

## UN agency works to fill humanitarian vacuum in north DR Congo after aid groups' departure

22 May 2017 – The United Nations migration agency is responding to the urgent humanitarian needs of more than 27,000 displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) eastern province of North Kivu, after many relief aid organizations left camps.

Sweden's development agency has provided 1.6 million SEK, valued at \$183,000, to the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)).

These funds have come at a time when most humanitarian actors have pulled out of many displacement sites in eastern DRC due to security and funding issues, leaving thousands of displaced people even more vulnerable, [said](#) Boubacar Seybou, Head of IOM's Office in Goma, in a press release.

The funding has been crucial to enable IOM to construct and rehabilitate basic water and sanitation infrastructure and provide 4,000 households with shelter kits. In the first three months of 2017, IOM constructed 324 latrines with hand wash stations, 120 showers and 35 rubbish pits in four targeted displacement sites.

Over the next 12 months, IOM will continue to provide life-saving assistance and protection to vulnerable people in displacement sites in North Kivu, thanks to additional financing from Sweden.

For decades, DRC has experienced conflict and instability, triggering mass displacements and abuses of human rights at the hands of warring factions against innocent civilian populations.

By the end of April 2017, there were 3.7 million internally displaced persons in the DRC, making it the African country most affected by internal displacement. North Kivu remains the province with the most population movement. Unlike in other provinces, armed violence represents the sole cause of displacement.

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## On World Day, UN agencies urge countering threats to cultural

# diversity

21 May 2017 – Cultural diversity is the driving force of change and development and is increasingly under threat, United Nations agencies today said, reaffirming support for the cultural diversity that stems from migration.

“Across the world, violent extremists have targeted cultural minorities and destroyed our shared heritage, to [weaken the essential links](#) between people and their history,” said Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)).

Marking the [World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development](#), Ms. Bokova called for a new humanism for the 21st century, to renew the fundamental aspirations to justice, mutual understanding and dignity that guide all women and men.

She quoted Martin Luther King Jr., saying: ‘injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.’

By embracing cultural diversity, the international community can more easily achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) which draw upon the strength and creative potential of humanity’s diversity of cultures.

Similarly, the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), William Lacy Swing, urged Governments and their citizens to embrace migration, despite its challenges, and help to develop common understandings, values and perspectives.

“It is sometimes asked whether the West’s multiculturalism, its diversity, has reached its limits? Can a society only cope with so much diversity? [The answer is no](#). There has never been a city or a country brought down by too much ‘diversity,’” said Mr. Swing.

IOM has compiled stories from some of the migrants with whom it has worked, highlighting their lives and journey, and how they are making their families and their new community better. The [‘I am a migrant’](#) collection is available online.

In today’s statement, Mr. Swing noted that all societies are so-called multi-ethnic because no single State lives with a single culture: “Even States averse to permitting entry to more ‘foreigners’ must acknowledge the multiple ‘cultures’ within their own borders. All countries have them: religious, ethnic, social, societal, sexual, occupational, educational, dietary specificities.”

The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 2002 and celebrated annually on 21 May, is meant to be an opportunity for mobilization on the part of governments, policy makers, civil society organizations, communities and

cultural professionals to promote culture in its diversity and in all its forms.

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## [Libya: UN chief urges all sides to restore calm in aftermath of deadly attack on southern airbase](#)

20 May 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres is deeply concerned about the military escalation at the Brak al-Shati air base in southern Libya and calls on all parties to exercise restraint and restore calm, the UN chief's spokesman said today.

[The Secretary-General] is particularly disturbed by the high number of fatalities as well as reports of summary executions of civilians, which, if confirmed, may constitute war crimes," said a statement from Stéphane Dujarric, which [added](#) that the continued insecurity in Libya is a reminder that there is no military solution.

News reports suggest that perhaps more than 100 people have died as a result of Thursday's attack on the airbase, mostly soldiers but also civilians. This is the latest flare-up of violence in the North African nation since the civilian uprising in 2011 led to the ouster of long-time Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The UN Spokesman said Mr. Guterres urges all key Libyan stakeholders to re-commit to the political dialogue and engage constructively towards that goal.

