

Challenges can derail Bosnia and Herzegovina from path of stability, Security Council told

18 May 2017 – Though Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued its efforts towards membership in the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), negative incidents could still derail the country from the path of peace and stability, a senior diplomat told the United Nations Security Council today.

“As we enter the third decade of peace implementation, it cannot be assumed that Bosnia and Herzegovina is on a glide path to a peaceful, viable State irreversibly on course for European integration,” [said](#) High Representative Valentin Inzko during a briefing on the situation in the country.

The Office of the High Representative was created in 1995 to oversee the Dayton Peace Agreement signed by the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that formally ended the 1992-1995 Bosnian war.

“We need to be mindful of the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a complex political and security environment, where negative scenarios can quickly endanger the Dayton Peace Agreement and the progress achieved after Dayton,” Mr. Inzko told the 15-member body, stressing the need for the international community to retain all the instruments at hand.

In this regard, he supported the EU military force’s presence on the ground with an executive mandate and its extension, an issue to be considered by the UN Security Council in November.

The EU military force is “a relatively inexpensive but necessary investment in peace and stability in the Balkans,” he said, as it provides an essential baseline of physical and psychological security that supports the EU, his Office and other international organizations.

Regarding the Euro-Atlantic integration, Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities formally received the EU Questionnaire in December and the adaptation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU took place in the same month.

Equally encouraging was the consensus and forward-looking pragmatism demonstrated by the country’s Presidency in adopting the so-called Defense Review of military forces last November, one of the requirements to participate in the NATO Membership Action Plan.

At the regional level, bilateral cooperation and overall reconciliation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia has continued to improve, he noted.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, faced some significant challenges over the

last six months, including the controversy between Bosniak political representatives and Serb political parties over whether the country should submit a request for revision of the International Criminal Court's 2007 judgment in the genocide case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia vs. Serbia.

In another negative development, Croat politicians have intensified calls for the "federalization," which was understood by some to imply the further ethnic division of the country into three to four "federal units," one of which would have a Croat majority.

Further, the situation with regard to rule of law continued to deteriorate, with corruption a serious problem.

These "will require continued attention and commitment from the international community," he said.

[UN envoy urges defusing tensions over Palestinian hunger strike in Israeli jails](#)

18 May 2017 – The United Nations envoy on the Middle East peace process today called for an immediate resolution to the growing tensions over a hunger strike by Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails.

"I am following with [great concern](#) the ongoing hunger strike by Palestinian detainees protesting against their conditions in Israeli jails," said the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, in a statement.

"The strike is now entering its second month and it is imperative that a resolution be found as soon as possible in line with international humanitarian law and Israel's human rights obligations," he added.

Expressing hope that current efforts will result in an immediate resolution to the matter, which is in the interest of ongoing initiatives to revive a political process, he called on all actors to exercise maximum restraint, show responsibility and take all necessary steps to avoid escalating tensions.

Industry leaders agree to implement UN agency's standards on clinical trial reporting

18 May 2017 – With about half of all clinical trial results unreported, some of the world's largest funders of medical research and international non-governmental organizations today agreed to adopt standards based on United Nations health agency's recommendations to register and publicly disclose results of all clinical trials they fund or support.

Research funders are making a strong statement that [there will be no more excuses](#) on why some clinical trials remain unreported long after they have completed, said Marie-Paule Kieny, Assistant Director-General for Health Systems and Innovation at the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

The concern is that unreported trials result in an incomplete and potentially misleading understanding of the risks and benefits of vaccines, drugs and medical devices, and could lead to the release of harmful products.

The standards are based on a 2015 WHO published position on public disclosure, which defines timeframes within which the results should be reported.

Today's joint statement that future standards will be in line with that 2015 position, was signed by the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Norwegian Research Council, the UK Medical Research Council, Médecins Sans Frontières and Epicentre (its research arm), PATH, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Institut Pasteur, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Wellcome Trust.

According to a press release, the entities agreed to develop and implement policies within the next 12 months that require all trials they fund, co-fund, sponsor or support to be registered in a publicly-available registry.

