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**ICC Prosecutor urges Security Council action on Darfur referrals**

**8 June** – The Prosecutor for the International Criminal Court today reiterated her call for States to arrest and surrender the suspects of alleged genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Darfur region of Sudan, including President Omar Al Bashir.

“Not one of the suspects for whom warrants have been issued has been arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Court,” ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda told the United Nations Security Council, and in remarks directed at the victims and their families she said “to those who continue to long for justice in Darfur; do not despair and do not abandon hope.”

Indeed, she recalled that the international tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia were reminders that persistence and determination could result in the arrest and surrender of suspects many years after the issuance of arrest warrants.

The Court was established by the treaty known as the Rome Statute adopted at an international conference in Rome on 17 July 1998. It entered into force on 1 July 2002.

“The States that form this Council have the power, independently and collectively, to positively influence and incentivize States, whether or not parties to the Rome Statute, to assist in the efforts to arrest and surrender the Darfur suspects,” she said, adding that regional organizations can do the same.

The prosecutor said there have been alleged cases of non-compliance by the parties to the treaty.



**Fatou Bensouda, Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Court, briefs the Security Council meeting on the situation in Sudan and South Sudan.** UN Photo/Manuel Elias

She said a pre-trial chamber of the Court plans to decide whether South Africa acted in non-compliance with the Statute when it failed to arrest and surrender Mr. Al Bashir in June 2015. Most recently, Mr. Al Bashir travelled to Jordan on 29 March 2017, but Jordan declined to arrest and surrender him.

“Inviting, facilitating or supporting the international travel of any person subject to an ICC arrest warrant is inconsistent with a commitment to international criminal justice,” she said. “It is also an affront to the victims in the Darfur situation.”

Ms. Bensouda noted that to date, the Court has made 13 decisions on non-compliance and referred them to the Security Council. “Yet not one has been acted upon by this Council,” she said. “By failing to act in response to such Court decisions, this Council is in essence relinquishing and undermining its clear role on such matters” arising from the Rome Statute and the Council's resolution 1593 (2005), which referred the Darfur situation to the body.

## Yemen's children 'have suffered enough;' UNICEF official warns of cholera rise, malnutrition



At the Al Sab'een Hospital in Sana'a, Yemen, a doctor checks on a girl suffering from cholera. UNICEF/Fuad

**8 June** – The situation facing children in Yemen is “extremely dire,” a senior United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) official warned today, citing a dramatic increase in cases of malnutrition and a massive outbreak of cholera across the war-torn country.

Speaking to the press at the UN Headquarters in New York, Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, highlighted a dramatic increase in the number of children with malnutrition.

When he left Yemen four years ago, there was already a huge caseload of children with severe acute malnutrition. On his recent visit to Yemen, he found the caseload having since doubled, with nearly half a million children under the age of five suffering the most extreme and visible form of undernutrition.

“It does not end there. Yemen has been hit by a massive outbreak of cholera,” he said, noting that reported cases already exceeded 100,000. With 3,000 to 5,000 cases added daily, it is possible that the outbreak will reach 250,000 to 300,000 cases, he said.

To make the matter worse, the country's medical care system is on the verge of collapse, or “half-collapsed,” he said, and the half of the health system that is partially functional is operating “on a zero budget.” Moreover, health workers have not received salaries for eight to nine months.

“Children in Yemen have suffered enough. It is high time that all those who are responsible realize that the country is at the verge of collapse; that one of Yemen's biggest assets, its children, are getting killed,” he said.

The situation in Yemen must be on the radar of the international community, he stressed, calling for a scaled-up support.

## Despite pressure and losses, ISIL remains potent threat, UN political chief warns Security Council

**8 June** – After losing control on population centres and declining financial strength, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorist group is more focused than ever before on “enabling and inspiring” attacks outside of conflict zones, the top United Nations political official said today.

