

[In Saudi Arabia, UN envoy seeks to further initiatives to end violence in Yemen](#)

25 October 2017 – A United Nations envoy has met with senior Yemeni and Saudi officials to discuss his initiatives to end fighting in Yemen, stressing that “this is at heart a political conflict so it can only be solved with political negotiations.”

These discussions took place in Saudi Arabia’s capital, Riyadh, where UN Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed wrapped up a four-day visit Wednesday.

In 2015, Yemen plunged into civil war between Houthi rebels and supporters of Yemen’s internationally recognized Government.

“We are currently exploring significant steps that each side can take to restore confidence and move towards a viable negotiated settlement,” said Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed at the end of the visit during which he met with Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and Foreign Minister Abdel-Malek Al-Mikhlafi.

The UN envoy added that these steps include a renewed ceasefire, confidence-building measures to alleviate the humanitarian suffering and the return to the negotiation table towards a comprehensive peace agreement.

During the visit, the UN envoy also met with Saudi officials, including Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir and Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Satterfield, as well as Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayyani.

“This large-scale suffering must end. I appeal to the parties to make the necessary concessions that can help paving the way for a long-lasting peace, and to the international community to ensure unity of purpose in supporting these much-needed initiatives,” Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed said.

[Peru must place human rights at heart of development, urges UN rights chief](#)

25 October 2017 – While Peru has made great strides over the past decade in reducing poverty, it needs to stand up firmly for human rights to ensure an economy that is sustainable and benefits all, according to the United Nations

human rights chief.

"I welcome Peru's efforts to fight poverty and exclusion, and its economic progress is undeniable," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein on Tuesday at the end of a [two-day](#) visit to the country – where he met with President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, authorities from Congress and the Judiciary, civil society representatives and the private sector.

"The country must now consolidate such advances by continuing to strengthen the rule of law and the protection of human rights," he added.

"Development, to be truly sustainable, should not leave anyone behind, and should never be at the expense of the rights of some members of society," the High Commissioner stressed.

The High Commissioner highlighted the Government's development of a National Human Rights Action Plan and called for the meaningful participation of all sectors, particularly civil society groups.

"It is our sincere hope that the resulting National Action Plan can adequately address Peru's human rights needs, particularly those of the most vulnerable groups," he said, reiterating his office's readiness to continue providing support and technical expertise.

Mr. Zeid also urged the Government to protect human rights defenders, saying "Peru is no exception to a trend across the Americas – and indeed the world – of harassment, intimidation and alarming attacks on human rights activists."

The implementation of the 2016 legal framework and National Plan to search for people missing between 1980 and 2000 is also urgent, according to the High Commissioner who voiced concern that "the recommendations made more than a decade ago by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have to date been insufficiently implemented."

"The high level of impunity for violations committed during this period is deeply troubling," the High Commissioner recalled, saying that victims' needs must be addressed, including their right to truth, justice and reparations and "resources must be made available to ensure that the search for the missing can be fully carried out."

Turning to the presidential pardon for former President Alberto Fujimori, who was sentenced in 2009 to 25 years in prison, Mr. Zeid stressed: "Fujimori was convicted of crimes amounting to crimes against humanity, that is, crimes of interest to the international community as a whole. The international community must be approached and engaged in this highly important matter."

Mr. Zeid acknowledged that with women and girls at high risk of gender-based violence, laws designed to prevent and punish those crimes, including domestic violence and femicide, are important, however rigorous implementation and strong preventive measures are also required to ensure punishment for the perpetrator.

"I urge the Government to address the social and cultural attitudes that

continue to be used to justify violence against women,” he said.

Mr. Zeid also appealed for improvements in women’s sexual and reproductive rights, calling the country’s recent amendments aimed at promoting gender equality and LGBTI a “setback.”

[In Central African Republic, UN chief warns of religious divide, seeks global solidarity to rebuild country](#)

25 October 2017 – On the second day of his visit to the Central African Republic (CAR), United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Wednesday called on the international community to show solidarity in helping the crisis-torn country chart a new future while warning against religious divide.

“This visit is a visit of solidarity but of active solidarity,” said Mr. Guterres during a press briefing after meeting with President Faustin Archange Touadéra and members of his Government in the nation’s capital, Bangui.

He called for the active engagement of the international community in the country because “there is an opportunity to build a new Central African Republic that is peaceful, secure and prosperous.”

Mr. Guterres also reiterated the need to strengthen the UN peacekeeping mission, known for its French acronym MINUSCA, so it can better protect the population.

He said a political will of openness is well translated in the recent enlargement of the Government, warning, however, that religious divisions that had not existed before are now seen.

“They are only the result of political manipulation that must be condemned and avoided at all costs,” he told reporters.

According to his Spokesman, the Secretary-General and his party then travelled to Bangassou in the southeast of the country. At the local UN force camp, he laid a wreath to honour Moroccan and Cambodian soldiers killed earlier this year in the line of duty as UN forces tried to protect the population.

In addressing representatives of the contingents, he told them how proud he was to be one of their colleagues and that their efforts were courageous as they attempted to keep the peace in areas where all too often there is no

peace to keep.

From there, the Secretary-General went on to the compound of the Catholic church in Bangassou, which is now home to more than 1,200 Muslim residents of the area. They had sought shelter from communal violence earlier this year. Mr. Guterres also listened as a 14-year old Muslim girl explained her community's concerns and wish for reconciliation.

The Secretary-General excoriated politicians who use religion to divide communities that often worship the same God, and urged religious leaders to live up to their responsibilities by being apostles for peace.

He also met with local authorities and civil society leaders, encouraging them as well with a message of reconciliation.

