

# Accelerate climate action and raise ambition, urges UN chief

10 November 2017 – As the impact of climate change worsens around the world, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has called on the global community to redouble efforts to help countries respond to climate shocks, especially the most vulnerable.

“I am encouraged to see climate action taking hold, at all scales, at all levels, involving an ever-wider coalition of actors and institutions,” said the Secretary-General, at a [press stakeout](#) at the UN Headquarters, in New York.

“But we need to do more,” he underlined.

In his remarks, the UN chief said that he will be travelling to Bonn to participate in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23), where, he will urge efforts to accelerate climate action as well as to raise ambition to do more.

“The window of opportunity to meet the 2-degree target may close in 20 years or less and we may have only five years to bend the emissions curve towards 1.5 degrees,” he said, noting the need for a further 25 per cent cut in emissions by 2020.

Speaking on the need for bolstering finance, Mr. Guterres called for mobilizing the agreed \$100 billion annually for developing countries, which is crucial to spur action.

He also said that in September 2019, he will convene a Climate Summit to mobilize political and economic energy at the highest levels.

“I ask world leaders to show courage in combatting entrenched interests; wisdom in investing in the opportunities of the future; and compassion in caring what kind of world we build for our children,” he said.

“As a former politician myself, I have no doubt that in today’s world, this is the path to progress today and a meaningful legacy for tomorrow.”

Also at the stakeout, the UN chief informed that before Bonn, he will visit the Philippines to attend the UN-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Summit, and after participating at COP23, he will deliver an address at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London on counter-terrorism and human rights on Thursday, 16 November.

“As the world responds to modern terrorism, our goal must be to win the fight while upholding our values,” he said.

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## [Victims can help shape effective counter-terrorism strategies, says senior UN official](#)

9 November 2017 – Surviving victims can help shape effective strategies to counter terrorism, a senior United Nations counter-terrorism official said on Thursday, pledging to provide practical, pragmatic and realistic support to victims.

“Victims are [powerful and credible](#) messengers,” the Under-Secretary-General of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office, Vladimir Voronkov, at a roundtable discussion on victims’ resiliency in New York. “And I promise that we will continue to make victims our priority,” he added.

To rectify a deficit of information on and for victims, the [UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal](#) was created in June 2014. It has grown in strength, attracting more and more users to its site, he said.

The [UN Office of Counter-Terrorism](#) has also commissioned a series of documentaries on victims of terrorism. Created together with the Department of Public Information (DPI), the series provides a platform to give victims a voice on a variety of issues.

At Thursday’s [event](#), the documentary *Surviving Terrorism: Victims’ Voices from Norway*, offered an intimate portrayal of two victims of the July 2011 mass killings by Anders Breivik.

The film showed the lives of Ms. Kamzy Gunaratnam and Mr. Viljar Hanssen as they recover from the attack and turn their experiences into something positive.

**VIDEO:** [Surviving Terrorism: Victims’ Voices from Norway](#)

“Building a resilient society is a powerful tool in the fight against terrorism,” Mr. Voronkov said at the earlier discussion. “A society that is resilient is more likely to uphold human rights and the rule of law, and not give into the grievances of terrorists.”

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# Syrian conflict has now lasted longer than World War II – UN humanitarian envoy

9 November 2017 – While there had been a period of de-escalation in many areas of war-riven Syria – reducing human suffering to some extent – the fighting now seems to be returning to some of the “bleakest days” of the conflict, a senior United Nations official warned Thursday.

The situation is particularly concerning in eastern Ghouta, near the capital Damascus, where some 400,000 men, women and children are living in besieged towns and villages, and extremely high prices have put food and basic supplies beyond reach. There are fears that [conditions could get much worse as winter closes](#) in and temperatures could plummet to freezing.

“[They have been through] a seven-year war, longer than the second World War,” Jan Egeland, the Special Advisor to the UN Special Envoy for Syria, told journalists after a meeting of the Humanitarian Task Force in Geneva.

“With little, if any, reserves, no heat in their houses and living amid ruin, [for them] it will be a horrific winter,” he warned.

Since September, eastern Ghouta, on the outskirts of the capital, Dmascus, has been completely cut off and the sole life-line for those still there are humanitarian convoys which, when successful in getting to the location, brings in food and medical supplies.

There are also growing numbers of acutely malnourished children, noted Mr. Egeland, calling on the parties to the conflict to allow medical evacuation urgently.

An estimated 400 patients – about three quarters of whom are women and children – need to be evacuated.

“We have confirmation that seven patients died because they were not evacuated and a list of 29 critical cases [...] including 18 children, among them young Hala, Khadiga, Mounir and Bassem [...] they all have a name, they all have a story, they all have to be evacuated now,” stressed the Senior Advisor.

Evacuation, is however, not the solution, he stressed, calling for the fighting and shelling to stop.

Further, the UN envoy informed that the situation is equally dire in Berm, a desolate area in south-east Syria, where as many as 55,000 civilians are in need of assistance but the last time relief was able to reach them was in June.

Also in his remarks, Mr. Egeland also said that a trilateral mechanism,

initiated by Russia, and having the UN and Syria onboard, offers hope to help address problems.

“[The mechanism] had its first meetings. It still hasn’t produced the results needed, but it is our strong feeling that Russia wants us to get the access and wants to help us, so we are hopeful that this trilateral mechanism will yield results soon,” he added.

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## **‘Leave no stone unturned’ to secure aid funding for Central African Republic, senior UN official urges**

9 November 2017 – One out of every four people in Central African Republic (CAR) is either displaced or living as a refugee in another country, a senior United Nations official said Thursday, urging the international community to provide more resources for a humanitarian plan that up to now is only partially funded.

“The aid community has very limited capacities and is struggling to provide basic services” outside of the main two cities, Najat Rochdi, told journalists in New York, saying the situation hinders on “life and death.”

Briefing on the latest humanitarian developments in CAR – where she is the Deputy Special Representative for the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission ([MINUSCA](#)) and UN Resident Coordinator – Ms. Rochdi said the nearly \$500 million Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017 is only about 39 per cent funded.

“This is not the time to give up on the people of CAR,” Ms. Rochdi said, highlighting “unprecedented levels of hunger” in a country where people are dependent on agriculture, and where women and children are particularly vulnerable.