“The threat from ISIL has been intensified by its use of the Internet and social media to disseminate propaganda online to a wide international audience,” Jeffrey Feltman, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, told a Security Council meeting on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

“Although the volume of such messages has declined in the past 16 months, the threat persists as supporters outside Syria and Iraq collect and re-distribute this propaganda,” he added.

In Europe, for example, ISIL has used its online presence to encourage supporters to mount attacks in their countries of residence. “This has led to multiple attacks, including in Belgium, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom,” noted Mr. Feltman, adding that while some of those extremists had been labelled “lone actors,” investigations demonstrate that the perpetrators often received support or resources from facilitators and, in a number of cases, were in direct contact with ISIL enablers.

He also noted a decrease in the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and in the overall number of ISIL fighters during the last 16 months but returnees and the relocation of fighters from the conflict zones to other regions now present a considerable – and an increasingly transnational – threat to international security.

At same time, Mr. Feltman also warned that ISIL continues to fund affiliates, while urging them to become more self-sufficient and proactive in developing internal revenue streams.

“Money services, including exchange houses and money couriers, continue to be a preferred method for ISIL and its supporters to move funds across borders,” he said, expressing concern that funds for reconstruction and stabilization for newly liberated areas should not enable ISIL remnants to abuse those new resources.

Further, welcoming recent Security Council initiatives countering terrorist narratives, protecting critical infrastructure and stemming the destruction, looting and smuggling of cultural heritage sites and artefacts, the senior UN official called for more effort to implement norms and mechanisms, particularly those relating to terrorist financing and foreign terrorist fighter threats.

He also informed the meeting of the work undertaken by the UN and other actors, including the INTERPOL and the Financial Action Task Force to strengthen regional and national frameworks to counter terrorism financing and arrest the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.



Jeffrey Feltman (front right), Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, briefs the Security Council threat posed by ISIL to international peace and security. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

## Recent killings in western Mosul indicative of rising atrocities against civilians – UN rights arm



A child stands barefoot alongside other children, after they fled with their families from fighting between ISF and ISIL in an area west of Mosul, Iraq. Many of those fleeing are using the cover of night to evade ISIL snipers. Photo: UNICEF/Romenzi

**8 June** – Noting “credible” reports that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) fighters killed more than 231 civilians, including women and children, attempting to flee western Mosul over the past two weeks, the United Nations human rights arm underscored that attacks on civilians could amount to war crimes.

In a news release today, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – which has been documenting alleged human rights violations and abuses since the start of the military operations to retake Mosul – said that recent reports suggest a “significant escalation” in atrocities against civilians.

“Shooting children as they try to run to safety with their families – there are no words of condemnation strong enough for such despicable acts,” Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in the release.

“I call on the Iraqi authorities to ensure that those who are responsible for these horrors are held accountable and brought to justice in line with international human rights laws and standards.”

In the most gruesome incident, last Thursday (1 June), ISIL reportedly shot and killed at least 163 civilians, including women, men and children, next to a Pepsi factory in the in al-Shifa neighbourhood. Their bodies were reportedly left on the street for several days following the killings.

An undetermined number of civilians were also reported missing. Those killed and missing were fleeing clashes between ISIL and the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).

In the same neighbourhood, at least 27 people, including 14 women and five children were reportedly killed by ISIL on 26 May, and at least 41 others on 3 June.

Further in the release, referring to reports of civilian casualties due to recent air strikes in an ISIL-held area of western Mosul, OHCHR called on the ISF and their coalition partners to ensure that their operations comply fully with international humanitarian law and that all possible measures are taken to avoid the loss of civilian lives.

An air strike on 31 May in Zanjilly (an ISIL-held area of western Mosul) reportedly resulted between 50 and 80 civilian deaths, the news release added, noting that High Commissioner Zeid “urged Iraqi authorities to ensure that any allegations of human rights violations committed by the ISF are also fully investigated and those responsible held accountable.”

