

Keep interests of people above all else, UN Security Council urges political actors in DR Congo

5 May 2017 – Voicing concern over challenges to the implementation of last year's political agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and deteriorating humanitarian and security situation, the United Nations Security Council has urged all stakeholders to redouble their efforts to resolve the problems faced by the country.

The agreement, popularly referred to as the '31 December agreement' represented a significant step towards a peacefully managed transition. However, its implementation has since seen considerable difficulties.

Effective, swift and timely implementation of the agreement is critical to a credible process and the peace and stability of the DRC, as well as in supporting the legitimacy of the transitional institutions, as it represents a viable road map towards the holding of peaceful and democratic elections, said members of the Security Council in a [statement](#) late yesterday.

Among others, the agreement has stipulated that peaceful, credible, inclusive and timely elections would be organized in DRC no later than December 2017, and would include the participation of all sectors of the society, in particular women.

Also in the statement, the members urged for the swift and inclusive establishment of a government of national unity, the *Comité National de Suivi de l'Accord*, the adoption of a new electoral law and the full implementation of the confidence building measures in chapter V of the 31 December 2016 agreement, some of which are yet to be implemented.

They also urged all national political stakeholders to overcome their differences, uphold the interests of their people and ensure that they are guided by the rule of law, restraint and the spirit of compromise and dialogue.

In that regard, they called on all political actors, whether in the country or abroad, to desist from any actions that could exacerbate tensions.

Further in the statement, the members of Security Council condemned violence and alleged violations and abuses of human rights in the Kasai region as well as the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in the region, which according to reports, has displaced more than one million people within the country and more than 11,000 across its borders.

The members also stressed the need for a swift and full investigation into the killing of the two members of the Group of Experts established pursuant

to Security Council resolution 1533 (2004) and underlined the need for full cooperation from the Government.

In this context, they further welcomed the Secretary General's establishment of a UN Board of Inquiry to investigate the deaths of the two experts and his commitment that the UN will do everything possible to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

[New UN study makes 'strong' economic case for Africa's investment in green energy](#)

5 May 2017 – Charting data from 54 African countries, a new UN atlas reveals the continent's energy potential; revealing that investment in renewable energy would strengthen its economic advancement.

“The Atlas makes a strong case that [investments in green energy infrastructure](#) can bolster Africa's economic development and bring it closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),” said Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director and Regional Representative of the Africa Office for the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

As such, she continued, it is an important policy guide for African governments as they strive to catalyze national development by making use of their energy resources.

The Atlas of Africa Energy Resources , released by UNEP and the African Development Bank at the World Economic Forum being held in Durban, South Africa, shows both the potential and the fragility of the continent's energy resources, which are at the heart of Africa's socio-economic development.

While Africa is richly endowed with both renewable and non-renewable energy resources, its current energy production is insufficient to meet demand. About a third Africa's population still lacks access to electricity and 53 per cent of the population depends on biomass for cooking, space heating and drying.

According to UNEP, energy consumption on the continent is the lowest in the world, and per capita consumption has barely changed since 2000. The poorest African households spend 20 times more per unit of energy than wealthy households when connected to the grid. A kettle boiled twice by a family in the United Kingdom uses five times as much electricity as a Malian uses in a year, according to UNEP.

“This Atlas will be instrumental to ease access to information and data

in the energy sector for all stakeholders, including the donor community, African governments and the private sector," said Amadou Hott, Vice-President in charge of power, energy, climate and green growth, African Development Bank.



Windmills rise above the New Port on Victoria's Inner Harbour on Mahe Island, Seychelles. Photo: David Stanley/UNEP Atlas of Africa report

Providing information in the form of detailed 'before and after' images, charts, maps and other satellite data from 54 countries through visuals, the Atlas details the challenges and opportunities in providing Africa's population with access to reliable, affordable and modern energy services.

Prepared in cooperation with the Environment Pulse Institute, United States Geological Survey and George Mason University, the Atlas consolidates the information on the energy landscape in Africa, highlighting some success stories of sustainable energy development around the continent, but also shining a light on major environmental challenges associated with energy infrastructure development.

Central African Republic: UN cites 'dire' situation for children; amid threats, some aid work suspended

5 May 2017 – Four international humanitarian organizations have temporarily suspended activities in northern Central African Republic (CAR) after dozens of attacks on aid workers in the region, the United Nations humanitarian office today said.

During the first quarter of the year, 33 incidents targeting humanitarians were recorded across the country, placing CAR "among the [high-risk countries](#) for humanitarian aid," according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

Sixteen of those attacks were in the northern prefecture of Ouham, and were reported since March.

