 2018, but voiced regret that the allocation of land on which to open a new team site in Golo is still pending.

Establishing that new team site will be essential to underpinning the concept of reconfiguring UNAMID, and goes hand in hand with the mission's withdrawal from more stable parts of Darfur, she explained.

In conclusion, she said the level of cooperation between UNAMID and the Government of Sudan has been positive overall, although challenges remain in terms of access restrictions and customs clearance at Port Sudan.

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## Central African Republic: UN mission mandate extended, additional 'blue helmets' authorized

15 November 2017 – The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday extended

the mandate of the Organization's peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), until 15 November 2018, increased the mission's troop level by 900 military personnel.

The increase in the number of the Mission's 'blue helmets' comes against the backdrop of increasing fighting in the African nation and the resulting added insecurity and misery of its civilian population.

The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR, known by its French acronym, MINUSCA, has also come under numerous attacks, which have killed at least 12 peacekeepers this year and injured many more.

In an effort to draw attention to the fragile situation in the country that, in his words, is "often far from the media spotlight," [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) travelled to CAR in late October.

In CAR, the UN chief warned of religious divisions in the country, stressing that these rifts are a result of "political manipulation that must be condemned and avoided at all costs."

**SEE ALSO:** [UN chief warns of religious divide in CAR, seeks global solidarity to rebuild country](#)

#### ***Security Council condemns incitement to ethnic, religious hatred***

Through a [unanimously adopted resolution](#), the 15-member Council condemned "in the strongest terms" incitement to ethnic and religious hatred and violence and the multiple violations of international humanitarian law and the widespread human rights violations and abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, committed – in particular – by the mainly Muslim ex-Seleka and mainly Christian anti-Balaka elements, as well as other militia groups, and the targeting of civilians from specific communities.

The Council also reiterated its serious concerns over the "dire humanitarian situation" in the country because of the deteriorating security situation, and the lack of access for and attacks against relief workers.

According to estimates, over 600,000 people have been internally displaced within the country and more than 500,000 have sought refuge beyond CAR's borders. This total figure of more than 1.1 million displaced – internally or abroad – is the highest ever recorded for the country.

Also by the resolution, the Security Council called on the national authorities to take concrete steps, "without delay and as a matter of priority," to strengthen justice institutions and to fight impunity and urged them continue their efforts to restore the effective authority of the State over the whole territory of the CAR.

#### ***Human rights, including child protection and sexual violence in conflict***

Concerning the human rights situation in the country, the Council reiterated the urgent need to hold accountable all perpetrators of violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law.

It also called upon all parties to conflict, including ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka elements, to end all violations and abuses committed against children, in violation of applicable international law, including those involving their recruitment and use, rape and sexual violence, killing and maiming, abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals.

“[The Council] further calls upon the CAR authorities to swiftly investigate alleged violations and abuses in order to hold perpetrators accountable and to ensure that those responsible for such violations and abuses are excluded from the security sector,” read the resolution.