

[Security Council extends mandate of UN mission in Afghanistan for one year](#)

17 March 2017 – The Security Council today extended the mandate of United Nations assistance operation in Afghanistan until 17 March 2018, stressing the political mission's role in supporting an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

Unanimously adopting a new resolution, the 15-member Council also requested the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and report back on the results of this exercise by July 2017, in order to ensure effective support for the Mission.

On the human rights front, the Council requested continued support efforts to strengthen the protection of children affected by armed conflict, and reiterated the importance of accelerating the establishment of a fair and transparent justice system. In that vein, the Council emphasized the importance of ensuring access for relevant organizations to all prisons and places of detention in Afghanistan.

Further in the text, the Council reiterated its support for the Government of Afghanistan, and in particular to the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF), in their fight against terrorism and violent extremism, calling upon the Afghan Government, with the assistance of the international community, to continue to address the threat posed by the Taliban as well as by Al Qaida, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) affiliates and other terrorist groups.

[UN forum in Paris to spotlight mobile learning for refugees and displaced persons](#)

17 March 2017 – Education experts and government officials will gather at the Paris headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) from 20 to 24 March, to discuss ways of expanding the use of mobile technologies to “reach people where they are” and improve education opportunities for refugees and displaced persons and others in emergency situations.

This year's edition of Mobile Learning Week, on the theme “Education in Emergencies and Crises,” will introduce participants to projects such as ‘Teachers for Teachers’, a portal that connects instructors around the world

through WhatsApp, a mobile messaging service.

Through this network, peers offer psychosocial and professional support and advice for challenges that instructors face in what the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) called “perhaps the toughest classroom in the world”: one that includes refugees learners.

Mobile learning involves the use of mobile technology, either alone or in combination with other information and communication technology (ICT), to enable learning anytime and anywhere.

There are 180 students in the class of the primary school teacher Romans Manyiel Garang, who will be part of a panel discussion during Mobile Learning Week. He teaches in the Kakuma Refugee Camp, in Kenya, where he started in 2015, equipped with a secondary school degree and no previous teaching experience.

Tools such as the ‘Teachers for Teachers’ portal allow him to be in touch with a larger community of instructors and receive support and feedback from peers, as well as exchange problem-solving techniques.



Mobile learning in the Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. Photo: UNHCR

“Comparing my ideas with others helps me grow as a teacher,” Mr. Garang told UNESCO, adding: “I have a lot I can share to help teachers overcome their challenges.”

Practical and psychosocial support offered by programmes such as ‘Teachers for Teachers’ are among the many ways educators, students and ministries of education are using cheap and widely available mobile technologies to expand and improve educational programmes to displaced people, whose numbers, according to UNHCR, surpassed 65 million in 2015.

This accounted for an average of 24 individuals being forced out of their homes per minute during every single day of 2015. Nearly 21.3 million of these people are refugees, and over half of these refugees are under 18 years old.

“We have to reach people where they are,” said Mark West, the UNESCO coordinator of the five-day mobile learning event. “Our work indicates that mobile technologies offer unique advantages for making education accessible to displaced people and others on-the-move. Mobile Learning Week is where solutions and cutting edge ideas are shared.”

The meeting in Paris will be structured in five parts: the symposium, which will include more than 70 breakout presentations; a total of 16 workshops, which aim to support learners, teachers, and systems; the strategy labs, to help guide the development of projects; the policy forum, which will bring together government officials and members of the private sector to examine how governments can facilitate the acquisition of essential digital skills,

particularly for disadvantaged or displaced learners; and side events such as art exhibitions and demonstrations.

One of these side events, the Family Tent, which will be set up outside UNESCO for the duration of the conference, will show participants the living conditions of refugees.

Mobile Learning Week 2017 is organized by UNESCO in partnership with UNHCR and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). This is the 7th edition of the meeting.

[Toll on refugee and migrant children continues to mount one year after EU-Turkey deal – UNICEF](#)

17 March 2017 – The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) warned today that one year after the Balkan border closures and the European Union-Turkey Statement, which were aimed at stopping mass migration flows, refugee and migrant children face greater risks of deportation, detention, exploitation and deprivation.

“While there has been a major decrease in the overall numbers of children on the move into Europe since last March, there has been an increase in the threats and distress refugee and migrant children endure,” said Afshan Khan UNICEF Regional Director and Special Coordinator for the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe.