## Working together, 'we can ensure that our oceans remain healthy as our blue home' – UN chief



A school of Moorish Idols cruise over the coral reef, Ha'apai, Tonga.  
Photo: UNEP GRID Arendal/Glenn Edney

**8 June** – The future of the planet's oceans is burdened by threats such as climate change, pollution and destructive fishing practices – and the lack of capacities to address these threats – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has said, calling for joint global action to ensure “that our oceans are peaceful, safe and bountiful, and remain healthy as our blue home.”

On this World Oceans Day, we look to the future. Caring for, and using, our oceans in sustainable ways is critical to achieve ecological and economic goals for communities everywhere,” said Mr. Guterres in a message on the Day.

This year, World Oceans Day is being celebrated alongside the first-ever The Ocean Conference, which has been under way in New York since Monday and wraps up tomorrow, aiming to strengthen commitments to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 14 – to conserve and viably use the ocean.

Mr. Guterres said the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an ambitious framework which, together, the international community will use to address these threats and improve people's lives. “World Oceans Day provides an important opportunity to advocate for a sustainable future,” he said, adding that governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society in New York are ready to launch a call for action to support implementation of SDG 14.

“Looking forward, the conservation and sustainable use of oceans can be achieved only if we manage to address effectively the threats that oceans face,” the Secretary-General said, stressing that “our future will thus be determined by our collective resolve to share information and find solutions to common problems.”

### *'Unite for the ocean we need, for the future we want' – UNESCO chief*

A healthy ocean requires robust global knowledge of ocean science, the head of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has said, marking the Day with a strong call to mobilize and harness the best scientific knowledge to protect our planet's vital oceans.

“We cannot manage what we cannot measure, and no single country is able to measure the myriad changes taking place in the ocean. From Fiji to Sweden, from Namibia to the Arctic, all Governments and partners must share knowledge to craft common science-based policies,” UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova said in her message commemorating the Day.

According to UNESCO, oceans give humankind the keys to its survival, from oxygen to a well-functioning climate, to key elements of our natural and human heritage. “For this, we must nurture, mobilize and harness the best scientific knowledge,” she stressed.

Pointing to the Global Ocean Science Report, which UNESCO launched at The Ocean Conference, she said “[It] records for the first time where and how existing ocean science capacities are empowering society, sustaining the environment and generating knowledge to conserve ocean resources for all. Our message is clear – much has been done to promote and finance ocean science, but much more is required to fill the capacity gaps,” she explained.

With this in mind, she said that UNESCO and partners are calling for 2021-2030 to become the International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development “to provide Governments, the scientific community, civil society and all other

actors with a framework for coordinating and consolidating the observations and research needed to achieve SDG14.”

*'We can ride the waves of change to a more positive outcome for the oceans'*

Cristiana Pasca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) said: “The future of the world's oceans is our future. Yet the present state of the oceans is troubling.” Indeed, people she has met this week at The Ocean Conference, from places as far flung as Sweden, Fiji, and Costa Rica, told stories of how the ocean they see today is a shadow of its former self.

“Populations of fish, corals and other living creatures have suffered, and there is a great deal more plastic in our oceans. Ocean acidification, marine pollution, and damaging fisheries practices – they are all the result of human activities,” she said, but added: “Humans can also make a difference. And they are.”

Noting that earlier this week, she had reported that as far as marine protected areas coverage is concerned, the world is on track to achieve the global Aichi Biodiversity Target of 10 per cent conservation of coastal and marine areas by 2020. The world can now take the steps to ensure that these areas are effectively managed, representative, and support equitable and inclusive sustainable development.

Ms. Pasca Palmer said that here in New York, she sensed the same enthusiasm, energy and political will that was seen during the negotiations for the Paris Agreement on climate change.

“We are at a point where we can change the tide on the oceans. The discussions this week are about working rowing together, connecting our actions, and learning from each other. We can ride the waves of change to a more positive outcome for the oceans, and the future we want,” she stated.

