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'Sustaining peace' strategy must cover entire peace continuum – UN deputy chief

29 August – Addressing how best United Nations peacekeeping operations can augment global efforts to sustain peace, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed has said that the nature of today's challenges requires seamless work across peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

“Peacekeeping operations need clear, realistic and up-to-date mandates, with well-identified priorities, adequate sequencing and flexibility to evolve over time,” Ms. Mohammed told the Security Council during an open debate on 'peacekeeping operations and sustaining peace.'

“Coherence, complementarity and collaboration between UN peace and security efforts and its development and humanitarian work are also essential for preventing conflict and mitigating risks, fostering more sustainable outcomes and ensuring that no one is left behind,” she added.

'Sustaining peace' is a term that emerged from the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture. In their resolutions on the review, the Security Council and the General Assembly defined sustaining peace “as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society [...] which encompasses activities aimed at preventing, the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict.”

“Implementing the Sustaining Peace Agenda requires an inclusive strategy that supports the diverse range of our missions and takes account of the entire peace continuum, from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-term development,” Ms. Mohammed said, underscoring the vital role the Security Council plays.



Civil-military activities conducted by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for the benefit of the population include, free medical consultations, awareness-raising activities related to mines and improvised explosive devices. Photo: MINUSMA/Harandane Dicko

In this regard, she added, the reform of the UN system has been designed to reinforce the links between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustaining Peace Agenda.

“We must work together across silos and address the humanitarian-development-peace nexus as well as the root causes of violence and conflict,” she said.

The debate also explored how peacekeeping operations can adapt to changing political and operational challenges through the various stages of UN missions' engagement and how they can be designed around support for building inclusive and effective national institutions and strengthening national capacities.

Sustaining peace can only be achieved through a broader vision of prevention, she stressed, adding that prevention measures and peace processes must be driven by national leadership and inclusive ownership that recognize the needs and contributions of all segments of society, including women and youth as agents of development and peace.

The complexity of current conflicts requires a multi-dimensional approach that prioritizes a range of initiatives, including providing crucial protection for civilians under threat and strengthening institutions, as well as the rule of law to enable respect for human rights to be strengthened at all levels.

They require disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of armed groups, and a focus on justice and reconciliation, credible elections and the extension of legitimate and accountable State authority.

In many ways, one of peacekeeping's most important contributions to peace is the preparation for a smooth and effective peacekeeping drawdown and handover to the UN Country Team, as seen recently in successful examples of this in Cote d'Ivoire and soon in Liberia.

“To ensure that we are on the right peacebuilding track, we must get the politics right,” the Deputy Secretary-General said.

Peacekeeping operations are political instruments that ideally accompany a locally-owned peace process. To this end, missions provide good offices and work closely with different parties and communities to achieve and implement peace agreements.

In considering all these areas, a broader and more sustained level of engagement by the members of a united and strong Security Council – individually or collectively – is essential to ensure that Member States, the UN system, and all our partners are aligned behind a common purpose and a common vision for action that integrates all pillars of the UN and bring all its activities together in a truly integrated fashion, Ms. Mohammed concluded.

UN extends solidarity to flood-devastated Texas after record-shattering rainfall



Texas National Guard soldiers assist residents affected by flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey in Houston (August 27th 2017). Photo: U.S. Department of Defense

29 August – The United Nations is reacting to the devastating images from Tropical Storm Harvey, which has affected an area the size of Spain in the southern United States, and which is likely to worsen in the coming hours as the rain continues.

Secretary-General António Guterres is following the developments in Texas “with great concern,” according to a statement from his spokesperson.

“The Secretary-General is saddened by the loss of life and extends his condolences to the Government and people of the United States of America,” the spokesperson said. “He wishes those injured a speedy recovery.”

Mr. Guterres, who is currently in the Middle East on an official visit with Israeli and Palestinian authorities, added that his thoughts are with all the victims and the first responders.

Earlier in the day, the UN chief tweeted that he was “shocked” at the images of the devastation.

The storm is presenting a “nightmare scenario,” according to the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and bringing “catastrophic and life-threatening” flooding.

Clare Nullis, a WMO spokesperson told journalists in Geneva that rivers are rising and the disaster is “far from over.”

“Harvey has caused so much rainfall that the National Weather Service has had to update the colour charts on its graphics in order to effectively map it,” Ms. Nullis said, “introducing a new colour category for rainfall totals above 30 inches or 76 centimetres.”

Although the storm is no longer classified as a hurricane, it is moving slowly and generating heavy rainfall.

“The priority for now is to save people's lives and get them out of harm's way,” said Ms. Nullis.

The UN disaster risk reduction office today extended condolences to the families and friends of the people killed, and said the destruction caused by Harvey is already in the millions of dollars.

