

Yemen: Senior UN relief official voices concern at reports of airstrikes on civilians

7 August 2017 – Expressing a deep concern about reports of airstrikes on civilians in Yemen's Sa'ada Governorate, a senior United Nations relief official has urged all parties to the conflict and those who influence and support them to uphold their responsibility under international humanitarian law to protect civilians.

All parties to the conflict continue to [show a disregard for the protection of civilians](#) and the principle of distinction between civilians and combatants in the conduct of hostilities," said Jamie McGoldrick, the Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, in a statement issued over the weekend by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

Attacks on a house in As Safra District and on a private vehicle in Razih District on Friday have reportedly resulted in the deaths of at least 12 civilians, including women and children and the injury of 10 more people.

While these new incidents are still being investigated by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)), they are an example of the brutality in which the conflict is being conducted, Mr. McGoldrick stated.

"As I have said before, even wars have rules and such rules must be respected," he added.

Meanwhile, UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric told reporters at UN Headquarters today that there had been a delay in the delivery of fuel needed for the UN's humanitarian operations in the country but UN team has got assurances that fuel will be moving this week from Aden to the capital, Sana'a.

"We ask authorities for a mechanism to help ensure regular delivery of aviation fuel for UN operations," Mr. Dujarric said.

UN health agency working to boost malaria prevention and control in north-eastern Nigeria

7 August 2017 – The United Nations health agency estimates that if more funds are secured, up to 10,000 lives in Nigeria could be saved by November through

targeted steps in malaria prevention and control.

To manage malaria in the Borno state of north-eastern Nigeria, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and its partners are strengthening surveillance systems to monitor cases and outbreaks; increasing people's access to care in clinics and to health facilities; spraying insecticides and distributing bed nets as part of vector control; and administering malaria drugs to children under five every month from July to October.

Following more than eight years of conflict in Borno, some 3.7 million people need humanitarian assistance and all are at risk for malaria. WHO estimates that through October, 8,500 people are infected weekly with more expected.

The most effective way to reduce deaths in emergencies in fragile States, especially those facing malnutrition, is by [boosting malaria prevention and control](#), however, this is often not viewed as the top priority during an emergency response, said Dr. Pedro Alonso, Director of WHO's Global Malaria Programme. We are working with our WHO colleagues and many partners to change this.

WHO estimates that over half of recorded deaths there are due to malaria comprising more than all other diseases combined, including cholera, measles and hepatitis E. The vulnerable population, consisting of 58.8 per cent children, stands at risk of disease outbreaks.

With more than 60 per cent of health facilities only partially functioning, many people have not had access for years to regular health services, including vaccinations and basic medicines. In addition to security concerns, deadly malnutrition is rising in parts of the state.

Tackling health emergencies

Malaria, malnutrition, fragile States and civil strife often feed each other, said Dr. Alonso, adding: Wherever we have a humanitarian crisis in a malaria endemic country, we can almost always be sure that malaria is the number one killer.

However, malaria is preventable and curable, and increased efforts over the last 15 years have drastically reduced related mortality rates by more than 60 per cent, averting six million deaths.

Following a visit, WHO malaria experts commissioned a modelling exercise that concluded that joint actions could prevent up to 10,000 deaths in Borno state alone.

In early July, the first of four monthly rounds of mass drug administration reached more than 880,000 of the 1.1 million under-age-five children targeted.

WHO hopes for \$2.5 million to mobilize the emergency intervention and is relying on the existing polio vaccinator infrastructure to carry out the operation, which faces Boko Haram security threats.

“We will give one curative dose of antimalarial drugs to a defined population, in this case children under-five,” said Dr. Alonso. “In Borno state, we are giving an antimalarial drug to a child, whether they have malaria infection or not, to ensure they are cleared of parasites at that point and to protect them for four weeks. It’s a necessary temporary fix to reduce malaria deaths for the next six months.”

WHO has trained community health workers to offer rapid and read diagnostic tests, provide treatment and advise on prevention.

“We will not know the full impact of our efforts until November, but we are confident that taking these steps will go a long way in reducing deaths and suffering of people from malaria so they can get on with their lives,” said Dr. Wondi Alemu, WHO Representative in Nigeria.