## Welcoming progress in arms laydown in Colombia, UN chief reiterates support to peace process



A FARC-EP member receives a arms lay down certificate. Photo: UN Mission in Colombia

**8 June** – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said today that he has been “encouraged” by the progress in Colombian peace process and called on the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) to continue to implement their respective commitments under the accord.

Mr. Guterres also reiterated the readiness of the UN to continue to support the peace process in the South American country, as required, read a statement issued today.

In a major milestone yesterday, the UN Mission in the country received a total of 2,300 weapons – just over 30 per cent of the arms of FARC-EP registered and identified by it – which are have been placed in its containers.

This timeline was agreed between the Government and FARC-EP on 29 May.

Also yesterday, Mission officials and those from the national Office of the High Commissioner for Peace travelled to the camps and started delivery of certificates and accreditations that will allow FARC-EP members formally start their reintegration into civilian life after the laying down of arms.

“Both factors constitute a major event that attests to the willingness of the parties to respond to the hope created in Colombia and the international community by the signing of the Peace Agreement in November last year,” the UN mission noted in a news release issued today.

The arms laydown process – a major component in the peace agreement – includes five distinct steps including: registration and identification of weapons, monitoring and verification of the holding of weapons, reception and storage of arms, neutralization of arms (to ensure that they will never again be used as firearms), and extraction of arms from camps.

## Indigenous and environmental rights under attack in Brazil, UN rights experts warn



The Iguazu Falls, on the border between Brazil and Argentina. UN Photo/Mark Garten

**8 June** – Human rights experts from the United Nations and an inter-American organization have denounced attacks on indigenous and environmental rights in Brazil, expressing concern over a Congressional report that accuses the UN of being “a confederation of non-governmental organizations influencing Brazilian policy.”

“The rights of indigenous peoples and environmental rights are under attack in Brazil,” said the UN Special Rapporteurs on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, on human rights defenders, Michel Forst, and on the environment, John Knox, in a press release from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Francisco José Eguiguren Praeli, Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples of the Inter-American Commission on Human

Rights, also joined the condemnation.

The experts noted that Brazil has seen the highest number of killings of environmental and land defenders of any country over the last 15 years, up to an average of about one every week. Indigenous peoples are especially at risk.

“Against this backdrop, Brazil should be strengthening institutional and legal protection for indigenous peoples, as well as people of African heritage and other communities who depend on their ancestral territory for their material and cultural existence,” the experts stated. “It is highly troubling that instead, Brazil is considering weakening those protections.”

More specifically, the Congressional Investigative Commission's report calls for stripping the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), the body supporting indigenous peoples in the protection of their rights, of responsibility for the legal titling and demarcation of indigenous lands, after having already had its funding severely reduced.

In addition, the report accuses the United Nations of being “a confederation of non-governmental organizations influencing Brazilian policy” through its agencies, the ILO Convention 169, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

According to the experts, the report states that the UN Declaration presents a grave threat to Brazil's sovereignty, and encourages the Brazilian government to denounce ILO Convention 169, claiming it manipulates the establishment of non-existent indigenous peoples in order to expand indigenous lands in Brazil.

“It's really unfortunate that instead of exemplifying the principles enshrined in the Declaration, the Congressional Investigative Commission questions the motives behind it and those of the UN itself, and waters down any progress made so far,” they said.

“Weakening such protections would be contrary to the general obligation of States not to regress in the level of their protections of human rights, including those dependent on a healthy environment,” they stressed.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

## UN chief congratulates people of Lesotho on peaceful national elections



Voting takes place in Maseru, Lesotho. Photo: UN Lesotho (file)

**8 June** – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today congratulated the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho on the conclusion of a peaceful National Assembly election.

“He commends the work of the Independent Electoral Commission in organizing the election and the role played by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in assisting the Kingdom of Lesotho to ensure a peaceful political environment,” said statement issued by his Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric.

“The Secretary-General highlights the importance of now focusing attention on the implementation of SADC decisions on further strengthening democratic governance and stability,” it added.

