

In Mosul and beyond, sustained efforts needed to support millions of displaced Iraqis – UN official

26 July 2017 – Witnessing complete devastation in districts of Mosul, a senior United Nations relief official visiting Iraq lauded the massive humanitarian effort under way while indicating that the crisis is far from over, including for millions of Iraqis displaced throughout the country.

I commend the achievements of the humanitarian operation in Iraq and wish to highlight the impressive national response, said Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator in a press [statement](#).

One of the things that impressed me the most was the exceptional level of cooperation between national counterparts, UN agencies and front-line NGOs [non-governmental organizations], she added.

From 24 and 26 July, Ms. Mueller met with senior officials and ministers from the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, as well as members of the international and humanitarian communities.

She saw first-hand the complete devastation of districts in western Mosul's old city. I saw homes and entire neighbourhoods destroyed; no doubt, countless tragedies remain untold among the rubble, she explained.

With almost one million people fleeing Mosul, humanitarians' worst-case estimates were surpassed.

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Despite escalating needs, humanitarians adjusted their response and kept pace with emergency sites and camps built in record time; over 18,000 people treated at trauma stabilization points near the front lines; and a quarter of a million adults and children received psychological first aid and psychosocial support.

The deputy UN relief coordinator also pointed out that beyond Mosul, sustained efforts are also needed to support the millions of Iraqis displaced across the country.

Hundreds of thousands of people will try to return home in the coming months, and must do so in a safe, voluntary and dignified manner, she emphasized. Others will be unable to return home for some time due to the levels of destruction and contamination by explosive hazards in their

communities.”

Ms. Mueller also met with representatives from the Yazidi community and visited displaced communities.

“Protection remains a top priority for minority groups in Iraq. The targeting of women – regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation – with rape, enslavement and other forms of violence, is a particularly disturbing feature of this crisis,” asserted Ms. Mueller.

A key take-away from the visit was that “the humanitarian crisis there is far from over.”

“Families lost loved ones, homes and livelihoods,” she continued. “I urge the international community to maintain its full commitment to supporting humanitarian assistance in Iraq, and I pledge that the United Nations will continue to stand with and support the Iraqi people.”

While Ms. Mueller thanked the international community and donors for generously providing 3.5 million highly vulnerable Iraqis with assistance so far this year, she emphasized that the \$985 million funding requirement for Iraq's 2017 humanitarian operations is not yet half met.

Burundi: UN envoy reiterates inclusive dialogue, regional support to political process

26 July 2017 – The United Nations Special Envoy to Burundi today urged African leaders, in solidarity with the UN, to support an inclusive dialogue between the Government and the opposition in a country where political upheaval has resulted in insecurity since April 2015.

Addressing the UN Security Council, Michel Kafando, recounted his recent efforts to support the inter-Burundian dialogue, including through a visit to President Pierre Nkurunziza last month.

“We would like to see an atmosphere of peace in Burundi. But under what conditions and at what price can this be achieved?” he asked the Council in New York.

“The first requirement is to give priority to inclusive dialogue, a prerequisite for any resolution of the crisis. It becomes imperative that the Government of Burundi accedes to the request of the countries in the sub-region and the African Union, supported by the United Nations, to engage in an inclusive dialogue; that means involving the exiled opposition as well as

the opposition in the country.”

He underscored the importance of regional efforts, in particular by former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, the East African Community's mediator heading the inter-Burundian dialogue.

Mr. Mkapa was due to brief the Council alongside Mr. Kafando but was unable to due to health reasons, the UN official said.

Mr. Kafando noted that authorities in Burundi and the opposition have diverging views on the political situation in the country, in a difficult socio-economic context, but consider the situation calm and seek to preserve their national sovereignty in managing internal affairs.

He did note, however, that representatives of the political opposition and some of the civil society are concerned about what they call “authoritarian” moves by the Government.

Mr. Kafando had met with civil society leaders and political parties during his second recent visit to Burundi, from 7 to 13 July.

Highlighting his discussions during that visit, Mr. Kafando reiterated calls for greater involvement of the regional and the international community in favor of an inclusive dialogue, without preconditions, and with the participation of all Burundians.

