

Rising cholera, diarrhoea and malnutrition 'deadly' for children in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Sudan, warns UNICEF

4 July 2017 – Access, funding and security are urgently needed to ensure humanitarians can reach hundreds of thousands of children suffering from cholera and diarrhoea across Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Sudan, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has said.

On top of these diseases, rising rates of malnutrition in these countries could be deadly for children," Christophe Boulierac, a spokesperson for the UN agency, [said at a regular news briefing](#) in Geneva.

"Access, funding and security are needed in the four countries so that UNICEF and our partners can reach children with an integrated response that deal simultaneously with both malnutrition and disease prevention treatment," he added.

According to the UNICEF spokesperson, Yemen is presently the worst cholera outbreak in the world with over 260,000 suspected cases and over 1,600 deaths. Of these, half the suspected cases and a quarter of the deaths are among children.

Furthermore, the situation of South Sudan is equally worrying. The current cholera outbreak in the country, which started in June last year, has for the first time lasted through the entire dry season and there are fears that it could worsen as the new rainy season progresses.

About 6,870 suspected cases of cholera have been reported in South Sudan so far this year, informed Mr. Boulierac, noting that children and teenagers accounted for about 51 per cent of the cases.

On top of this, about 1.1 million are malnourished in the country and almost 290,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition.

In Somalia, there are about 53,000 cases of cholera (three times more than in 2016 and ten times more than in 2015) and some 1.4 million children are feared to be malnourished, 275,000 of them severely malnourished, the UN spokesperson added.

Furthermore, in Sudan, over 20,000 suspected cases of acute water diarrhoea, with over 400 deaths, had been recorded.

"Over 20 per cent of the affected population are children," he noted.

Response in midst of daunting challenges

In their response, UN agencies, including UNICEF as well as humanitarian partners have stepped up their efforts but face considerable challenges.

In Yemen, UNICEF delivered a total of 36 tons of life saving medical and water purification supplies to Yemen on board chartered aircrafts. However, with limited access and a national health system ravaged by conflict, there are significant challenges reaching those in need.

Similarly, access is a major obstacle in Sudan where the most affected areas lack safe water and proper sanitation. In the country, UNICEF is also in urgent need of some \$22 million to provide life-saving interventions to over 100,000 children.

As part of its programmes, UNICEF along with partners is providing therapeutic and life-saving food treatment to severely malnourished children South Sudan (200,000), Somalia (200,000) and Yemen (320,000). The UN agency is also restoring and equipping health facilities, developing medical and nutritional supply pipelines and providing clean and safe water to vulnerable children and families.

[UN agency condemns attack on staff in Central African Republic town](#)

4 July 2017 – Strongly condemning an attack against its staff and premises in a northern town of the Central African Republic (CAR), the United Nations refugee agency has underscored the importance of safety of aid workers for them to be able to help civilian populations in desperate need.

At about 5 PM on 1 July, unidentified armed men entered the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) premises in Kaga Bandoro town, [threatened staff at gun point, and looted all goods and money](#) on site, Andrej Mahecic, a spokesperson for the UN agency told the media at a regular news briefing in Geneva today.

There were six UN staff members (four from UNHCR and two from the [UN Development Programme](#)) at the premises and they were also robbed of their belongings, including personal items and passports.

“Since the attack, UNHCR has temporarily relocated staff to the [MINUSCA](#) (the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR) base in Kaga Bandoro, and we will be moving some to [the capital,] Bangui,” added Mr. Mahecic.

Also in the town, on the night of 28 June, [unidentified armed men tried to](#)

[break](#) into a UNHCR accommodation, with the intention of attacking staff and looting belongings. That attack was thwarted by MINUSCA forces.

Frequent violence in Kaga Bandoro – located about 350 kilometers (220 miles) north of Bangui – has had a significant impact on the local population, displacing many and leaving them in need of humanitarian assistance.

In CAR, UNHCR has been providing protection and relief support to more than 8,600 refugees and 503,000 internally displaced persons.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, have plunged the country of about 4.5 million people into civil conflict since 2013. In addition to those displaced within the CAR, more than 484,000 people from the country have been forced to seek refuge in neighboring nations.

[UN chief appoints head of panel laying groundwork for possible war crimes probe in Syria](#)

3 July 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today announced the appointment of Catherine Marchi-Uhel of France as the head of the independent panel to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for most serious violations of international law in Syria.

The panel, formally known as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, was [established by the UN General Assembly in December last year](#).

Ms. Marchi-Uhel is the first Head of the Mechanism.

Since 2015, she had been serving as the Ombudsperson for the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

According to a [statement](#) issued today, she also has extensive experience in the judiciary and in public service, including in the fields of criminal law, transitional justice and human rights.

She was previously a judge in France and an international judge at the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, and at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia.

