

DRC's Kasai region one of world's 'largest displacement crises' for children – UNICEF

31 July 2017 – Waves of violent conflict in the Greater Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have forced more than one million people, including hundreds of thousands of children from their homes, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has reported.

The lives of hundreds of thousands of children and their families in Greater Kasai have been [turned upside down by this brutal violence](#), said Tajudeen Oyewale, UNICEF Acting Representative in the DRC in a press statement issued late last week, calling the situation in the restive region of the DRC one of the largest displacement crises for children in the world.

A total of 1.4 million people, including 850,000 children, have been displaced, with at least 60,000 uprooted in the month of June alone, he added.

Most of the displaced, who have lost or left behind all their essential goods and personal belongings, live now with foster families and relatives in communities that are among the poorest in the country.

A smaller number of displaced families have fled to improvised huts in the bush near their villages. These families are the most vulnerable and least accessible to humanitarian workers. They suffer from lack of adequate food, shelter, healthcare, water and sanitation.

This is a rapidly growing humanitarian crisis, and with our partners, we are working amid great insecurity to try to help these highly vulnerable families, said Mr. Oyewale.

UNICEF and its partners have implemented a cash assistance programme for displaced people that provides households with \$100 cash support, which can be used for basic necessities. To date, UNICEF has supported 11,225 households through this programme.

In addition to the cash programme, a flexible multi-sectoral programme called Rapid Response Mechanism pre-positions materials and aid partners to rapidly respond to the needs of displaced populations. The assistance includes healthcare, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and essential non-food items such as shelter materials, kitchen utensils, buckets of water, blankets. Some 50,000 households are expected to benefit from this programme over the coming months.

Thanks to donor support, UNICEF and its partners have so far this year, assisted 157,490 people in urgent humanitarian need.

UN joins international community to salute park rangers' dedication and commitment

31 July 2017 – Park rangers across the world face increasing challenges and risks due to a surge in poaching and illicit trafficking in wildlife, the head of the United Nations entity on protection of endangered species today said, honouring the work of park rangers in protecting wild animals, plants and culture.

Honest and hardworking park rangers devote their lives [to protecting our natural resources and cultural heritage](#) and, in some areas, these brave men and women regularly encounter well-resourced groups of poachers, equipped with high caliber weapons, who do not hesitate to use violence or threats of violence against them," said John Scanlon, Secretary-General of the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

In recent years, rangers have increasingly been targeted by criminals seeking some of the world's most iconic animal species, such as elephants and rhinos, and plants, such as rosewood.

Mr. Scanlon added that the "illegal trade in wild animals and plants is occurring at a scale that threatens wildlife, people and their livelihoods" and is being driven by transnational organized crime groups and rebel militia groups, as well as rogue elements of regular military forces.

The dedication and commitment shown by these honest hard working park rangers on a daily basis is worthy of much greater public recognition," Mr. Scanlon said, welcoming World Ranger Day which is marked by the international community but not by the UN specifically.

VIDEO: Message from Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit

World Ranger Day takes place annually on 31 July to recognize the park rangers around the world who have been injured or killed in the line of duty.

In the past year, at least 105 rangers were killed doing their job, according to the International Ranger Federation.

The UN Environment Programme's ([UNEP](#)) Wild For Life programme added its voice today to celebrate rangers' work.

Praising park rangers for facing an array of challenges, including natural

disasters like avalanches and floods, Wild For Life called rangers hands-on heroes.

Fighting crime, educating the public, and protecting our heritage... all in a day's work for the rangers [that safeguard](#) the earth's most treasured locations, the campaign said.

It noted that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at least 140 rangers [were killed](#) in the past 15 years in the Virunga National Park.

[Philippines: UN experts urge Government to address spiralling rights violations](#)

31 July 2017 – A group of United Nations experts has urged the Government of the Philippines to immediately address reported human rights violations, including murder, threats against indigenous peoples and the summary execution of children.

Attacks are spiralling against many groups in society and we are making an urgent appeal for Government action, [said](#) a joint statement issued by Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; and Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children.

They said attacks target indigenous peoples and human rights defenders, including children.

The experts noted that a number of villagers, farmers and human rights defenders seeking to protect the ancestral land of Lumad indigenous peoples against businesses have been reportedly killed, or executed outside the ordinary legal proceedings.

Last week, President Rodrigo Duterte, speaking in a televised news conference on 24 July, threatened to bomb Lumad schools on Mindanao.