UNICEF staff in Greece report deep levels of distress and frustration among children and their families, including one child as young as eight attempting self-harm. Despite recent improvement in living conditions some unaccompanied children in shelters, suffer psychosocial distress, with high levels of anxiety, aggression and violence and demonstrating high risk behaviour such as drugs and prostitution.

War, destruction, the death of loved ones and a dangerous journey exacerbated by poor living conditions in camps around Greece or the lengthy registration and asylum procedures, can trigger post-traumatic stress disorders.

“It has become a vicious circle – children flee suffering, and they end up either fleeing again, or facing de facto detention, or just utter neglect,” underscored Ms. Khan.

In response, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Greek Government and non-governmental organization partner, are prioritizing appropriate care for refugee and migrant children to meet their mental health and psychosocial

needs. Imminent transfers back to Greece in line with so-called 'Dublin regulations,' are likely to add even greater strain to the situation facing children and further pressure to existing services.

RELATED: 'Refugees need protection, not rejection,' UN says in wake of EU-Turkey deal

Instead of stemming the flow, border closures and the EU-Turkey statement, have led to children and families taking matters into their own hands and embarking on even more dangerous and irregular routes with smugglers, as UNICEF and partners warned a year ago.

Even in 2017 nearly 3,000 refugees and migrants – with about a third children – have arrived in Greece despite the full implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and strict border control. Many continue to slip through borders into Bulgaria, West Balkans and Hungary, said UNICEF.

Children stranded in Greece and West Balkans have already lost nearly three years of education and now face several hurdles like different languages and education systems and yet another year without schooling. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education's strategy to integrate stranded refugee and migrant children in Greek schools. However only 2,500 children out the 15,000 school age children so far that benefit from the national scheme in Greek language.

Despite significant efforts – from government and partners – about half of the 2,100 unaccompanied children are still living in substandard conditions, including nearly 200 unaccompanied children in facilities with limited movement early March (178 in reception and identification centres on the Islands and 16 in "protective custody" in police cells).

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Speech: “Central African Republic needs more than just plans and pledges”

I would like to begin by welcoming President Touadera to the Council and thanking him for his briefing, as well as the other briefers for theirs.

It has been a significant twelve months for the Central African Republic. The peaceful and credible elections that saw you, Mr President, elected were a welcome moment of hope for a country that has endured crisis for far too long. And the National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding, agreed in November, sets out a clear pathway forward. It will move the country on and away from the cycle of conflict.

In that effort the Central African Republic will have the international community's support, including \$44 million from the United Kingdom.

But the Central African Republic needs more than just plans and pledges. What it really needs is implementation delivery, both by the Government and by us in the international community.

Because as the past twelve months have sadly shown, progress is fragile. The hope of March 2016 risks being replaced by the violence, displacement, humanitarian urgency, and fear of the past. Having come so far, the risk of reversal, the risk of deterioration, a return to the chaos of the past, is now a painful reality that we must confront. In response, we see four steps.

First, the Government of the Central African Republic, with support from MINUSCA, must secure an agreement with armed groups to cease attacks on civilians as well as for their disarmament and demobilisation. They can't be allowed to derail progress in pursuit of their own short term self interest.

Second, more effort needs to be made on disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of ex-Seleka faction and anti-Balaka groups. We welcome the President's Consultative Committee as the formal framework for DDR with all armed groups represented, as we heard today. Efforts to support mediation, in particular the Angola-led African Initiative, are all welcome. Any initiative must support the President's authority, be in coordination with the UN, and respect the will of the Central African Republic people to end impunity as demonstrated at the Bangui Forum.

Third, for long term stability, it's essential that the Central African Republic's own armed forces can provide the security and stability that the people deserve. That means reform of the armed forces. And we stand ready to support the country in that effort.

Fourth, and finally, if the Central African Republic is to move beyond the violence, there must be accountability. Not only will that bring justice for those who have suffered but it will also send a clear message to armed groups that they cannot kill and maim with impunity. This Council has given our support for the development of a Special Criminal Court and we've mandated MINUSCA to help make it happen. And now we need to see implementation.

In conclusion, the Central African Republic is at a critical juncture. There is a possibility for sustainable peace, but that possibility narrows as the security situation deteriorates. Having endured conflict and chaos for so long, having stepped away from the brink of genocide in 2014, the people of the Central African Republic deserve a peaceful future, not a return to a hateful past. Mr President of the Republic, we stand ready to support you so that the Central African Republic can finally break the cycle of conflict.

Thank you.