“Hurricane Harvey has revealed how exposed even high-income countries are when building takes place on a grand scale along coastlines exposed to tropical storms. There is no doubt that along with failings in risk governance, climate change is intensifying the cocktail of man-made risk to an unprecedented degree,” said UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction, Robert Glasser.

He noted the impact of displacement caused by flooding – the most common natural hazard – and stressed the importance of building outside of flood plains.

UN aid chief allocates \$45 million to tackle neglected emergencies in four countries



Bada, Kako, 3 years old, and other IDP children in the village of Tagal, Lake Chad region, Chad. Photo: UNICEF/UN028762/Tremeau

29 August – The United Nations aid chief released today \$45 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to four countries “struggling in crises away from the headlines” – Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad and Sudan – where more than 21 million people need urgent humanitarian assistance.

The allocation for these neglected emergencies will sustain and scale up critical aid operations by humanitarian partners in these countries, where life-saving needs are alarmingly high but funding is critically low, according to a press statement from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

“This funding is a lifeline for millions of people who struggle in crises away from the headlines. Focusing largely on longstanding conflict-related crises, this allocation will address the most urgent needs of affected people, said UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mr. Stephen O'Brien.

Thanking all donors to the CERF, he added that such funding allows their contributions to go further, “reaching those who need our help the most.”

“The spotlight on underfunded emergencies is unique to the mandate of CERF, enabling urgent response to where the needs are greatest and not to where the noise is loudest. A bigger CERF is critical to address our common goal to leave no one behind. I urge your continuous support,” said Mr. O'Brien.

A large portion of these funds will reach people affected by displacement – one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges in today's world, OCHA explained. The funds will enable humanitarian partners to provide critical health care, food assistance, access to clean water and sanitation and other types of humanitarian aid. However, it addresses only a small portion of the urgent humanitarian needs in the countries.

In Palestine, UN chief says two-state solution 'only way to guarantee peace'



Secretary-General António Guterres (left) and Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah of the State of Palestine brief the press. Photo: Katrin Hett

29 August – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today reiterated his call for a political solution to the Middle East conflict that would end Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and would create an independent Palestinian state, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

“It is my deep belief that it is essential to restart a serious and credible political process of negotiation aiming at that objective – the two-state solution – as it is also important to create conditions on the ground to improve the situation of Palestinian populations,” Mr. Guterres said at a press conference in Ramallah after meeting with Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah.

“A two-state solution that will end the occupation and, with the creation of conditions, also the suffering even to the Palestinian people, is in my opinion the only way to guarantee that peace is established and, at the same time, that two states can live together in security and in mutual recognition,” Mr. Guterres said.

He said that Israel's settlement activity represented a major obstacle to the implementation of the two-state solution although there are other obstacles.

The UN chief also expressed a concern about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, and pledged to support the effort towards creating conditions for a unified Palestinian leadership both in West Bank and Gaza.

To a question about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's latest comments on settlements in West Bank, Mr. Guterres said “it is clear that there is a disagreement on that matter.”

“We believe that settlement activity is illegal under international law [...] it is an obstacle to the two-state solution,” he added.

Visit to Yasser Arafat Museum

Also today, the Secretary-General visited Yasser Arafat Museum.

“When visiting this museum, there are of course many emotions and many feelings, but the most important of them is the feeling of the suffering of the Palestinian people,” Mr. Guterres told reporters.

For many years, in different capacities as Prime Minister of Portugal and as president of an international political organization, he has closely followed the peace process, in its hopes and frustrations, he said.

“I have a dream, a dream to see in the Holy Land two states: A Palestinian state and an Israeli State, living together in peace and security, in mutual recognition and allowing for this kind of suffering not to be possible anymore,” the Secretary-General stated.

He also visited the One Stop Centre, which provides women and juvenile survivors of gender-based violence with

comprehensive in-house services, including medical examination, legal consultation, psychosocial support, referral service to long-term shelters, and police protection.

Since its establishment, the centre, with the support of UN Women, UN Development Programme, and the UN Children's Fund, has already assisted more than 400 women and juvenile survivors of violence.

Myanmar: UN rights chief says violence in Rakhine state 'predictable and preventable'

29 August – Alarmed at renewed fighting and incitement in the wake of the attacks on Myanmar security forces in northern areas of Rakhine state, the top United Nations human rights official today urged all sides to renounce the use of violence and called on State authorities to ensure they abide by their obligations under international human rights law.

“This turn of events is deplorable. It was predicted and could have been prevented,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, noting that “decades of persistent and systematic human rights violations, including the very violent security responses to the attacks since October 2016, have almost certainly contributed to the nurturing of violent extremism, with everyone ultimately losing.”