The spokesman said the Secretary-General returned to Bangui, where he is scheduled to meet with the UN humanitarian and development team, as well as with non-governmental organizations later on Wednesday.

Plausible that 'attack or threat' led to crash that killed former UN chief Hammarskjöld – new report

25 October 2017 – A new United Nations-mandated report has found it “appears plausible” that an external attack or threat may have led to the fatal plane crash that killed former United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.

António Guterres on Tuesday called on UN Member States to make available information concerning the 56-year-old incident. A [statement](#) issued his Spokesman said Mr. Guterres is of the view that the information made available to the UN to date has been insufficient and that it seems likely that important additional information exists.

The chartered DC6 plane registered as SE-BDY crashed just after midnight on 17-18 September 1961, near Ndola (then Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia), killing Mr. Hammarskjöld and 14 of the 15 members of the party accompanying him, with the sole survivor succumbing to injuries a few days later.

“There is a significant amount of evidence from eyewitnesses that they observed more than one aircraft in the air, that the other aircraft may have been a jet, that SE-BDY was on fire before it crashed, and/or that SE-BDY was fired upon or otherwise actively engaged by another aircraft,” noted Eminent Person Mohamed Chande Othman in his report, [transmitted](#) to the General Assembly Tuesday.

"It appears plausible that an external attack or threat may have been a cause of the crash, whether by way of a direct attack causing SE-BDY to crash or by causing a momentary distraction of the pilots. Such a distraction need only have taken away the pilots' attention for a matter of seconds at the critical point at which they were in their descent to have been potentially fatal."

Over the year, a series of inquiries have explored various hypotheses for the crash, including aerial or ground attack or other external threat ("external attack or threat"), sabotage, hijacking, and human error.

Conclusions of investigation

In the [report](#), the Eminent Person concluded that it is almost certain that Mr. Hammarskjöld and the members of his party were not assassinated after landing and that all passengers died from injuries sustained during the plane crash, either instantaneously or soon after.

Exploring whether a sabotage – possibly a bomb planted on the plane and activated before landing – led to the crash, "as part of a plot to 'remove' Hammarskjöld," Mr. Othman reported that he attempted to obtain access from South Africa to the 'Operation Celeste' documents, which concern this claim, but at the time of writing his report, access to the documents had not been granted.

Noting that in the time available, and in view of the emergence of new matters requiring further analysis of facts, he was not able to conclude all aspects of the work, the Eminent Person noted that it appears to him "reasonable to conclude that the burden of proof has now shifted to Member States" to show that they have conducted a full review of records and archives in their custody or possession, including those that remain classified, for potentially relevant information.

He also recommended that Member States appoint an independent and high-ranking official to conduct a dedicated and internal review of their archives, in particular, their intelligence, security and defence archives, with a view to ensuring comprehensive access to relevant information and establishing what happened on that fateful night.

"An incident such as this where one or more of the hypotheses of the air crash may have involved an adverse or hostile act or acts on the Secretary-General of the United Nations is a matter of highest public interest," he noted, urging for meaningful participation of key Member States in identifying material relevant to the tragic incident.

"This is a step that must be taken before this matter, and the memories of those who perished on flight SE-BDY in the service of the Organization, may rest," he concluded.

Migrants helped to return from Greece, reintegrate, start businesses back home – UN agency

25 October 2017 – Over the past 15 months, more than 2,000 migrants who have voluntarily returned home from Greece have successfully reintegrated back into their countries of origin, according to the United Nations migration agency.

“Building on the collaboration between Greece and the countries of origin, this [reintegration support enhances opportunities](#) for social and economic sustainability, both for returnees and local communities,” said Gianluca Rocco, the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) Chief of Mission in Greece, in a press statement on Thursday.

Between June 2016 and September 2017, IOM supported 2,084 returnees, assisting their reintegration through a grant of 1,500 euros in in-kind support, provided exclusively or in combination to set up small businesses or receive medical assistance, education, temporary accommodation, vocational assistance, material assistance, and job placement.

Mr. Rocco explained the importance of reintegration support as an essential component of IOM’s Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration ([AVRR projects](#)), saying that it further strengthens a cooperative, humanitarian approach for people who have decided to return home from Greece.

For migrants who need to return home but lack the means to do so, assisted voluntary return and reintegration is often the only approach to address their immediate plight. AVRR allows the migrants concerned to prepare for their return, encouraging them to identify potential opportunities for socioeconomic reinsertion into communities of origin, thereby facilitating the sustainability of their return.

The vast majority of approved personalized reintegration plans – 1,953 – were for setting up small businesses, while IOM’s social workers and psychologists worked with cultural mediators to conduct 3,671 individual counselling sessions with voluntary returnees, 2,084 of whom were eligible for reintegration assistance.

According to IOM, the main considerations for selecting candidates to be approved for reintegration support are a person’s vulnerability, work experience and skills that can guarantee the sustainability of the reintegration plan.

Breaking down the origins of voluntarily returning migrants, Pakistan had 1,184 – the most by far. Some 342 returned to Georgia and 173 to Iraq while about 1,750 beneficiaries were male and 334 female.

IOM's global presence makes reintegration assistance available worldwide, and the assistance is based on collaboration between the countries where the plans are being implemented.

The UN migration agency in Greece currently works closely with over 25 IOM offices and third countries to enhance tailored reintegration assistance, link it with the needs of the local labour market, and ensure long-term, sustainable reintegration assistance.

IOM's reintegration assistance is provided under the framework of the European Union (EU) and Greek government-supported programme, Implementation of Assisted Voluntary Returns, which includes AVRR and is funded by the EU's Asylum Migration and Integration Fund as well as the Greek Ministry of Interior.