‘Don’t turn a blind eye’ to dire situation of children in DR Congo’s Kasai region – UNICEF

7 August 2017 – The world must not turn a blind eye to the dire situation of children and families in the Grand Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said today, stressing that nothing can justify terrible acts of abuse against women and children.

“Children and women tell us of terrible acts of abuse. Many children have been recruited by armed forces, drugged and caught in the violence. Nothing can justify these actions,” said Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, in a statement.

Over the past 12 months, more than 1.4 million people – including 850,000 children – have been forced from their homes, and their lives turned upside down by widespread acts of extreme violence. More than 200 health centres have been destroyed, and one in four health centres is no longer functioning normally. An estimated 400,000 children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition.

Children have lost a year of education, as hundreds of schools have been targeted and looted, teachers killed or fled for safety. Teachers are not able to go to work, while parents are scared to send their children to school.

She urged all parties to the conflict to protect children, end grave violations against children, and preserve schools and health services.

Humanitarian actors must have unhindered humanitarian access to affected populations so that we can reach all those in need of assistance," she said.

UNICEF is responding to the escalating humanitarian needs, "but unless this violence stops, our best work will never be enough," she said. "The lives of many thousands of children are at risk."

[On anniversary of Hiroshima atomic bombing, UN chief calls for intensified effort on nuclear disarmament](#)

6 August 2017 – With the presence of some 15,000 nuclear weapons on earth, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today urged all States to intensify their efforts in the shared pursuit of a nuclear-weapons-free world.

"Our dream of a world free of nuclear weapons remains far from reality," said Mr. Guterres in his message delivered on his behalf by High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu at an annual memorial held in Hiroshima, Japan, for the victims of the atomic bomb dropped on the city today in 1945.

"The states possessing nuclear weapons have a special responsibility to undertake concrete and irreversible steps in nuclear disarmament," Mr. Guterres stressed, warning against the continued presence of some 15,000 nuclear weapons and dangerous rhetoric regarding their use.

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He went on to state that the world looks to Hiroshima, as the city "built on resilience and hope" "has come back from the tragic event 72 years ago. "Your determination for peace is an inspiration to the world," Mr. Guterres said.

On a positive note, he highlighted a major development in 2017, in particular the adoption last month of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons by UN Member States.

This outcome was the result of a global campaign focused on the unconditional unacceptability of the use of nuclear weapons, the Secretary-General noted, acknowledging the invaluable contribution made by Hiroshima's message of

peace and the heroic efforts of *hibakushas*, or survivors of the atomic bombs.

They have reminded the world of the devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, he said, expressing UN support for a global effort towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

[UN notified of US intention to withdraw from Paris climate pact](#)

4 August 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today received a notification from the delegation of the United States expressing the country's intention to withdraw from the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change as soon as it is eligible to do so, his spokesman has confirmed.

The notification came two months after President Donald Trump announced his intention to leave the accord.

“As the Secretary-General said in a statement on [1 June](#) 2017, the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Paris Agreement is a major disappointment for global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote global security,” said UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric in a [note](#) sent tonight to correspondents.

Under article 28 of the Paris Agreement, a Party may withdraw at any time after three years from the date on which the Agreement has entered into force for that Party, and such withdrawal takes effect upon expiry of one year from the date of receipt by the Depositary of the notification of withdrawal. The United States accepted the Paris Agreement on 3 September 2016 and the Agreement entered into force for the United States on 4 November 2016. This means that the US must stay in the pact until at least 2019.

The communication says the US intends to exercise its right to withdraw, unless it identifies suitable terms for reengagement.

The Secretary General welcomes any effort to reengage in the Paris Agreement by the United States, Mr. Dujarric said.

“It is crucial that the United States remains a leader on climate and sustainable development. Climate change is impacting now. He looks forward to engaging with the American government and all other actors in the United States and around the world to build the sustainable future for our children and future generations,” he added.

The Spokesman said that the Secretary-General is the depositary of the Agreement, and will circulate the text of this communication as a notification, in English and French, early next week.