After fleeing violence in Myanmar in October 2016, Rohingya refugees live in overcrowded makeshift sites in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Photo: UNHCR/Saiful Huq Omi

The High Commissioner called on the political leadership to condemn the inflammatory rhetoric and incitement to hatred that is proliferating, including on social media.

Mr. Zeid also expressed concern about claims by the State Counsellor's Office that international aid workers were complicit in or supporting the attacks.

“Such statements are irresponsible and only serve to increase fears and the potential for further violence,” he said. “I am extremely concerned that the unsupported allegations against international aid organizations place their staff in danger and may make it impossible for them to deliver essential aid.”

Mr. Zeid said the perpetrators of the attacks on security personnel must be brought to justice, as must those who have been attacking the civilian population.

State authorities should issue clear instructions to security forces to refrain from using disproportionate force, minimize damage and injuries and respect the right to life, he said.

“The State has a duty to protect those within its territory – without discrimination,” stated Mr. Zeid.

“I call on the Government of Myanmar to follow the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, headed by Kofi Annan, for an integrated and calibrated response to the situation in Rakhine state, to address rather than sacrifice human rights concerns in the interests of maintaining peace and order,” he said.

The High Commissioner also expressed concern about thousands of Rohingya having fled from Myanmar into Bangladesh since the attacks, adding to the tens of thousands who have been arriving in Bangladesh since October 2016.

UN refugee agency urges open borders for people fleeing violence in Rakhine

Meanwhile, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today communicated to the Government of Bangladesh its readiness to support the country in assisting refugees crossing the border.

As of Sunday, it was estimated that some 5,200 people had entered Bangladesh from Myanmar since Thursday. Several thousand were reported to be in locations along the Myanmar side of the border.

The agency is aware of several reported instances of people being prevented from entering Bangladesh. UNHCR believes it is of the utmost importance that Bangladesh, which has hosted refugees from Myanmar for decades, continues to allow Rohingya fleeing violence to seek safety there.

UNHCR also called on the international community to support Bangladesh in doing so, with all necessary aid and other help.

UN chief Guterres condemns latest ballistic missile launch by DPRK

29 August – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has condemned the latest ballistic missile launch by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), in violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

“The launch undermines regional security and stability and efforts to create space for dialogue,” said a statement issued by UN spokesperson Eri Kaneko.

According to press reports, early Tuesday morning, the DPRK launched a ballistic missile that travelled some 2,700 kilometers, flying over Japan before crashing into the Pacific Ocean.

“The Secretary-General calls on the Government of the DPRK to fully comply with its international obligations and to work to re-open channels of communication,” the statement said, adding that Mr. Guterres remains in close contact with all parties concerned.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council is scheduled to meet urgently on the issue this afternoon at the request of Japan, the United States and the Republic of Korea.

Guterres urges all countries to join legally-binding treaty against nuclear tests



An atmospheric nuclear test conducted by the United States at Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands, on 1 November 1952. Photo: US Government

29 August – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has urged all countries to sign and ratify a global treaty that bans nuclear explosions on the Earth's surface, in the atmosphere, underwater and underground.

“More than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted over the past seven decades – from the South Pacific to North America, from Central Asia to North Africa. They have harmed some of the world's most vulnerable peoples and pristine ecosystems,” the Secretary-General said in his message for the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

To ensure that no country could conduct another test, he urged all countries to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré (file)

To date, 183 countries have signed the CTBT and 166 have ratified it. For the treaty to enter into force, ratification is required from eight more of the so-called Annex 2 States. Of these, China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and the United States, have yet to ratify it.

DPRK, India and Pakistan are among the 13 countries that have not signed the CTBT.

“I urge all countries yet to join the CTBT to do so as soon as possible,” Mr. Guterres said. “For almost 20 years, a global norm has existed against nuclear testing based on voluntarily unilateral moratoriums. I applaud this restraint, but it is not enough.”

He noted that continued nuclear tests by DPRK demonstrate that “even the strongest norm is no substitute for a legally-binding prohibition.”

Overnight, DPRK fired a ballistic missile in violation of Security Council resolutions, Mr. Guterres said in a separate statement condemning the event and urging DPRK to fully comply with its international obligations.

The comments come on the International Day against Nuclear Tests, which is observed annually on 29 August, following the declaration of that day in a resolution unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2009.

The resolution called for increasing awareness and education “about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.” The resolution’s adoption also commemorated the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan in 1991.

Children's access to safe water and sanitation is a right, not a privilege – UNICEF

29 August – In countries beset by violence, displacement, conflict and instability, children’s most basic means of survival – water – must be a priority, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said today, warning that children living in fragile situations are four times more likely to lack access to drinking water.