The Secretary-General appreciates the efforts of a number of regional and neighbouring countries for their contributions aimed at strengthening the dialogue between key stakeholders in support of the overall UN-led process," the statement concluded.

In the aftermath of the attack Martin Kobler, the top UN official in Libya and the Head of the UN Support Mission known as UNSMIL, strongly condemned the deadly incident as a "vicious attack [that] undermines political efforts."

"I am outraged by reports of significant numbers of fatalities, including civilians and by reports that summary executions may have taken place. Summary executions and targeting civilians constitute a war crime, which may be prosecuted by the International Criminal court (ICC)," Mr. Kobler said.

The Special Representative stressed that this vicious attack must not lead to further, serious conflict. There is no military solution to Libya's problems.

“I call upon all parties to condemn this attack and not to allow it to undermine intense efforts to find peaceful political solutions.” he added.

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## [Peru: UN agency supports recovery of some 7,000 farmers from El Niño floods, landslides](#)

19 May 2017 – In the wake of the heavy rains, floods and landslides that hit Peru earlier this year, the United Nations agriculture agency said today that it is working with the Government to assist some 7,000 mostly small-scale farmers to restore their capacity to produce crops and feed their families.

Citing preliminary estimates, the Food and Agricultural Organization ([FAO](#)) said that adverse conditions caused by the coastal [El Niño](#) phenomenon from January to March had affected about 445,000 people in Peru’s worst-hit northern coastal areas – 59 per cent of affected households.

“According to Peru’s Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, more than 60,000 hectares of crops have been severely or partially affected and 18,000 hectares were left completely unusable,” FAO reported.

To [address the situation](#), the Government approved the Agrarian Reactivation Plan with an investment of \$76 million. FAO seeks to complement this by requesting some \$3.1 million from the international community to support activities aimed at restoring family agriculture in the remote areas of Piura, Lambayeque and La Libertad.

“The FAO recovery project will provide the necessary inputs to establish orchards, recover irrigation infrastructure and provide technical assistance in animal health,” the UN agency explained.

FAO stated that these activities will be implemented directly, with affected farmers receiving cash-for-work transfers for household income generation, access to food and mitigating migration to cities.

“In Piura, Lambayeque and La Libertad, FAO will support the rehabilitation of local supply markets, to ensure that farmers and fisher folk can quickly reinsert themselves into these marketing channels so that they obtain direct sources of income,” the agency added.

As climate disasters are the emergencies that most impact food security and agriculture in Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO is calling on the international community to support the recovery of the livelihoods of the affected farmers and farmers, coordinated with the national government and subnational governments.

According to FAO, addressing these challenges requires adequate risk governance, early warning and monitoring systems, implementation of good practices and risk prevention and mitigation technologies in the agricultural sector, to ensure a rapid response focused on saving lives and livelihoods.

FAO, together with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction ([UNISDR](#)), is supporting countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to develop a Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in the agricultural sector and food and nutritional security, in response to a request by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

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## [Intra-Syrian talks end with 'incremental progress;' possible resumption in June – UN negotiator](#)

19 May 2017 – United Nations-facilitated talks to help resolve the Syrian conflict have ended on schedule in Geneva, where UN negotiator Staffan de Mistura said he was satisfied that some progress had been made, and that there had been “less rhetoric” on all sides.

Speaking to journalists after his meetings with delegations from the Syrian Government and opposition, as well as representatives from Russia and the United States, the UN Special Envoy said that he would look to hold further [intra-Syrian talks](#) “sometime in June.”

Mr. de Mistura underlined that the purpose of this short round of discussions was to address “constitutional and legal issues” which could provide a “strong, legal and constitutional basis” for any future negotiated political process.

The mechanism for this was a series of high-level meetings in Geneva – which the Special Envoy explained were meant to complement the existing intra-Syrian talks.

But only the Syrian people – and not the UN – would be in charge of writing their own constitution, he insisted: “We are not planning or aiming through this to draft a new constitution for Syria; this has to be done by the Syrians. We are rather trying, and we intend to pursue trying to lay the ground for the Syrians to do exactly that, in the context of an overall political solution that is in the context as you know, of [UN Security Council] [resolution 2254 \(2015\)](#).”

As well as a new constitution for Syria, the UN-facilitated process remains focused on three other main issues: free and fair elections, combating terrorism and governance.