We urge the Government to ensure effective protection of individuals and groups who may be subject to extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions, or those who received death threats, the experts said.

The Government must also prevent incitement to violence or killings against indigenous communities, human rights defenders and farmers, they concluded.

The group of UN human rights experts has been in contact with the Government of the Philippines regarding these concerns.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

‘Act now’ to help and protect trafficking victims, UN urges on World Day against the scourge

30 July 2017 – Criminal groups feed off the instability created by conflicts, and as links between wars, trafficking and migrant smuggling become more widely known, the United Nations is calling on the international community to act now to help and protect trafficking victims and to end this crime forever.

Conflict is a breeding ground for criminal activity,” said Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)). People forced from their homes are [falling prey to human traffickers](#) as they try desperately to escape the violence.

In Syria, for example, women and children there were less likely to be trafficked before 2011, according to the latest UNODC [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#).

Since the start of the Syrian crisis, however, an increasing number of countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East have detected trafficking victims from this country,” Mr. Fedotov said.

As evidence grows of conflict’s ability to nourish crime, the international community is increasingly recognizing the need to confront people’s vulnerability to trafficking during conflicts,” Mr. Fedotov said, recalling that in 2016, UN Security Council passed its [first-ever resolution](#) on this issue, and last year’s [New York Declaration](#) calls for the need to vigorously combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling, as well as provide support and assistance under the [UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#).

His comments come on the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, which is being held this year under the theme of “Let’s act now to protect and assist trafficking victims.”

In line with this year’s theme, the UN is promoting the Trust Fund for

trafficking victims, as well as the Blue Heart Campaign, which is being adopted across the world.

Resources, well-supported advocacy, cooperation under international law, and action on the ground are the starting points for tackling this dehumanizing crime that shames everyone," said Mr. Fedotov.

The Trust Fund facilitates effective, on-the-ground assistance and protection to victims of trafficking, through grants to specialized NGOs. Victims coming from areas of armed conflict and those identified among large refugee and migration flows are being prioritized.

Human trafficking is the acquisition of people by force, fraud or deception to exploit them, including for sex and forced labour. Smuggling of migrants is considered part of human trafficking.

Victims of trafficking have been targeted for sexual exploitation and pornography, organ removal, forced begging, forced criminality and other crimes.

Children among main targets of human traffickers

Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit, or destination for victims, UNODC has said.

Children make up almost one-third of all human trafficking victims worldwide, according to the UN agency's latest report on trafficking. In addition, women and girls comprise 71 per cent of human trafficking victims.

Two UN human rights experts are also taking the opportunity provided by the World Day to warn that current systems designed to protect migrant children are failing, leaving many at risk of trafficking, sale and other forms of exploitation.

"So many children have died in conflict zones and along their perilous journey," said Special Rapporteurs Maria Grazia Giammarinaro and Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, in a [statement](#) issued ahead of the Day.

The experts warned that all children fleeing conflict, especially those traveling alone, are vulnerable to abuse of different kinds: sexual and labour exploitation including as a consequence of trafficking, being sold and being coerced into marriage, in their homes, communities, society or in places where migrants and/or refugees reside – including reception centres, refugee camps or informal settlements at source, transit and destination countries.

The UN General Assembly will discuss trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in a special session in Vienna, Austria – where the UNODC is headquartered – in early September.

The event is part of preparations for a global compact on migration that is expected to be completed and adopted in 2018.

The World Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 2013 to raise awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and for the promotion and protection of their rights.

The UN International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) estimates that 21 million people are victims of forced labour globally. This estimate also includes victims of human trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation.

While it is not known how many of these victims were trafficked, the estimate implies that currently, there are millions of trafficking in persons victims in the world.

UN chief condemns DPR Korea's latest launch of ballistic missile

28 July 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres condemned today's launch of a ballistic missile of possible intercontinental range by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

This is [again a manifest violation](#) of Security Council resolutions. The DPRK leadership must comply fully with its international obligations and work together with the international community to resolve the outstanding issues on the Korean Peninsula," said the Spokesman for the Secretary-General.

In the statement, Mr. Guterres reiterated his call for DPRK leadership to respond to the Republic of Korea's proposals to reopen communication channels, particularly military-to-military, to lower the risk of miscalculation or misunderstanding and reduce tensions.

On Monday, Seoul announced that its Defence Ministry had proposed to meet with DRPK representatives with the goal of ending hostilities.