“I deeply believe in the sub-region's commitment to work for peace in Burundi with the support of the African Union and I strongly recommend that the United Nations accompany them and resolutely support these efforts. In the end, even if we still need a little patience, we will certainly arrive at a dynamic compromise,” the Special Envoy said.

In late June, Assistant Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun told the Council that the security situation in the country was “fragile” and noted a series of grenade attacks in the capital, Bujumbura.

Insecurity has been a concern in the country since 2015, when violence emerged around the President's decision to run for a third consecutive term. Some three million people are in need of humanitarian aid, with some 2.6 million others hungry, and more than 600,000 displaced from their homes.

[UN condemns killing of two peacekeepers in Central African](#)

Republic

26 July 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres and the United Nations Security Council have condemned yesterday's killing of two peacekeepers in the Central African Republic's (CAR) south-eastern city of Bangassou.

This incident brings to nine the number of peacekeepers killed in service in Bangassou since the beginning of the year, [said](#) a statement issued this morning by Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General.

According to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)), two of its Moroccan peacekeepers were killed in an ambush in Bangassou by suspected anti-Balaka fighters, while another peacekeeper was slightly injured. The incident followed the killing of a Moroccan peacekeeper on Sunday.

In the statement, the Secretary-General offered his condolences and sympathy to the bereaved families and to the Government of Morocco, and urged the Central African authorities to swiftly investigate this incident and all previous killings without delay and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The Secretary-General is deeply concerned at the fighting in the country's southeast, heightened inter-ethnic tensions and efforts by spoilers to derail the stabilization process.

If allowed to continue, the prevailing situation risks undermining the hard-won gains achieved towards lasting peace. The Secretary-General calls on all parties to cease violence and to take action to avoid a further deterioration of the fragile security situation in the country, the statement added.

The UN Security Council also joined in the condemnation of the attack. In a press statement, the Council expressed its readiness to apply sanctions against individuals and groups responsible for acts of undermining peace, stability or security in the country, including attacks against MINUSCA peacekeepers.

The 15-member body also called on all parties to cease violence immediately, and underlined the need for the Central African authorities, the sub-region and the international community to work in a concerted manner to avoid a further deterioration of the situation.

DR Congo: UN rights chief names international investigators in Kasai abuses

26 July 2017 – The United Nations human rights chief today named three international experts to investigate reports of killings, mutilations, rapes and other abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) restive Kasai provinces.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein [named](#) Bacre Ndiaye, a Senegal national, to lead a team of experts that includes Luc Côté, a Canadian who has worked on human rights violations in the DRC, and Mauritania's Fatimata M'Baye.

The team of experts is expected to collect and preserve information, to determine the facts and circumstances in accordance with international standards and practice, and while ensuring the protection of all persons who will cooperate with the team, in cooperation with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as stipulated in a mandate by the UN Human Rights Council resolution adopted on 22 June 2017.

The cooperation with the Government includes facilitating visits and access to the country, sites and persons, concerning alleged human rights violations and abuses, and violations of international humanitarian law in the Kasai regions, according to the Council.

The resolution refers to reports of the recruitment and use of child soldiers, sexual and gender-based violence, destruction of houses, schools, places of worship, and State infrastructure by local militias, as well as of mass graves.

The team's findings are due to be presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2018.

Ahead of the report, the High Commissioner is scheduled to present an oral update on the situation in the Kasais to the Human Rights Council in March of next year.

Violence flared up in the DRC's Kasai regions in August 2016, when a customary chief was killed by Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), as DRC's armed forces are known. The Kamuina Nsapu militia (named after the chief) then set about avenging the killing, committing widespread atrocities as well as recruiting children into its ranks.

The gravity of the situation was further underscored by the discovery (in April, this year) of forty-two mass graves by OHCHR and the UN mission (known by its French acronym, MONUSCO).

More than 1.3 million people have since been displaced within the country as

well as thousands forced to flee across its borders.

Security Council urges progress on political agreement

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council today warned that unless politicians in DRC demonstrate renewed efforts to deliver on an agreement to hold elections by the end of this year, the country and the wider region faces an increased risk of instability.

The Security Council further calls upon all political parties, their supporters, and other political actors to remain calm and refrain from violence of any kind, according to the statement signed by Ambassador Liu Jieyi, who holds the rotating presidency for the month of July.

