

[In first official visit to Mali, new peacekeeping chief praises Government's support for UN mission](#)

16 May 2017 – During his first working visit to Mali, United Nations peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix met today in the capital, Bamako, with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and other senior Malian officials, whom he thanked for their constructive and sustained cooperation with the UN integrated mission in the country, known by the French acronym, MINUSMA.

Mr. Lacroix, the Under Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations, also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of International Cooperation and African Integration, Abdoulaye Diop, as well as the High Representative of the President for implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, Mahamadou Diagouraga.

Meeting with President Keita, Mr. Lacroix hand-delivered a letter from UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres encouraging further progress on the peace agreement, as well as expressing support for the G5 regional initiative, as the 'Group of Five for the Sahel' – formed in 2014 by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – is known.

Accompanied by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Mali, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, these meetings provided an opportunity to discuss the peace process and challenges, particularly in the security field.

Mr. Lacroix thanked Malian officials for their constructive and sustained cooperation with MINUSMA, the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission, in fulfilling its mandate. As part of his first working visit, he was in Timbuktu with Mr. Annadif to visit the Liberian contingent at the site of the attack on 3 May in which one of their comrades was killed and nine others were wounded.

Mr. Lacroix paid tribute to the fallen peacekeeper and wished a speedy recovery to the wounded. He also conveyed his solidarity when he met with civilian and uniformed staff and thanked them for their dedication and sacrifices in very difficult conditions.

[One in four children in North Africa, Middle East live in poverty – UNICEF](#)

study

16 May 2017 – Poverty continues to impact the lives of Middle Eastern and Northern African children, according to new analysis from the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), which highlights that millions of the region’s young people live without quality health care or decent housing.

Based on research among children in 11 countries, UNICEF says that the lives of at least 29 million children – or one in four in the region – are deprived of two or more of the most basic life necessities including basic education, nutritious food, quality safe water, sanitation and access to information.

The outcome of the UNICEF research has been presented ahead of the first-ever conference on child poverty in the region, which is currently taking place in Rabat, Morocco.

While at the conference in Rabat, the UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Geert Cappelaere, [explained](#) that child poverty is about much more than family income – it is about access to quality education, healthcare, a home and safe water.

He also warns that future families could become impoverished for at least three generations. “When children are deprived of the basics, they are at risk of getting trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty.”

Looking back, UNICEF notes that important progress has been made in most countries to reduce poverty, but at the same time the number of children living in poverty continues to be high, particularly in conflict-affected countries, which are seeing a rapid regression of gains made in past decades.

UNICEF’s key findings

Among others, the study finds that:

- Lack of education was found to be one of the key drivers of inequality and poverty for children. Children who live in households that are headed by an uneducated family member are twice as likely to live in poverty. One quarter of children aged 5 to 17 are not enrolled in school or have fallen two grades behind;
- Almost half of all children live in inadequate housing with poor flooring and overcrowding;
- Almost half of all children are not fully immunized or were born to mothers who did not get enough antenatal care or birth assistance; and that
- One in five children are forced to walk more than 30 minutes to fetch water or use unsafe drinking water. More than one third of children live in homes with no tap water.

Looking ahead

UNICEF warns that major regional challenges stand in the way of measuring the

impact of poverty on children and taking collective action towards poverty alleviation. The agency says there is a risk that existing policies and actions fall short from addressing child poverty effectively in absence of a full understanding of children's reality, including the most marginalised or invisible ones. "The return on investing in the most vulnerable children now is a peaceful and prosperous region in the future," says Mr. Cappelaere. "It takes a combination of true leadership and courageous public and private investment from governments, civil society, private sector, individuals and the international community."

[UN envoy warns against Kosovo and Serbia trading 'ethno-nationalist' barbs](#)

16 May 2017 – A flurry of recent intolerant and provocative rhetoric has further damaged the trust between Kosovo and Serbia – a development that must be closely watched – though the situation remains generally stable, the head of the local United Nations peacekeeping mission in Kosovo told the Security Council today.

"Escalation has been avoided in several instances due to external diplomatic interventions, but the necessary level of trust between Pristina and Belgrade has been further eroded by a number of irresponsible and inflammatory statements," said Zahir Tanin, the Secretary-General's Special Representative and the head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo ([UNMIK](#)), during a quarterly debate on the situation there.

Kosovo declared its independence in 2008 from Serbia while the latter has not recognized the move.