“Children’s access to safe water and sanitation, especially in conflicts and emergencies, is a right, not a privilege” said Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF’s global chief of water, sanitation and hygiene, who warned, as World Water Week gets underway, that more than 180 million people in crisis-torn countries have no access to drinking water.

UNICEF said that in Yemen, a country reeling from the impact of over two years of conflict, water supply networks that serve the country’s largest cities are at imminent risk of collapse due to war-inflicted damage and disrepair. Around 15 million people in the country have been cut off from regular access to water and sanitation.

As for Syria, where the conflict is well into its seventh year, around 15 million people are in need of safe water, including an estimated 6.4 million children. Water has frequently been used as a weapon of war: In 2016 alone, there were at least 30 deliberate water cuts – including in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Raqqa and Dara, with pumps destroyed and water sources contaminated.

In conflict-affected areas in northeast Nigeria, 75 per cent of water and sanitation infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, leaving 3.6 million people without even basic water services. The UN agency adds that in South Sudan, where fighting has raged for over three years, almost half the water points across the country have been damaged or completely



Children drink from a tap during recess at a UNICEF supported primary school inside Bukasi internally displaced people’s camp, in Maiduguri, Borno state, Nigeria UNICEF/Gilbertson

destroyed.

“In far too many cases, water and sanitation systems have been attacked, damaged or left in disrepair to the point of collapse. When children have no safe water to drink, and when health systems are left in ruins, malnutrition and potentially fatal diseases like cholera will inevitably follow,” said Mr. Wijesekera.

In Yemen, for example, children make up more than 53 per cent of the over half a million cases of suspected cholera and acute watery diarrhoea reported so far. Somalia is suffering from the largest outbreak of cholera in the last five years, with nearly 77,000 cases of suspected cholera/acute watery diarrhoea. And in South Sudan, the cholera outbreak is the most severe the country has ever experienced, with more than 19,000 cases since June 2016, said UNICEF.

In famine-threatened north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, nearly 30 million people, including 14.6 million children, are in urgent need of safe water. More than five million children are estimated to be malnourished this year, with 1.4 million severely so.

Urgent funding needed to ensure full food rations for refugees in Tanzania – UN agency



A young Burundian refugee waits in Nduta camp, which is located in north-western Tanzania. It can barely provide shelter, household items, latrines and showers to every refugee. Photo: UNHCR/Benjamin Loyseau

29 August – Amid a funding shortage has forced the reduction of rations for some 320,000 refugees in north-west Tanzania, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) today said that it urgently requires \$23.6 million to guarantee the food and nutritional needs through December.

“Without an immediate response from donors, further ration cuts will be necessary as food stocks are simply running out,” said Michael Dunford, WFP Tanzania Country Representative.

Five food commodities – maize meal, pulses, Super Cereal, vegetable oil and salt – are provided by WFP to refugees in Mtendeli, Nduta and Nyarugusu camps, mainly from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

However, food portions were reduced in August due to funding cuts, which might lead to long-term, life-changing consequences, such as acute malnutrition and rising vulnerability to disease.

Meanwhile, the UN agency also has hot meals for refugees upon arrival and supplemental rations for pregnant and nursing women and food assistance to hospital in-patients and people living with HIV/AIDS.

“While WFP appreciates the support received so far, we are urgently appealing to donors to quickly come to the aid of the refugees and provide additional funding,” said Mr. Dunford, stressing that it will be critical to prevent future prolonged negative impacts.

UN migration agency, Libyan authorities boost support for rescued migrants

29 August – The United Nations migration agency is working with Libyan authorities to help rescue more migrants off the Libyan coast.

The UN Migration Agency (IOM) met this week with Libyan authorities in Tunis to create a coordination body to aid rescues, and also provided lifesaving equipment and offered computer literacy classes aimed at documenting sea rescue operations.

“By better documentation of migrants at the disembarkation points, IOM is hoping to put a registration system in place to help regulate the humanitarian services provided to rescued migrants,” said Maysa Khalil, IOM Libya's Operations Officer.

Among other supplies, IOM also provided computers and other information technology equipment to Libyan Coast Guard officers.

“Saving lives remains our highest priority,” said Othman Belbeisi, IOM Libya Chief of Mission. “As it is also a legal obligation, it is important to help the Libyan Coast Guard improve their capacities to save lives and respond in a better way to the needs of the migrants that they rescue.”

The UN agency is also working with Libyan counterparts to rehabilitate the points where the boats reach, by offering shaded areas, installing a water tank, cementing the floor, and creating toilets and showers, among others.



The UN Migration Agency (IOM) provides lifesaving equipment to Libyan authorities as part of a wider intervention to strengthen the Government's humanitarian capacity. Photo: UN Migration Agency