

UN chief concerned about unfolding violence in Jerusalem's Old City

21 July 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today expressed concern about the situation in the Old City of Jerusalem, which has been the scene of escalating violence in recent days.

In a statement, his spokesperson said that the Secretary-General [“deeply deplores](#) the death of three Palestinians in clashes today with the Israeli security forces and calls for these incidents to be fully investigated.”

He urged the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to refrain from actions that could further escalate the situation.

In today's statement, Mr. Guterres also called all political, religious and community leaders to help reduce tension.

“The Secretary-General reiterates that the sanctity of religious sites should be respected as places for reflection, not violence,” the spokesperson said.

The Old City is a walled area within the city of Jerusalem.

In DR Congo, UN aid chief says world must ‘not let down’ millions of people in need

21 July 2017 – Wrapping up a four-day mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations humanitarian chief today urged the world [“not to forget the DRC,”](#) and called for scaled-up relief funding to help millions of people suffering from violence, diseases, and malnutrition.

“I urge and encourage the international community not to let down the millions of people in need in the DRC. How many more lives do we need to step up?” said UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien in a press release on the visit.

Some 3.8 million people are now displaced within the DRC. An appeal for \$748 million launched earlier this year has so far received less than 25 per cent of funding, the lowest level in the past 10 years.

Separately, a \$64.5 million emergency appeal was made for the Kasai crisis.

To date it has only received 11 per cent.

“This is not just insufficient it is unacceptable for the global community to leave this very real suffering of the Congolese people unaddressed just because of a shortage of money,” stressed Mr. O’Brien, who is also the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

During two days of travel outside of the capital, Kinshasa, Mr. O’Brien visited some of the communities most affected by the massive crisis, including Tshikapa in the Kasai region, where a year of conflict has led to serious human rights abuses and displaced some 1.4 million people.



Stephen O’Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, visits Moni, once a site for internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It used to host 12,000 people, but after fighting broke out on July 4th 2017, shelters were burned down and people fled. Photo: OCHA

The violence in the five provinces that make up the Kasai region has also pushed thousands of children out of school. Some 600 cases of sexual-based violence have been reported since last year, while several schools and health clinics have been commandeered into temporary shelter for the displaced.

“In the Komba IDP site, I met young Mangasa Kalone who told me how she was almost burned alive when her village was attacked,” Mr. O’Brien highlighted.

He also visited a school compound where NGOs are providing protection and recreational activities to some 1,000 unaccompanied minors. “I am deeply concerned for the health of these children, many have been stunted by malnutrition,” he said.

He also held talks with a wide range of actors in North Kivu and South Kivu, two of the traditional hotbeds of humanitarian needs.

In Kinshasa, he met with the Congolese Prime Minister, Bruno Tshibala, the ministers for interior and humanitarian affairs, representatives of donor countries, and senior officials of UN agencies and of the peacekeeping mission, known for its French acronym MONUSCO.

In addition to the 3.8 million IDPs, the country is dealing with a steady flow of refugees from neighboring Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

“All we need now is the funding,” Mr. O’Brien concluded.

Rainy season worsens cholera crisis in war-torn Yemen; UN agencies deliver clean water, food

21 July 2017 – Yemen is facing the world’s largest cholera outbreak, the United Nations health agency today warned, with 5,000 Yemenis falling sick every day – the majority of them children and the elderly.

The cholera outbreak is far from being over, Fadela Chaib, spokesperson for the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), told reporters in Geneva. The rainy season had just started and would exacerbate the situation in terms of transmission.

WHO reported 368,207 people are suspected of having cholera and at least 1,828 died of it since late April.

UN agencies, including WHO and the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), are scaling up access to clean water and sanitation, and setting up treatment centres for oral rehydration therapy and other measures.

The response is also focused on providing food as the country remains on the verge of famine. Seventeen million people are currently hungry in the war-torn country, making them more vulnerable to catching the bacteria.

It is necessary to break the vicious cycle of malnutrition and diarrhoea, Ms. Chaib said.

