

At Security Council, UN chief Guterres highlights global significance of a peaceful Europe

21 February 2017 – Noting that recent crises in Europe show that the continent remains at risk from new outbreaks of conflict, United Nations Secretary-General called for reinforcing mutual trust and respect to strengthen stability and cooperation both within Europe and beyond.

The Security Council meeting at which the UN chief delivered this message started with a moment of silence in memory of the Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, who passed away yesterday.

“I think [the Ambassador’s] passing represents a deep loss for all of us in the UN, including in this Council, where his distinctive voice was ever-present for the past decade, and where, I think, we will all miss that voice in the sessions to come,” said Mr. Guterres in his tribute.

Turning to the subject at hand, the Secretary-General, who briefed the Council alongside Lamberto Zannier, the Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and Helga Schmid, Secretary-General, European External Action Service of the European Union (EU), said crises in Europe could also adversely impact economic progress and sustainable development.

“Conflict in Europe is not only a tragedy for those directly involved: those killed, injured, displaced, who have lost loved ones, who may be unable to access healthcare and are missing vital years of their education,” Mr. Guterres said, adding: “It is also reversing development gains and preventing communities and societies from achieving their full potential and contributing to regional and global prosperity.”

Noting that no single factor is responsible for the emergence and continuation of conflicts, he said that in many cases, peace agreements were simply not being implemented.

Other factors included challenges to democratic governance and the rule of law, and the manipulation of ethnic, economic, religious and communal tensions for personal or political gain.

“Whatever the causes may be, the inability of regional and international institutions, including our own, to prevent and resolve conflicts is seriously undermining their credibility and making it more difficult for them to succeed in future,” added the UN chief.

Speaking specifically on the conflict in Ukraine, Mr. Guterres said the UN remains committed to supporting a peaceful resolution, in a manner that fully upholds the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine,

and in accordance with relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

AUDIO: António Guterres was speaking in the Security Council during an open debate which looked at cooperation between the UN and regional bodies in responding resolving existing conflicts in Europe

He also noted that the UN fully supported the efforts within the Normandy Four, the Trilateral Contact Group, and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, and that it has repeatedly called for the full implementation by all sides of all of their commitments under the Minsk Process, both in letter and in spirit.

“I urge all stakeholders to avoid unilateral steps or attempts to create facts on the ground, which further complicate and endanger efforts to find negotiated settlements. This is especially relevant in view of the latest actions taken in relation to the conflicts in eastern Ukraine and the South Caucasus,” he highlighted, urging all sides to give the highest priority to protecting civilians.

In his remarks, Mr. Guterres also spoke of challenges to peace in other parts of Europe, such as in the Balkans, Cyprus, Georgia, Moldova and South Caucasus, as well as on the long-standing name issue between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

He also noted new challenges and threats such as the phenomenon of populism, nationalism, xenophobia and violent extremism were both causes and effects of conflict.

“I encourage Member States, this Council, regional mechanisms and all stakeholders to intensify their efforts to define a peace and security agenda to address today’s complex challenges,” urged Secretary-General Guterres.

“The status quo is not sustainable.”

‘We cannot give up the fight’ to end child recruitment, says UNICEF chief

21 February 2017 – Even though over the past 10 years, more than 65,000 children have been released from armed forces and armed groups, tens of thousands of boys and girls under the age of 18 continue to be used in conflicts around the world, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said today.

[It] is not only about looking back at what has been accomplished but looking forward to the work that remains to be done to support the children of war," said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake as global leaders gather in the French capital on the anniversary of the Paris commitments to end the use of children in conflict.

Adopted 10 years ago, the Paris commitments, together with the Paris principles and guidelines, lay out guidance for protecting children from recruitment and use by armed forces or armed groups, and assisting their release and reintegration, with other vulnerable children affected by armed conflict in their communities.

According to UNICEF, exact data on the number of children used and recruited in armed conflict is difficult to ascertain because of the unlawful nature of child recruitment. But estimates indicate that tens of thousands under the age of 18 are used in conflicts worldwide.

For instance, since 2013 an estimated 17,000 children have been recruited in South Sudan and up to 10,000 have been recruited in the Central African Republic (CAR). Similarly, nearly 2,000 children were recruited by Boko Haram, in Nigeria and neighbouring countries, last year alone, and there have been nearly 1,500 cases of child recruitment in Yemen since the conflict escalated in March 2015.

There has also been progress: since it was adopted, the number of countries endorsing the Paris commitments has nearly doubled from 58 countries in 2007 to 105 at present, signalling an increasing global commitment to end the use of children in conflict.

Globally, more than 65,000 children have been released from armed forces and armed groups, including 20,000 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo); nearly 9,000 in the Central African Republic; and over 1,600 children in Chad.

But more needs to be done.

Seeking to build on the current momentum, the Paris International Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Children in Armed Conflicts is urging for unconditional release of all children without exception and putting an end to child recruitment.

It is also calling increased resources to help reintegrate and educate children who have been released, and urgent action to protect internally displaced children, child refugees and migrants.

"As long as children are still affected by the fighting, we cannot give up the fight for the children," Mr. Lake added.

[India-Rwanda Innovation Growth Program to expand ties in Science, Technology and Innovation: Vice President](#)

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari has said that India-Rwanda Innovation Growth Program is being launched to expand ties in Science, Technology and Innovation, and the program aims at creating an ecosystem wherein Indian innovations and technology enterprises will thrive and encourage business ventures from both sides.

[Global Crude oil price of Indian Basket was US\\$ 54.97 per bbl on 20.02.2017](#)

The international crude oil price of Indian Basket as computed/published today by Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas was US\$ 54.97 per barrel (bbl) on 20.02.2017. This was higher than the price of US\$ 54.56 per bbl on previous publishing day of 17.02.2017.

[Nanluoguxiang reopens to visitors](#)

Nanluoguxiang, a popular pedestrian street in central Beijing known for its traditional culture. [Photo/Xinhua]

Some shops in Nanluoguxiang, a popular pedestrian street in central Beijing known for its traditional culture, reopened to visitors on Saturday after a two-month renovation project.

The total number of shops on the street has been reduced to 154 from 235, while programs for public interest such as a folk cultural center have been set up.

On May Day this year, the whole Nanluoguxiang will open to the public with a new look.

Nanluoguxiang is a narrow alley that is approximately 800m long, running from East Gulou Street in the north to Ping'an Street in the south. Built in the Yuan Dynasty, it is one of Beijing's oldest streets with a history of over 740 years.

At the beginning of last year, Nanluoguxiang was disqualified as a 3A level scenic spot. Its main street has been closed for construction from October 28. The renovated Nanluoguxiang features blue bricks, gray tiles and wooden doors, and embraces more shops with cultural elements to preserve the street's cultural charm.