

[Syria: UN health agency steps up health services for thousands of people in Raqqa](#)

25 October 2017 – The United Nations health agency is stepping up the delivery of medicines and medical supplies to thousands of people in newly accessible areas of Raqqa.

“The immediate objective of WHO [World Health Organization], together with local health authorities and NGO [non-governmental organization] partners, is to scale up life-saving health services for thousands of people who had been deprived of essential health care,” said Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Syria. “We are also ensuring the availability of quality vaccines for children.”

In a news release issued Tuesday, the agency said that [five tons of shipment](#), including medicines and medical supplies for 500 trauma cases and 37,000 medical treatments, have been provided to Al-Tabqa National Hospital, the closest hospital to Raqqa.

This was the second shipment of health supplies provided by WHO to the hospital since its reopening in September 2017. The hospital was partially damaged in February 2017 due to intensive fighting in the area, but the emergency department, internal medicine and pediatric sections have been rehabilitated.

More than 13,500 people currently live in Raqqa city, where access to health services remains limited.

Since its rehabilitation, the hospital has treated more than 3400 patients, including more than 800 women and 1,300 children.

[Meet Gladys Nkeh, a UN police officer in the Central African Republic](#)

24 October 2017 – Gladys Ngwepekeum Nkeh is a United Nations police officer ([UNPOL](#)) from Cameroon, one of some 12,870 uniformed personnel working with the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic.

Earlier this year, the officer and her team went to a school – Ecole des 136 villas – in Bangui looking for Ashley, a young girl who she found out from community leaders had been raped and became pregnant.

“She was so very sad,” Gladys told *UN News*. That day would be a turning point for Ashley, for Gladys, and for hundreds of girls who attend the school.

Gladys was deployed to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) eight months ago as a gender officer.

Every day, Gladys collaborates with the national police in the capital, Bangui, at the police station for the First District. She monitors the work of the national police, ensuring that the basic human rights of detainees are respected, and that international professional standards are met.

She also meets regularly with community members in central Bangui, talking to local leaders and traditional chiefs to promote gender rights.

By meeting with community members, Gladys learned about Ashley Bongo Passi, a 13-year-old girl who was raped and became pregnant as a result. Gladys supported Ashley, and her 25-year-old mother, by sending Ashley to the non-governmental organization Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), or Doctors Without Borders, for medical aid.

Gladys also worked to identify the rapist and arrest him, while also providing Ashley with support for clothes and baby formula for her six-week-old baby. Ashley was able to go back to school, and she named her baby Gladys, in tribute to the UN police officer who supported her. Gladys continues to help with Ashley’s school fees.

In addition to her regular duties, Gladys and her UNPOL colleagues provide classes at Ashley’s school, Ecole des 136 villas, on sexual education and preventing gender-based violence. The students are from the last elementary class (CM2) at the school, which has over 2,700 students.

[Marking UN Day in Central African](#)

Republic, Secretary-General honours peacekeepers

24 October 2017 – Commemorating United Nations Day alongside UN peacekeepers in the Central African Republic, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Tuesday paid tribute to the sacrifices made by uniformed personnel in the service of peace.

“I want to say that we need to make sure that the world fully appreciates the [heroic contributions](#) of peacekeepers protecting civilians, sometimes in extremely difficult circumstances, like the ones we face in the Central African Republic,” said Mr. Guterres at a wreath-laying ceremony for peacekeepers in the country’s capital, Bangui.

He said these ‘blue helmets,’ as UN peacekeepers are informally known, work where sometimes the peace is elusive, which means that they die, are wounded, and sacrifice their lives to protect civilians.

Noting that women and men of the UN police and military forces are the UN brand in the world, he said “your sacrifice is something that the UN will always honour.”

The 24th of October, the day in 1945 when the [Charter of the United Nations](#) entered into force, is celebrated annually as UN Day. In 1971, the General Assembly recommended that the day be observed by UN Member States as a public holiday.



Secretary-General António Guterres arrives in Bangui for a visit of solidarity with the people of the Central African Republic and UN peacekeepers serving with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission ([MINUSCA](#)). UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



Secretary-General António Guterres is greeted by residents of Bangui, Central African Republic. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



Secretary-General António Guterres takes part in a wreath-laying ceremony to honour peacekeepers who lost their lives in the line of duty while serving with MINUSCA. N Photo/Eskinder Debebe



Secretary-General António Guterres (left) takes part in a townhall meeting with staff serving with MINUSCA. To his right is Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative in the country and Head of MINUSCA. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

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At UN Headquarters in New York, the Organization's Department of Public Information will [organize](#) a concert featuring the Slovak National Folklore Ballet, Lúènica.

