

## UN chief voices concern over 'potentially destabilizing effects' of Kurdish referendum

25 September 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres voiced concern about the “potentially destabilizing effects” of today’s referendum in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

“The Secretary-General respects the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Iraq and considers that all outstanding issues between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government should be resolved through structured dialogue and constructive compromise,” his Spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric, said in a [statement](#).

“The Secretary-General expects that United Nations-mandated activities across Iraq, including in the Kurdistan region, will be allowed to continue unhindered.”

Last week, both Mr. Guterres and the Security Council voiced their concern that the referendum was scheduled to be held amid ongoing operations to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh) – in which Kurdish forces have played a critical role.

The referendum could also detract from efforts to ensure the safe, voluntary return of over three million refugees and internally displaced persons, they noted.

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## At UN Assembly, Nicaragua underscores dialogue and negotiation as way to peace

25 September 2017 – The Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations, Maria Rubiales de Chamorro, addressed the General Assembly’s annual debate today, reflecting on the political will and action that must be undertaken to achieve a better and peaceful world.

“We must assume the commitment to continue fighting for peace, which is a global priority, of our peoples, and that the conflicts that arise in different regions of our planet can be overcome, through dialogue, through negotiation and, above all, free from the use or threat of use of force, which is what our peoples desire most, from the peoples of the great powers,

to the peoples with small populations, small in development, but great, great in their values and in their history,” she quoted the President.

Turning to UN reform, she pointed out that after 72 years, “our Organization has not been able to fully comply with the objectives set out in its Charter,” saying that a “re-foundation” is urgently needed, including transformations of the Security Council to ensure that its composition and function reflects the geopolitical and economic realities.

Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro also underscored that ambitious actions are urgently needed to combat climate change. Concerned about the unprecedented record temperatures reached at the global level, she said “Developed countries must take the lead and change their unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and meet their financial commitments and technology transfers.”

Noting that her country signed the Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty, she underscored that verbal confrontation and threats of using nuclear weapons are unacceptable. “There is a need to advance in the commitment to eliminate nuclear arsenals in the world, until they disappear from our planet and utilize these enormous resources for the eradication of poverty,” she stressed.

[Full statement available here](#)

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## **Ongoing settlement activities undermining Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, warns UN envoy**

25 September 2017 – Continuing settlement expansion, most notably in occupied East Jerusalem, is making the two-State solution increasingly unattainable and undermining Palestinian belief in the international peace efforts, a senior United Nations official told the Security Council today.

“In addition to illegal settlements, the practice of demolishing Palestinian structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and displacing Palestinians undermines the prospects of peace,” [said](#) Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

Briefing the 15-member body on the latest developments, Mr. Mladenov reported that since June, Israel’s illegal settlement activities have continued at a “high rate,” a consistent pattern over the course of this year. Activity during this period was concentrated primarily in occupied East Jerusalem, where plans were advanced for over 2,300 housing units in July, 30 per cent more than for the whole of 2016.

The reporting period witnessed the eviction of a Palestinian family in Sheikh Jarrah, residents for over 50 years, after a protracted legal battle. The building is located in a section of the neighbourhood in which several settlement plans were among those promoted in July.

“The United Nations considers all settlement activities to be illegal under international law and an impediment to peace,” the Special Coordinator stated.

He went on to note that violence persisted as one of the main obstacles to resolving the conflict. Although the reporting period was characterized by relatively low levels of fatalities, a number of incidents occurred, resulting in the deaths of 19 Palestinians and eight Israelis. Settler-related violence and punitive demolitions of Palestinians homes by the Israeli authorities also continued.

“Continued violence against civilians and incitement perpetuate mutual fear and suspicion, while impeding any efforts to bridge the gaps between the two sides,” said Mr. Mladenov.

“I once again urge both Palestinians and Israelis to demonstrate their commitment to rejecting violence, inflammatory rhetoric and provocative actions.”

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## **United Nations ‘backbone’ of global order, stresses Norway at Assembly**

25 September 2017 – Underscoring that the “unprecedented” progress achieved by human kind over the last decades cannot be taken for granted, Norway called for continued international cooperation to safeguard the achievements and to ensure that they remain sustainable.

“Protectionism and isolationism will reverse our common development. We need more trade and cooperation – not less,” said Tore Hattrem, the Chairperson of the Delegation of Norway at the 72nd annual general debate of the United Nations General Assembly.

The world cannot afford to “shake the very foundations” that its open, global economic order is based on, he added.

In his remarks, Mr. Hattrem stressed that the United Nations is the “backbone” of the global order, noting, in his words that a strong and healthy back is needed to address and resolve the challenges the world is facing today.

“But we know that we can do it together.”

He also urged continued commitment for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), in particular Goal 4, on inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Norway's head of delegation also noted that the country has actively supported the UN since it was founded, and expressed his support to [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres' vision for the Organization.

[Full statement available here](#)

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## [Allow people to be 'dignified agents of their own destiny,' Holy See tells UN debate](#)

25 September 2017 – The Observer of the Holy See, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary of Relations with States, speaking on the final day of the United Nations General Assembly's annual debate praised this year's theme – 'Focusing on People: Striving for peace and a decent life on a sustainable planet'– saying that Pope Francis "never tires of insisting on people first, especially those who suffer, those who are excluded, marginalized and left behind."

The Archbishop underscored the importance of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms as the foundation of peace, security and integral human development. The Holy See sees reforming the UN development system as an additional opportunity to place people at the centre of its actions, recounting the Pope's message to 'allow them to be dignified agents of their own destiny.'

Turning to the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change, he said that while Pope Francis defined the Agenda as an "important sign of hope," he warned against "assuaged consciences," saying: "We must not rest until the legal commitments have been truly accomplished and the political promises have been fulfilled in the lives of people."

The duty to prevent wars and violent conflicts is an essential component of the 'responsibility to protect,' he continued. Against that backdrop, the Archbishop stressed the need for an environment of trust saying that "prevention requires, first of all, restoring faith in the capacity of humankind for dialogue." He encouraged all countries to take urgent steps back from military preparations, exhorting that "all the diplomatic and political means of mediation should be engaged to avoid the unspeakable."

Another great challenge facing the international community is trafficking in

persons. The Archbishop pointed to conflicts, extreme poverty, underdevelopment and exclusion along with the lack of education and employment as being at the root of this and other contemporary forms of slavery.

“Pope Francis calls on all, in particular the competent authorities, to address such a heinous crime through effective juridical instruments, to punish those who profit from it, to assist the healing and the reintegration of its victims, and to eradicate its root causes,” he stated, adding “our response must be commensurate to this great evil of our time.”

[Full statement available here](#)