Children aged 15 and under accounted for 41 per cent of all suspected cases, and people aged over 60 for 33 per cent of all deaths.

Asked if the number of cases could rise about 600,000, as projected by the non-governmental organization Oxfam, Ms. Chaib called the current toll heavy and said the situation remains alarming.

In 2011, some 719,377 suspected cases of cholera were recorded in Haiti, and 8,767 people died, according to national figures cited by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

UN report reveals shocking abuse African migrant women face on their

journey to Europe

21 July 2017 – The United Nations migration agency today said that perhaps 80 per cent of Nigerian migrant women and girls arriving on Europe's shores in Italy could potentially be sex trafficking victims, spotlighting the horrific levels of abuse and violence migrants face along their arduous journeys for a better future.

In its report, *Human Trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route* (in Italian), the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) highlights the plight of those who have been assisted by the UN agency and calls for urgent action against the 'market' which are supplied these victims as well as what is called is a 'growing demand' for paid sexual services.

[Trafficking is a transnational crime that devastates the lives of thousands of people and is the cause of untold suffering](#), Federico Soda, the Director of the IOM Coordinating Office for the Mediterranean, said in a news release announcing the findings.

'This is a theme we have been working on for years, committing to protect, prevent and collaborate with the authorities dealing with organized crime.'

According to the UN agency, over the past three years, its office in Italy has witnessed an almost 600 per cent increase in the number of potential sex trafficking victims arriving in Italy by sea. The upward trend has continued during the first six months of this year, with most victims arriving from Nigeria.

The data feeding the report was drawn from IOM operations in various parts of Italy, where staff met with potential victims of trafficking as soon as they reached the country, allowing the UN agency to develop a list of indicators that can help identify potential victims.

Described in the report, the indicators include gender (most sex trafficking victims are women); age (most victims age between 13-24 years); nationality (most are Nigerians); and psycho-physical wellness (victims are mostly silent and often 'controlled' by other migrants who speak on their behalf or refuse to let them be interviewed by IOM).

When IOM staff identify a potential victim of trafficking, they explain to them that it is possible to access protection mechanisms and, with the victim's consent, the staff inform the anti-trafficking helpline about the victim.

Also, if the person agrees, IOM staff provides assistance in communicating and filing a report to the investigating authorities.

'The report describes IOM's activities in the face of this phenomenon: the difficulties in protecting victims and the main vulnerabilities

identified among several cases of people who were assisted by [the agency], said Carlotta Santarossa, the project's manager at IOM, adding:

"We also wanted to tell some of the stories of people who have been assisted by IOM staff to highlight the true nature of this painful and hateful form of slavery."

The English version of the report will be released shortly, according to IOM.

[UN agency lauds new project to register undocumented Afghan refugees in Pakistan](#)

21 July 2017 – A new pilot project in Pakistan to register undocumented Afghan refugees who up to now have been without identity papers and living in fear of being arrested or deported would allow up to one million people to have legal status, the United Nations refugee said.

"This [significant step](#) will help regularize the stay for many Afghans at a time when return to their home country may not be possible," Duniya Aslam Khan, spokesperson at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters at the UN's Geneva Office.

The six-month registration programme started yesterday in the capital Islamabad and Peshwar, in the north-west, which hosts the largest number of undocumented Afghans. The programme is expected to be rolled out throughout the country starting on 16 August.

Afghans registered under the new scheme receive African Citizen cards, which allow them to legally stay in Pakistan until the Government of Afghanistan can issue them passports and other documents, and provides protections under Pakistani law.

"The initiative will bring much needed relief for many Afghan families where some were registered refugees, while others had no legal status," Ms. Khan said.

The registration project comes after three years of consultations between the Governments, and is part of Pakistan's Comprehensive Policy on the Repatriation and Management of Afghans, which was endorsed by its cabinet in February this year.

"I am [feeling confident](#) that I will have at least some sort of identity while in Pakistan," Mohammad Rehman, who was born and raised in Pakistan

to Afghan parents, told UNHCR. “If the police arrest me now, at least I will be released without much trouble.”