The presidential statement which has a tone similar to a Security Council resolution but is not legally binding expresses concern about the slow implementation of the 31 December agreement.

The agreement facilitated by Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo (CENCO) mediators, and reached in DRC's capital, Kinshasa, on 31 December 2016 allowed President Joseph Kabila to stay in power beyond the end of his term.

In today's statement, the Council also welcomed progress made in the voter registration process led by the National Electoral Commission (CENI), and called for continued efforts to ensure that voters throughout the country, including in the Kasai provinces, are duly registered.

The Council also called on the Government to set aside a budget for the elections and come up with a timetable for preparations.

In the same agreement, the Council reiterated its condemnation of the violence in the Kasai region and expressed serious concern about cases of sexual violence and recent reports of more alleged mass graves.

The Security Council underscores the primary responsibility of the DRC Government for ensuring security in its territory and protecting its population, with respect for the rule of law, human rights and international humanitarian law, the statement said, cautioning that some of the reported violations could constitute war crimes under international law.

Malnutrition and cholera 'a vicious combination' in war-torn Yemen – UN

agency chiefs

26 July 2017 – In Yemen, the world's worst cholera outbreak is unfolding amid the world's largest humanitarian crisis, crippling health, water and sanitation facilities in the country, and creating ideal conditions for diseases to spread, according to the heads of three United Nations agencies.

The country is [on the brink of famine](#), with over 60 per cent of the population not knowing where their next meal will come from, said UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) Executive Director Anthony Lake, World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) Executive Director David Beasley and World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Wrapping up their joint visit to the crisis-torn nation, the agency chiefs pointed out that nearly two million Yemeni children are acutely malnourished, and malnutrition makes them more susceptible to cholera; diseases create more malnutrition [...] a vicious combination.

Together in Yemen they witnessed the scale of the humanitarian crisis, observing that over the last three months, 400,000 cases of suspected cholera and nearly 1,900 associated deaths have been recorded.

At one hospital, we visited children who can barely gather the strength to breathe. We spoke with families overcome with sorrow for their ill loved ones and struggling to feed their families, they lamented, adding that as they drove through the city, we saw how vital infrastructure, such as health and water facilities, have been damaged or destroyed.

Thousands of health workers, unpaid for nearly a year, still show up for duty

Amid the chaos, some 16,000 volunteers go from house to house, educating families on how to protect themselves from diarrhoea and cholera while doctors, nurses and other health staff work around the clock to save lives.

Highlighting that in spite of not having been paid for over 10 months, many of the 30,000 health workers continue to labour, the senior UN officials said they have asked the authorities to pay them.

As for our agencies, we will do our best to support these extremely dedicated health workers with incentives and stipends, they stated.

We also saw the vital work being done by local authorities and NGOs (non-governmental organization), supported by international humanitarian agencies, including our own. We have set up more than 1,000 diarrhoea treatment centres and oral rehydration corners, they noted.

The UN agency heads underscored that the delivery of food supplements and medical supplies is ongoing, as is the rebuilding of infrastructure, including hospitals, health centres and the water- sanitation network.

We are working with the World Bank in an innovative partnership that

responds to needs on the ground and helps maintain the local health institutions,” they continued.

While the UN officials also offered hope – noting that more than 99 per cent of cholera-infected people with access to health services are surviving and the number of children afflicted with severe acute malnutrition this year was estimated to be 385,000 – they maintained that as thousands fall sick every day, the situation remains dire.

They flagged that nearly 80 per cent of Yemen's children need immediate humanitarian assistance, underlining the importance of sustained efforts to stop the spread of disease.

Drawing attention to their meeting with Yemeni leaders in Aden and Sana'a, the UN officials pressed for humanitarian access to fighting-affected areas and urged for a peaceful political solution.

“The Yemeni crisis requires an unprecedented response,” they stressed, explaining that the three agencies have teamed up with the Yemeni authorities and other partners “to coordinate activities in new ways of working to save lives and to prepare for future emergencies.”

“We now call on the international community to redouble its support for the people of Yemen. If we fail to do so, the catastrophe we have seen unfolding before our eyes will not only continue to claim lives but will scar future generations and the country for years to come,” concluded the UN heads.