Number of unaccompanied refugee and migrant children hits 'record high' – UNICEF

18 May 2017 – The number of children traveling alone has increased fivefold since 2010, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said today, warning

that many young [refugees and migrants](#) are taking highly dangerous routes, often at the mercy of traffickers, to reach their destinations.

At least 300,000 unaccompanied and separated children were recorded in some 80 countries in the combined years of 2015 and 2016, up from 66,000 in 2010 and 2011, according to the new UNICEF report [A Child is a Child: Protecting children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation](#), which presents a global snapshot of refugee and migrant children, the motivations behind their journeys and the risks they face along the way.

“One child moving alone is one too many, and yet today, there are a staggering number of children doing just that – [we as adults are failing to protect them](#),” said UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Justin Forsyth yesterday in a news release.

Among a raft of alarming statistics, the report finds that children account for approximately 28 per cent of trafficking victims globally. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America and the Caribbean have the highest share of children among detected trafficking victims at 64 and 62 per cent, respectively. Further, as much as 20 per cent of smugglers have links to human trafficking networks.

“Ruthless smugglers and traffickers are exploiting their vulnerability for personal gain, helping children to cross borders, only to sell them into slavery and forced prostitution. It is unconscionable that we are not adequately defending children from these predators,” stated Mr. Forsyth.



A boy carrying his belongings in a large cloth bag over his shoulder is among people walking on railway tracks to cross from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia into Serbia. Photo: UNICEF/NYHQ2015-2203/Georgiev

Frist and foremost, the agency says, children need protection, highlighting the importance of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), through which State Parties commit to respect and ensure the rights of “each child within their jurisdiction, without discrimination of any kind.”

Six-point agenda for action

The information is coming to light just ahead of next week’s G7 Summit in Italy and UNICEF is calling on governments to adopt its six-point agenda for action, which includes:

1. Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, from exploitation and violence;
2. End the detention of children seeking refugee status or migrating, by introducing a range of practical alternatives;
3. Keep families together as the best way to protect children and give children legal status;
4. Keep all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services;

5. Press for action on the underlying causes of large scale movements of refugees and migrants; and
6. Promote measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization in countries of transit and destination.

“These children need a real commitment from governments around the world to ensure their safety throughout their journeys,” said Mr. Forsyth. “Leaders gathering next week at the G7 should lead this effort by being the first to commit to our six-point agenda for action.”

[UN expert urges Dominican Republic to place child protection at core of tourism strategy](#)

18 May 2017 – Those who come to the Dominican Republic to sexually exploit children must know that they will be punished, a United Nations independent expert said, urging the Government to put child protection at the centre of its tourism strategy.

At the end of her first official visit to the Dominican Republic, the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, urged the Government to [send a strong signal](#) that the target of 10 millions of tourists by 2022 is not reached at the expense of exposing further children to the scourge of sexual exploitation.

During her eight-day mission, the Special Rapporteur visited child care institutions, and met with children in vulnerable situations to fall victims of sexual exploitation such as girl vendors on beach locations.

She noted that blame for rape and other sexual exploitation is often put on the families and the exploited children while perpetrators often foreign male from Western countries whose crimes are facilitated by all sorts of intermediaries walk around with a complete sense of impunity.

The Special Rapporteur called on the Ministry of Tourism to incorporate prevention of this scourge in its plans, and to lead efforts already deployed by the private travel and tourism sector, together with local actors of affected communities, to implement the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.

The expert commended measures adopted by the specialised units of the Attorney General’s Office to combat trafficking and high technology crimes, which have led to a series of convictions, including of foreign nationals.

She also called for better coordination between the police and the body in

charge of tourist security (CESTUR) to improve detection and referral of cases for criminal investigation.

International police and judicial cooperation are also crucial to combat impunity," she added.

Ms. de Boer-Buquicchio also called for a strengthened cooperation between the Dominican and Haitian authorities to address the situation of unaccompanied children living and working around the Haitian border, and reminded that "while these children remain in the country, they must receive the Dominican authorities' assistance and protection."

Among other statements made during her visit, the expert called for absolute prohibition of child marriage.

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.