

[Mosul: 200,000 more people could be displaced as battle nears Old City – UN](#)

18 May 2017 – As military operations against terrorists intensify and move closer to Mosul's Old City area, up to 200,000 more people could be displaced, a senior United Nations humanitarian official in Iraq warned today.

The numbers of people fleeing their homes in western Mosul are overwhelming, [said](#) Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq Lise Grande in a press release from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Since military operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) began in Mosul seven months ago, nearly 700,000 people have been displaced, including 500,000 people from the city's western neighbourhoods.

Iraqi Security Forces have made rapid gains in north-west Mosul and ISIL terrorists are reportedly surrounded in the west of the city.

The military battle in Mosul isn't over yet and even when it is, the emergency will continue for months... Hundreds of thousands of lives are at stake, [said](#) Ms. Grande, stressing the need to re-double efforts to mobilize more resources to assist the people in need.

She said many are lacking food and haven't had access to safe drinking water and medicines for weeks or months.

Acknowledging the generosity of people in other parts of Mosul who are opening their homes for displaced families, she said: "Without this support, the camps would have been overwhelmed long ago."

To date, the \$985 million appeal for Iraq is less than 30 per cent funded. About \$331 million is being sought for the Mosul assistance.

[Innovators, UN discuss using tech to tackle world's development challenges](#)

17 May 2017 – From drones dropping food and medicines, to handheld devices that can diagnose Ebola with a drop of blood, the latest technological

advances are converging to make the “unthinkable happen,” said global innovators and heads of tech companies invited to the United Nations today to discuss how emerging technologies can boost achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Living up to his promise to be “disruptive,” a famous Silicon Valley catchphrase, Peter Thomson, the President of the UN General Assembly told those gathered for the High-level [SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity](#) that he had refrained from wearing a tie, while Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed kicked off her shoes before addressing the room.

“Today, in this world, everyone is closing their border,” she said, but partnerships are necessary for the SDGs to reach every corner of the globe. Indeed, many innovators know no borders, “like we do in these halls when we negotiate and we talk about red lines, blue lines and green lines.”

Ms. Mohammed underscored: “There are no red, blue or green lines as you walk through the Internet, social media, communicating across those borders. That is what is exciting. Because with that you can share knowledge, with that you can go to scale, with that you can partner to de-risk environments where ordinarily you would not go.”

The Action Event, which sought to get leading innovators from major global corporations to interact with UN Member States, [featured](#) two keynote speakers, with Dr. Peter Diamandis, Chairman of XPrize Foundation and Singularity University, telling the gathering that he believed that in seven years, the entire planet will be connected.

This is what he called the “dematerialization” of things that people used to own, and that are now free on our cell phones.

VIDEO: Speaking at the General Assembly’s High-level SDG Action Event, leading innovators from major corporations interacted with UN Member States on how emerging technologies can transform efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

“The son or daughter of a billionaire here in Manhattan, or the son or daughter of the poorest person in Kenya, has access to the same free applications, the same knowledge and information. It’s an incredible world. What we are seeing here is a dematerialization as all of these things become cheaper and cheaper and ultimately, a democratization where we have a billion handsets in Africa.”

Mr. Diamandis then asked participants to imagine the power of five billion new minds that had never been connected before.

“Change the world,” was his response.

The second keynote speaker, Astro Teller, Chief Executive Officer of Google

Ex, said partnerships between inventors, technologists, governments and local communities are what matter the most.

The majority of 7.5 billion people living on the planet do not have access to the internet, he remarked.



General Assembly President Peter Thomson speaks at the High-level SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity. UN Photo/Evan Schneider



Astro Teller, CEO of Google X, speaks at the High-level SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity. UN Photo/Evan Schneider



Peter Diamandis, Chairman of the XPrize Foundation and Singularity University, speaks at the High-level SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

[<](#) [>](#)

“This is a picture in Brazil. There are so many people who climb up the trees in order to get cell phone signal that they call them fireflies because at night, all you can see in the darkness is all of the flashing lights of the cell phones high up in the trees as they are hoping to get a signal. In Peru, they climb to the top of water towers or walk for many kilometres for the hope of getting a signal,” he said.

In order to get more people online, Google Ex launched a balloon-powered Internet project, Loon, in Latin America with the help of the UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Partnering, Mr. Teller stressed, is important for everyone, from the innovator to Governments. “No one can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals alone.”

[Amid ‘alarming rise’ in obesity, UN study finds one in three European adolescents overweight](#)

17 May 2017 – Citing eating habits, physical activity and sedentary behaviours, the United Nations health agency launched a new publication today

at the European Congress on Obesity in Portugal which revealed a rising number of obese adolescents in many countries across Europe.

Despite sustained efforts to tackle childhood obesity, one in three adolescents is still estimated to be overweight or obese in Europe, with the highest rates found in southern European and Mediterranean countries, said Dr. Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director for Europe of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

Noting with particular concern that the epidemic is on the rise in eastern European countries, where historically rates have been lower, she called for ambitious policy action to reach the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) target to halt the increase in childhood obesity. Governments must target efforts and break this harmful cycle from childhood into adolescence and beyond.