The theme of the concert is 'Potential in Diversity' and is sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the UN.

Also, Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, on behalf of the Secretary-General, will present the [2017 Secretary-General Awards](#) in categories, including innovation and creativity; implementing efficiencies; gender equality and parity; and champion of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

Mr. Guterres, in his first UN Day message, called on people around the world to overcome their differences to address global challenges that go beyond

national borders.

Our world faces many grave challenges. Widening conflicts and inequality, extreme weather and deadly intolerance, [and] security threats including nuclear weapons, said Mr. Guterres in a video message.

We have the tools and wealth to overcome these challenges. [All we need is the will.](#)

In his message, the UN chief stated that the challenges faced by the world transcend borders and, therefore, everyone needs to transcend their differences to transform our future.

When we achieve human rights and human dignity for all people they will build a peaceful, sustainable and just world, he added, urging humanity noted in the UN Charter as 'We the Peoples' to make this vision a reality.

Eradication of polio 'once and for all' within reach – UN health agency

24 October 2017 – Despite progress towards global eradication of polio, sustained commitment is needed to overcome the final hurdle and stamp out the disease once and for all, the United Nations health agency said today, the World Polio Day.

So far in 2017, a total of 12 cases of polio had been reported, in two countries, fewer cases than ever before [and] innovative methods have put eradication within reach, Christian Lindmeier, a spokesperson for the World Health Organization told journalists at the regular [news briefing](#) at the UN Office in Geneva.

Today, only three endemic countries remained affected by the disease Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan.

Challenges remain, especially in these polio-endemic countries [and] sustained commitment is needed to overcome those challenges and eradicate polio once and for all, added Mr. Lindmeier.

[Polio](#) is a debilitating disease which mainly affects young children is caused by a virus that is transmitted by person-to-person spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a common vehicle (such as contaminated water or food) and multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.

The disease has no cure, but can be prevented by immunization.

In the [past year](#), over 400 million children around the world received the polio vaccination, giving them vital protection against the disease.

SEE ALSO: [10 facts on polio eradication](#)

[UN migration agency delivers hygiene kits to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh](#)

24 October 2017 – Soap, toothbrushes, water containers and liquid antiseptic are among the items the United Nations migration agency is distributing to the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees that have settled in sprawling camps that cover the Cox's Bazar district of southern Bangladesh.

These kits ensure that Rohingya families particularly women and children can at least [meet their personal care](#) and hygiene needs as they face the harsh reality of life in the makeshift settlements, Sarat Dash, International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Bangladesh Chief of Mission said on Tuesday.

The kits, which also include hygienic cloths, menstrual hygiene products, undergarments, and other small personal items, are funded by the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

To date, IOM has distributed 6,626 hygiene kits to the most vulnerable families, reaching an estimated 33,130 people among those that have arrived in Bangladesh after fleeing violence in Myanmar's Northern Rakhine state.

The kits are part of a \$5 million CERF contribution to fund IOM shelter, health, water, sanitation and hygiene operations in Cox's Bazar.

CERF funding has been critical to saving lives in this humanitarian crisis. It has allowed us to scale up and respond to the escalating needs of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar in a very short timeframe, Mr. Dash stressed.

An estimated 603,000 refugees have arrived in the Cox's Bazar district of southern Bangladesh since August joining some 200,000 others already sheltering in the settlements. Most of the new arrivals come with nothing but the clothes on their back, often having walked for days without food or water. Many have experienced devastating physical and emotional trauma.

Committing to help

On Monday, IOM, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

([OCHA](#)) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) organized a [pledging conference](#) in Geneva co-hosted by the European Union and the Government of Kuwait. There, 35 international donors pledged \$345 million to ramp up, over the next six months, critical humanitarian assistance for the refugees and host communities in Bangladesh.

The pledges, which include money already committed, cover nearly 80 per cent of the \$434 million appealed for in the UN Joint Response Plan aimed to meet the basic needs of 1.2 million newly arrived and existing refugees and their Bangladeshi hosts in Cox's Bazar through February 2018.

Without these vital funds, humanitarian agencies will not be able to continue to provide protection and life-saving aid to one of the most vulnerable groups in the world," said IOM Director General William Lacy Swing, after the pledging conference.

"We welcome these pledges, but I hope that the end of this conference does not mean the end of new funding commitments. We have not reached our target and each percentage point we are under means thousands are left without food, healthcare and shelter," he added.

IOM is appealing for \$120 million to meet the needs of the most vulnerable Rohingya and the Bangladeshi communities hosting them over the next six months.