

UN agency expanding camps around Mosul to cope with surge in displacement

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7 March 2017 –

Amid a spike in new displacement triggered by the Iraqi military offensive to recapture western Mosul, the United Nations refugee agency is setting up new camps and expanding existing ones to shelter new arrivals, many of whom are visibly traumatized, hungry and dehydrated.

According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), its newly opened Chamakor camp will help manage the up tic.

“[The camp] received its first 200 residents [yesterday] and more arrivals are expected [today] and through the week.” Cécile Pouilly, a spokesperson for the UN agency, said at a media briefing today at the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG).

“It is ready to immediately receive 6,600 people,” she added.

The UN agency is also building two additional camps – one to the east of Mosul and the other, south – for some 39,000 people and setting up 19 tented halls in the Iraqi Government-built Hammam al-Alil, that will serve as reception centres and transit area.

RELATED: 15,000 children flee west Mosul over past week as battle intensifies, says UNICEF

Ms. Pouilly also said that UNHCR is exploring expanding capacity in camps north of the city but is facing serious challenges finding suitable land to build the camps.

Hunger and insecurity biggest reason to flee

Hunger and insecurity have been cited as the key factors in the decision to flee by newly displaced families, who told the UN agency of armed groups attacking areas recently retaken by Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), causing sustained civilian casualties.

“The newest arrivals are in a desperate condition, visibly traumatized, hungry and dehydrated. Many arrived without shoes and wearing soaking clothes, having walked long distances to reach safety at government checkpoints,” said the UNHCR spokesperson.

“Some had left relatives behind, hoping to be reunited once they are able to find safer exit routes from west Mosul. Families recounted surviving on one meal a day – flour and water, sometimes supplemented by bread or tomato paste – over recent weeks.”

Currently there are 211,572 Iraqis displaced by the fighting in Mosul, with over 50,000 added since the beginning of the latest operations in west Mosul, launched on 19 February.

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UN migration agency reports surge in displacement from Mosul as fighting intensifies

[In Somalia, UN chief Guterres urges global support to avert famine, tackle cholera](#)

7 March 2017 – Visiting Somalia, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today urged international support to avoid a famine in the drought-hit African country and curb the spread of cholera while also highlighting some hopeful developments there.

“It is exactly because it is tragic and because it is hopeful that it makes sense to make a very strong appeal to the international community to support Somalia at the present moment,” Mr. Guterres told reporters in the country’s capital, Mogadishu.

With almost half of the Somali population in need of assistance, including 330,000 children who are acutely malnourished, the UN chief reiterated an appeal for \$825 million for the support of 5.5 million people for six months.

“There is a chance in Somalia to avoid a situation like the one we had in 2011,” he said, referring to the previous famine that killed many in that country.

He said that 3.3 million people are in need of health support and that cholera has been developing and making hunger even worse and more dangerous. In the last two months, there were 7,731 cases of cholera with 183 people dying. Just last week, there were 1,352 cases of cholera and 38 people dying. “It’s a process in acceleration,” he warned.

But now is also “a moment of hope” because Somalia is turning the page, with a new President elected and a new Prime Minister appointed, he said.

“There is a very strong commitment to enhance security and at the same time to enhance the capacity of the government to start to provide effective

services to the population,” he said.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which is doing a job that the world should be grateful for because it is not only protecting Somalis, but protecting all against terrorism, has not been effectively helped by the international community, he said.

[UN migration agency seeks \\$25 million to aid families in Eastern Ukraine](#)

7 March 2017 – To meet the emergency needs of 180,000 people in Eastern Ukraine, the United Nations migration agency today announced plans to provide aid ranging from blankets to money to cover electricity costs and psychological support at a cost of \$25 million.

“Many of the people who need urgent help are trapped in villages along the contact line without fuel for heating and cooking, hot water, food, or basic necessities,” said said Manfred Profazi, the Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ukraine.

Since April 2014, nearly 10,000 people have been killed in fighting in Eastern Ukraine and nearly 23,000 injured.

In addition, an estimated 3.8 million people are in need of humanitarian aid, according to IOM figures. More than half of those people are displaced across the country “jobless, struggling to pay their utility bills and lacking funds for food and medical expenses,” according to information released today.

One of the worries is that mass displacement elevates the risk of human trafficking. In addition to humanitarian concerns, the UN agency is aiming to help the displaced communities come together to strengthen mutual trust.

“Traffickers know the market and cynically move in to exploit vulnerable people who are desperate to provide for their families. We will work with communities both to prevent it happening and to assist victims,” Mr. Profazi said.

[West Africa can serve as a model for](#)

preventive diplomacy – UN political chief

6 March 2017 – The United Nations political affairs chief today stressed that West Africa could be a model of how the UN can work with local partners in bringing stability to regions or sub-regions.

“The situation in West Africa says a lot of the region’s growing capacity to deal with regional problems,” said Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman at a regular briefing at the UN Headquarters in New York, following a one-week visit to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Guinea, The Gambia and Senegal.

The key objective of his visit was to advance sustaining peace initiatives in Burkina Faso and the Gambia – two countries that are in political transition. He also said that the situation in Guinea-Bissau, which he did not visit this time, was also a major topic of discussion during his trip.

The transition in the Gambia is “a very clear case of prevention,” in which the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU) and the UN were “all united behind the will of Gambian people.”

In January, the former President of the Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, decided to facilitate an immediate and orderly transition process and transfer of power to President Adama Barrow after concerted mediation efforts by a number of African leaders to help resolve the crisis in the country following the presidential elections in December.

The situation is still fragile, however. With the legislative polls to be held on 6 April, the cohesion of the seven-party ruling coalition will be tested, he said.

On Burkina Faso, Mr. Feltman highlighted some progress made since the new leader was inaugurated in December 2015, including the country’s improved relationships with its neighbours, in particular with Côte d’Ivoire.

He said he discussed with President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré and other officials the implementation of key reforms that will help consolidate stability in the country, including in the economic and security spheres.

Mr. Feltman said Burkina Faso was successful in rallying international support for its 2016-2020 national plan for economic and social development, with donors pledging 28.6 billion euros at a conference in December.

Mr. Feltman highlighted the contributions of ECOWAS and the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) to these countries’ transitions.

“Working with local actors and subregional organizations can make the UN more effective in prevention,” he said, underscoring the need to build on the leverage and credibility that local partners have inside countries.

For instance, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who chairs ECOWAS, can talk to fellow Heads of States in West Africa as a peer and as someone who with real leverage and credibility on the ground, he noted.

UN chief Guterres condemns reported firing of multiple ballistic missiles by DPR Korea

6 March 2017 – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has condemned the reported firing of ballistic missiles today by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), three of which landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone.

"Such actions violate Security Council resolutions and seriously undermine regional peace and stability," Mr. Guterres said in a statement issued by his spokesperson in New York.

"The Secretary-General reiterates his call for the DPRK leadership to refrain from further provocations and return to full compliance with its international obligations," concluded the statement.

This is the latest in a series of reported missile launches by the DPRK, all of which have been condemned by the United Nations.

After urgent closed-door talks last month, the Security Council, condemning a reported incident on 12 February, issued a press statement expressing serious concern that the DPRK conducted these ballistic missile launches after the 15 April, 23 April, 27 April, 28 April, 31 May, 21 June, 9 July, 18 July, 2 August, 23 August, 5 September, and 14 October 2016 launches, as well as the nuclear test of 9 September, "in flagrant disregard of its repeated statements."