The latest WHO study on [Adolescent obesity and related behaviours: trends and inequalities in the WHO European Region, 2002-2014](#) points to evidence suggesting that up to one in three boys and one in five girls aged six to nine is now obese.

Childhood obesity is considered one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century, according to the study. Globally, around one in 10 young people aged five to 17 is overweight or obese with rapidly increasing levels in recent years.

According to the publication, the primary causes of overweight and obesity can be traced to energy-related behaviours physical activity, sedentary behaviour, eating behaviour and sleep which contribute to an energy imbalance between calorie intake and energy expenditure.

While trends have previously been reported on separately, this study compiles together the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) data on obesity and obesity-related behaviours reviewing the latest evidence and studying the range and complexity of influences on childhood obesity.

The health consequences of excess body weight are well documented. As the report points out, obesity increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnoea and cardiovascular disease. It also diminishes adolescents' quality of life and is related to various emotional and behavioural problems.

Additionally, the chronic nature of obesity can limit social mobility and perpetuates an intergenerational cycle of poverty and ill health. Many inequalities in obesity and related behaviours exist, with young people from lower socioeconomic groups generally reporting worse outcomes.

The study also notes that longitudinal studies have found that obesity early in life relates to less educational attainment and lower incomes in adulthood even after differences in childhood socioeconomic position (SEP) are controlled. Furthermore, low SEP in childhood increases the risk for becoming obese in adulthood over and above the impact of adult SEP on obesity.

Most young people will not outgrow the condition: about four in every five adolescents who become obese will continue to have weight problems as adults, the study underscores.

The HBSC survey is a WHO collaborative cross-national study that monitors the health behaviours, health outcomes and social environments of boys and girls aged 11, 13 and 15 years every four years.

Secretary-General Guterres praises a united Europe as 'fundamental pillar' of strong UN

17 May 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today stressed that the European Union's contribution is absolutely essential for the United Nations, from support to peacekeeping to protecting human rights, solving conflicts, advancing the agenda for sustainable development and fighting climate change.

A strong and united Europe is an absolutely fundamental pillar of a strong and effective United Nations, Mr. Guterres told the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The European Union (EU) is clearly the most successful project of peace sustainability in the world, he added, expressing his gratitude and appreciation for the EU's commitment to multilateralism and its contributions to development cooperation and humanitarian aid.

Addressing a number of issues, including Syria, migration, globalization and the need to preserve cultural diversity, the Secretary-General laid out his reform priorities to ensure the UN is closer to the aspirations of the people it is serving.

Mr. Guterres also stressed the need for Governments, local authorities, civil society and religious authorities to foster social cohesion, inclusivity and tolerance.

According to his spokesperson, the Secretary-General also gave a [press conference](#) alongside European Parliament President Antonio Tajani during which he stressed the need for a united Europe to support the search for global solutions, as no issue today can be solved without global efforts.

On his way to Strasbourg, the Secretary-General had met with new French President Emmanuel Macron. They discussed peace and security issues, as well as issues related to sustainable development and climate change. The UN chief said he looked forward to working with the French President on all pressing issues, noting France's key role as a pillar of multilateralism, the

spokesperson said.

[As four countries face famine, world 'must step up now' says top UN food security forum](#)

17 May 2017 – With famine looming in four countries, the United Nations-backed Committee on World Food Security ([CFS](#)) stressed today the need to rally support for both immediate relief to people at risk and for longer-term initiatives.

“Governments, civic groups and businesses need to rally support for both immediate relief to people in countries at risk of famine and longer-term initiatives that will allow them to recover and restore their livelihoods,” Ambassador Amira Gornass, Chair of the CFS, [said](#) today in Rome.

Famine has been declared in some counties of South Sudan, and the number of people close to sliding from emergency to disaster is perilously high in north-eastern Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen, according to the Food and Agricultural Organization ([FAO](#)) and other UN agencies.

The risk of famine in all four countries – where some 30 million people are uncertain as to where their next meal will come from or rely on humanitarian assistance – is mostly induced by conflict, which has disrupted food production, blocked aid and commodities from accessing vulnerable communities and driven food prices beyond what people can afford.

“I urge you to take action now to relieve the impending suffering and to prevent further damage to livelihoods,” Ms. Gornass stated in a letter to CFS Members and stakeholders, as well as the international community at large, to step-up their response to the crises in the four countries.

Reiterating calls made by Secretary-General, António Guterres, the Ambassador wrote: “The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the primary mechanism for the coordination of humanitarian assistance, emergency and relief responses, can meet immediate needs if adequately funded.”

“Everyone should do what they can to support the IASC and to mobilize the necessary resources to enable emergency and relief activities to continue,” she added.

While emergency relief is an immediate priority, plans for medium and longer-term assistance to support recovery and prevent future famines must be supported, the CFS Chair emphasized.

“The affected populations of these four countries need our help now. We, as the international community, need to act urgently and come together with effective actions,” she said.

In 2015 CFS approved the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises that sets out concrete policy approaches that can build resilience. All stakeholders, public and private, should apply the principles and actions laid out in that document in the four countries and wherever there is a protracted crisis that threatens food security and nutrition.

“I am counting on you to respond in a way that will ensure that short-term relief is properly funded while medium and long-term measures are taken to build resilience and to eradicate hunger and malnutrition for good,” concluded Ambassador Gornass.

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.