The senior UN humanitarian official in the country strongly condemned the attacks, reminding that half of the population – about 2.2 million people – depends on aid. Provision of basic services has been hampered by decades of instability, the latest following the ouster of President François Bozizé by the Séléka rebel coalition in March 2013.

“Suspending this aid would jeopardize social stability and threaten the fragile resilience of the communities,” said the Humanitarian Coordinator, ai, Michel Yao.

“This withdrawal constitutes a setback in humanitarian access for the Central African Republic, as it places in the disarray of people who have already repeatedly suffered violence and have experienced successive displacements.”

The staff from the four non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will redeploy to the capital, Bangui, while other aid organization plan to “strictly reduce” their presence and possibly withdraw if the attacks persist, according to OCHA.

Aiding children in the ‘forgotten crisis’

Meanwhile, the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) today called for increased support to the more than 1 million children threatened by violence, in what a senior UNICEF official called a “forgotten crisis.”

The situation for children inside the country is “calamitous as violence and widespread displacement have made children especially vulnerable to [health risks, exploitation and abuse](#),” the UN agency reported.

“We cannot allow the Central African Republic to become a forgotten crisis,” said Christine Muhigana, UNICEF Representative in the Central African Republic. “The reality is that without sufficient support we will not be able to provide the vital services that are needed to keep children healthy, safe and in school.”

The UN agency is facing a \$32.6 million funding gap in its work in the country.

[Worsening food insecurity forcing more people to migrate, finds new UN report](#)

5 May 2017 – Highlighting the complex link between food insecurity and migration – where increase in one forces the other to rise and then spirals back to push the former even higher – the United Nations food relief agency has urged greater investments in food security and livelihoods at places of origin to prevent displacement and reduce forced onward migration.

In its new report, [At the Root of Exodus: Food security, conflict and international migration](#), the UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) found that each 1 per cent increase in food insecurity pushed 1.9 per cent more people towards migration. However, the act of migration itself can cause food insecurity,

given the costs, lack of opportunities and often hazardous conditions along the journey, and force people to continue to move.

With millions of our brothers and sisters having fled their homes and facing so much hardship, it is our duty to shed light on their tragic situation, David Beasley, the Executive Director of WFP, said in a [news release](#) announcing the report.

By understanding the dynamics that compel people to move, we can better address what lies at the heart of forced migration and what must be done to end their suffering, he added.

The report is launched at a moment when multiple protracted crises and a period of political transition challenge the levels of international food and humanitarian assistance provided for refugees and people who have been forcibly displaced.

Link between food insecurity and armed conflict

The WFP study is the first time such comprehensive analysis has been carried out on the subject. It is based on quantitative and qualitative research and features often dramatic accounts of people forced to take extreme measures when left with nothing at all.

A country with rising levels of food insecurity and conflict will experience greater outward migrationWFP report

One particularly troubling finding was the link between food insecurity and armed conflict: food insecurity was found to be a significant cause for the incidence and intensity of armed conflict, with 0.4 percent more people fleeing a country for each additional year of conflict.

This means that a country with rising levels of food insecurity and conflict will experience greater outward migration, or movement of people away from their homes, noted the UN agency.

People want to stay closer to their homes

The report also found that people who are displaced often do not want to move far away from their homes, and try to stay as close to their place of origin as possible.

Nearly eight in ten Syrian refugee families interviewed had been internally displaced inside Syria at least once, and 65 per cent twice or more. Almost every single Syrian participant in the study strongly affirmed a desire to return to Syria if the situation stabilized and security prevailed.

In light of these findings, one of the key recommendations contained in the report is for increasing investments in food security and livelihoods at or near people's place of origin.

Doing so may prevent further displacement, reduce forced onward migration, result in more cost-effective humanitarian interventions and yield greater socioeconomic benefits now and in the long term," noted WFP.

'Blue helmet' killed in attack on UN Mission camp in Timbuktu, Mali

4 May 2017 – A United Nations peacekeeper from Liberia was killed and nine others injured when their camp came under attack in the Malian city of Timbuktu, the UN Integrated Mission in the country, known as MINUSMA, has reported.

According to MINUSMA, eight among the injured were evacuated to capital Bamako for treatment.

"[We] condemn in the strongest terms this cowardly and ignoble attack on the camp and personnel," said MINUSMA in the [news release \(in French\)](#), underscoring the need to identify those responsible for the attack and to bring them to justice.

Some six mortar shells or rockets hit the camp at around 13:15 local time, yesterday, 3 May. The projectiles also caused some material damage, the full extent of which has not been established yet.

MINUSMA added that defences at the camp have been strengthened and air assets have been deployed to reconnoitre the area where the shots originated.

The UN Mission also informed that no civilian personnel were deployed at the camp.

Also in the news release, MINUSMA extended sincere condolences to the family of the peacekeeper who was killed and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.