"Public communications, during this reporting period, unfortunately descended back to intolerant and ethno-nationalist slogans," said Mr. Tanin said, noting that both sides repeatedly accused one another of provocation, whereas the process of normalisation of relations requires cooperation.

One issue of contention is the extradition of Ramush Haradinaj, leader of the AAK political party from France. The question of regional or sub-regional unions is another issue on which both sides traded barbs.

"Improving the situation in Kosovo and the region requires leadership which transcends ethno-national divisions, rather than amplifying them," Mr. Tanin said.

On a positive note, the Mitrovica wall dispute was resolved peacefully through negotiations, and the initial determination to form a Kosovo army by

legislative amendments has calmed.

“Such outcomes helped to diffuse tensions and maintain peace,” Mr. Tanin said.

On the forthcoming parliamentary election in Kosovo in June, he said the next government, regardless of its composition, would continue to face numerous pressing challenges, but provide opportunities for the renewal of political will and direction, as well as for greater diversity in leadership and representation, for example greater engagement with youth, he said.

[With barely enough money for food, conflict-displaced Ukrainians struggling to survive, reports UN agency](#)

16 May 2017 – Two-thirds of internally displaced Ukrainians are struggling financially; many without even enough money for food, according to the latest report by the United Nations migration agency on the situation in the crisis-torn country.

In its report *National Monitoring System on Situation of IDPs in Ukraine*, the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), reveals that on average, income per internally displaced person (IDP) in Ukraine is 1,991 Ukrainian Hryvnia – or \$75 per month, approximately \$2.50 per day. While a loaf of bread costing about 0.40, some 21 per cent are surviving on less than \$2 a day.

[Soaring temperatures pose new threat to Mosul's displaced – UN migration agency](#)

16 May 2017 – The United Nations migration agency today warned that while hundreds of thousands of people displaced from Mosul have braved the ongoing offensive to oust the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), the beleaguered citizens are now struggling to cope with another danger – the

sweltering summer heat.

“With [temperatures nearing 37 degrees Celsius](#) and rising, the coming months will be trying,” said UN Migration Agency ([IOM](#)) communications officer Hala Jaber.

From June onwards, temperatures in the Ninewa governorate will hit, and sometimes surpass, the 50° mark. The PVC tents that provided warmth during the cold winter will be hard to tolerate in summer, as temperatures inside register at least 10° higher than outside.

The scorching heat is already impacting health and living conditions at IOM’s emergency site at the former Qayara airstrip, which hosts over 52,000 displaced Iraqis or 8,746 families.

Thirty-seven-year old Thaer, who returned to Qayara after his six-month-old son was treated for acute dehydration sleeps outside to escape the suffocating heat.

“During the day, the tents are very hot and at night unbearable with all of us inside. So, I and my older children are sleeping outside the tent to escape the heat,” he said.



An Iraqi woman from Mosul holds her daughter in one hand and empty water containers in the other. Two other children follow her in search of water near the Garmava temporary camp in central Iraq. Credit: UNHCR/S. Baldwin

At full capacity, IOM teams are in the process of ensuring that all internally displaced persons (IDPs) are equipped with basic materials to help alleviate summer discomfort, including supplementary mini kits – containing 40-litre capacity cool boxes, battery-rechargeable fans and summer bed linens – for distribution to some 7,790 families in Qayara and neighbouring Haj Ali camp.

Another 5,400 or so summer kits have already been distributed to IDP families from West Mosul, who have arrived in the emergency sites since the end of March 2017.

IOM’s primary health centres in both Qayara and Haj Ali, home to 34,000 people, each serve an average of 1,800 patients per week with medication. Displaced people with scabies have also been seeking treatment in IOM’s medical centre in Qayara, prompting the primary health care to set specific morning hours, exclusive to these cases. Winter colds have been replaced by diarrhoea and dehydration, particularly among children.

With only 33 per cent of the required \$28.83 million needed by IOM for the Mosul response, the funding gap is having a significant impact on IOM’s ability to effectively provide for the scale of needs created by the Mosul crisis.

“Hundreds of thousands of displaced Iraqis from Mosul have escaped the conflict but now need humanitarian assistance to survive. Forced to flee their homes and exposed to the elements, they are especially vulnerable to the hot summer weather,” said IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Thomas Lothar Weiss.

“IOM staff are providing emergency assistance at full capacity, but additional funding is required to cover the massive scope of the Mosul crisis needs: shelter, medical services, household items, and more, without which displaced Iraqis will continue to be at risk,” he added.