The statement concluded by reaffirming “the United Nations commitment to support the Kingdom of Lesotho in this regard.”

## Rising shipping costs set to lift the global food import bill to more than \$1.3 trillion – UN agency

**8 June** – Despite balanced global food commodity markets, shipping costs and import volumes will lift worldwide import costs to over \$1.3 trillion this year, according to the latest report from the United Nations agriculture agency.

“Global food commodity markets are well-balanced, buoyed by ample supplies of wheat and maize and rebounding production of oilseed products. However, rising shipping costs and larger import volumes are set to lift the global food import bill to more than \$1.3 trillion this year, a 10.6 percent increase from 2016,” said the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) today in its biannual publication entitled Food Outlook.



Loading bags of wheat for transport. Photo: FAO/Giuseppe Bizzarri

The report went on to explain that food import bills of least-developed countries, low-income food deficit countries and countries in sub-Saharan Africa are on course to rise even faster due to higher import volumes of meat, sugar, dairy and oilseed products.

Rising import bills are forecast for all food categories except for fish, for which growing domestic market demand in many developing countries is being increasingly met by robust growth in their local aquaculture sectors.

According to the report, “global food commodity prices rose for the first time in three months in May, with the FAO Food Price Index – also released today – averaging 172.6 points during the month, 2.2 per cent higher than in April and some 10 per cent higher than May 2016.”

FAO's Food Price Index is a trade-weighted index tracking international market prices of five major food commodity groups: cereals, vegetable oils, dairy, meat and sugar. Rising prices were reported in May for all of those groups except sugar.

### *Buoyant supplies loom for most food commodities*

The Food Outlook offers fresh market forecasts of major food commodities, all of which appear well-supplied on a global level – even if there may be regional or national divergences.

“International prices of wheat should remain stable, especially during the first half of the season, while near-record production of coarse grains will likely keep competition intense among the major exporters. Rice supplies are also forecast to remain ample, although reserves may decline as some exporters reduce their public stockpiles,” according to the report.

Due mostly to outstanding yield levels for soybean, oilseed production worldwide is expected to leap to an all-time high in 2016-17 – allowing further replenishments of global stocks. First indications point to a well-supplied market also in 2017-18, further weighing on prices.

The report said growth in world meat production is expected to stagnate for the third year in a row, due mainly to an anticipated decline in China, which is expected to ramp up imports from the United States and Brazil.

Meanwhile, global milk output is expected to grow by 1.4 per cent in 2017, led by a rapid expansion in India.

For its part, FAO's latest Cereal Supply and Demand Brief, also released today, anticipates a 2.2 per cent contraction in worldwide wheat production year-on-year, nearly offset by a 1.4 per cent expansion in global maize output – led by South America and Southern Africa – and a 0.7 per cent increase in world rice production.

While aggregate global cereal output is now forecast to decline by .5 per cent to 2,594 million tons, FAO also trimmed its May forecast for global cereal utilization to 2,584 million tons.

## **China's Liu Zhenmin named new head of UN Economic and Social Affairs Department**



Secretary-General António Guterres (right) meets with Liu Zhenmin, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. Credit: UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

**8 June** – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today appointed Liu Zhenmin of China as the next Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

According to a statement issued by the Secretary-General's office, Mr. Liu – currently Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China – brings to the position more than 30 years of experience in the diplomatic service, with a strong focus on the promotion of bilateral, regional and global issues.

He was deeply involved for ten years in climate change negotiations including the conclusion of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, added the statement.

Furthermore, over the last several years, in various capacities, he has been consistently highlighting and advocating for sustainable development issues.

Having started his career at the Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry in 1982, Mr. Liu served as an Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China to the UN Office at Geneva and Other International Organizations in Switzerland, as well as a number of other senior positions.

Mr. Liu succeeds Wu Hongbo, to whom Secretary-General Guterres expressed his appreciation for his commitment and dedicated service, and for playing key role in the preparations for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, third International Conference on Financing for Development, and the UN Ocean Conference.