SEE ALSO: [Syria: UN chief Guterres clarifies tasks of panel laying groundwork for possible war crimes probe](#)

Ms. Marchi-Uhel also served as the Senior Legal Officer and Head of Chambers at the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and worked in legal positions at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with UN peacekeeping missions.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka appointed head of UN Women for the second term

Also today, Mr. Guterres following consultations with UN Member States and the Executive Board of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women ([UN Women](#)), [announced the appointment](#) of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka of South Africa as Executive Director of UN Women for a further term of four years.

She was initially appointed to the position in July 2013 and assumed office a month later.

Before joining UN Women, she worked with women and girls in different capacities in civil society and as a public representative, focusing on political and economic rights as well as girls' education.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka was the also first woman to hold the position of Deputy President of South Africa (2005-2008). She also held a number of senior positions at the South African Government as well as in the country's parliament.

[Turning national pledges into action crucial in fight against hunger, stresses head of UN agency](#)

3 July 2017 – Highlighting that the number of people going hungry across the world has increased since 2015, threatening to undo years of progress, the head of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) today called for translating commitments into action at the national level.

[“Hunger will only be defeated if countries translate their pledges into action](#), especially at national and local levels,” FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva said at the opening of the agency's biennial conference in Rome.

Concerted effort is required in countries affected by conflict and climate change – which collectively house nearly 60 per cent of the world's population suffering from hunger – he underscored.

“Peace is of course the key to ending these crises, but we cannot wait for peace to take action [...] it is extremely important to ensure that these people have the conditions to continue producing their own food.”

FAO has currently identified 19 countries in a “protracted crisis” situation, often facing extreme climatic events, such as droughts and floods. It has also signalled the high risk of famine in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen with 20 million people severely affected.

These extreme conditions not only disrupt the lives of those affected, they also force many to migrate in search of better lives, compounding the distress. The most vulnerable – especially women – are often the worst impacted.

To save lives, we have to save their livelihoods José Graziano da Silva,
FAO chief

In order to alleviate the suffering of millions, the UN agency will, over the next two years, be focusing its efforts on the promotion of sustainable agriculture, climate change mitigation and adaptation, poverty reduction, water scarcity, migration as well as supporting conflict-affected rural livelihoods.

“To save lives, we have to save their livelihoods,” stressed Mr. Graziano da Silva.

Transforming agriculture sector critical for [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development – UNDP chief

Also today, delivering the McDougall Memorial Lecture, Achim Steiner, the Administrator of the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), highlighted that [transforming agriculture was crucial to transform the world](#), as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This, he said, is in many ways a “profound political reforms agenda.”

“Doing so cannot be seen as a technical challenge to be addressed within the agricultural sector, but rather as a complex undertaking that calls for integrated approaches considering economic, environmental, and social aspects,” said Mr. Steiner.

“[This] needs to recognize farmers as agents of change, operating within a larger ‘agriculture economy,’ that with the right incentives and enablers, can leverage agriculture to enhance livelihoods and sustainability.”

The lecture honours Frank Lidgett McDougall, an Australian economist, who played a key role in the creation of FAO.

The FAO Conference, being held from 3 to 8 July, is the UN agency’s highest governing body. It reviews and decides on FAO’s programme of work and budget, and discusses priority areas related to food and agriculture across the

globe.

[UN health agency declares end to latest Ebola outbreak in DR Congo](#)

3 July 2017 – A recent outbreak of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is over, the United Nations health agency today said, while adding that enhanced surveillance for the virus continues.

The announcement comes 42 days since the last confirmed Ebola patient in the affected Bas-Uélé province tested negative for the disease for the second time.

“With the end of this epidemic, DRC has once again proved to the world that [we can control](#) the very deadly Ebola virus if we respond early in a coordinated and efficient way,” said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the new Director-General of the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

At least four people died, and more than 580 were registered and closely monitored after having come into contact with the virus, the UN agency reported.

The virus emerged in Likati, which according to WHO is “a remote, hard-to-reach area” bordering the Central African Republic and other provinces of the DRC.

UN officials said the response was “effective” and praised “the timely alert by local authorities of suspect cases, immediate testing of blood samples due to strengthened national laboratory capacity, the early announcement of the outbreak by the government, rapid response activities by local and national health authorities with the robust support of international partners, and speedy access to flexible funding.”

National officials continue to screen for the virus and provide medical care to people who may have come into contact for Ebola.

This was the eighth outbreak of Ebola in the DRC, where the virus was discovered in 1976.

Likati is one of the areas where the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) had been providing technical support to local officials in May, to help them deliver lifesaving information about Ebola to local populations.

In coordination with WHO, UNICEF also trained people on how to use chlorine and disinfect homes to avoid spreading the virus, as well as how to wash hands properly and reduce contamination by adapting local burial practices.