STATEMENT BY THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR IN YEMEN
MR. JAMIE McGOLDRICK
ON THE CONTINUED VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL
HUMANITARIAN LAW IN YEMEN

Targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure in Yemen continues during the holy month of Ramadan despite my repeated calls and the calls from the international community, including the UN Security Council, to all parties to the conflict to respect their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights laws.
On 17 June, at least 22 civilians, including six children, were reported killed and injured in a series of air attacks on a market in Sa’ada Governorate, near the border with Saudi Arabia. There were no reported military targets in the proximity of the market at the time of the attack, and no warning was issued to civilians in the area.

On 19 June, the power lines to the main water supply system in Dhamar City were damaged as a result of military activity, affecting one million people who rely on this water source and putting them at greater risk of death given the current fast-spreading cholera outbreak in Yemen.
Following the attacks on the market in Sa’ada, the European Union and others in the international community have expressed concern over the reported deaths of civilians, noting that this is a stark reminder that Yemeni civilians are the ones bearing the brunt of a war that has devastated their country.

Civilian casualties continue to rise in Yemen, warns UN human rights office

The United Nations Human Rights Office in Yemen continues to document reports of civilian casualties in the conflict and had verified 49 civilian deaths over the past month, a UN spokesperson said today.
“All incidents resulting in civilian casualties must be thoroughly investigated to ensure accountability when breaches of international law have been found to have taken place,” Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, told a news briefing in Geneva.
She said 19 civilians were killed in Taiz between 21 May and 6 June. According to witnesses interviewed by the High Commissioner's Office (OHCHR), the victims were hit by shelling attacks by a group affiliated with the Houthis rebels.
STATEMENT BY THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR ………

The disregard for the loss of civilian lives and damage to civilian infrastructure at a time of great need, due to the combined effects of the cholera outbreak and the looming famine, continues to shock me and must end. Wars have laws and I implore that all parties to the conflict uphold their responsibilities to comply with international humanitarian and human rights laws. The warring parties must distinguish between the civilian population and combatants at all times, and between civilian objects and military objectives; and must take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects.

I urge those influencing and arming the parties to use their position to end the conflict and to stop fueling the violence. The humanitarian crisis is Yemen is entirely man-made and it is immoral to allow hardship and deprivation to continue. We must give hope to millions of Yemenis by showing that the world is not indifferent to their suffering.

Civilian casualties continue to rise in Yemen ……

Seven civilians were killed reportedly as a result of mortar attacks from areas controlled by fighters affiliated with forces loyal to President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.

She went on to say that at least 23 civilians were killed on 17 June by an airstrike, helicopter attack and shelling on a house and nearby market area located just a few hundred metres from the Yemeni-Saudi border in Shada District in Sa'ada Governorate.

Since March 2015, OHCHR has recorded a total of 13,504 civilian casualties, including 4,971 killed and 8,533 injured.

“We recall that indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, or attacks targeting civilian objects such as markets, are prohibited under international humanitarian law,” Ms. Shamdasani said, reminding all parties to the conflict of their obligation to ensure full respect for international human rights and humanitarian laws.

On cholera, she said the outbreak of disease has affected eight prisons and detention centres in six governorates. Some 50 prisoners have contracted cholera and there are 72 other suspected cases. “In the best of circumstances, prisoners are among the most vulnerable members of society,” she said.
Over 1,000 children seek treatment for watery diarrhea daily as number of suspected cholera cases in Yemen Soars

The number of suspected cholera cases in Yemen has risen by 10,000 to a total of 65,300. Over 1,000 children suffering from acute watery diarrhoea have been reporting to health facilities every day.

In just one month, cholera has claimed at least the lives of 532 people, including 109 children. These numbers represent only verified cases and actual figures are expected to be much higher.

In response to the outbreak, UNICEF has sent in three aircrafts carrying over 40 tonnes of lifesaving supplies including medicines, oral rehydration salts, diarrhoea disease kits and intravenous fluids to treat more than 50,000 patients. But needs continue to increase, with medicines and other vital medical equipment in short supply.

“The situation in Yemen is teetering on the verge of disaster. The water, sanitation and health systems have all but collapsed. Over 27 million Yemenis are staring at an unforgiving humanitarian catastrophe. The biggest victims of this man-made tragedy are Yemen’s most vulnerable population – its children,” said Dr. Meritxell Relaño UNICEF Representative in Yemen. “The international community needs to support long-term investments in social services like water and sanitation. Otherwise, deadly disease outbreaks will strike again and kill many more”.

With barely functional water treatment plants, sewage and uncollected garbage is gathering in residential areas and contaminating water sources. Two thirds of Yemen’s population have no access to safe drinking water. Half of the country’s health facilities aren’t working, and medical staff haven’t been paid for over 8 months. Yemen’s weakened health system is completely overwhelmed by the scale of the cholera emergency.

UNICEF and partners are working around the clock to respond to the outbreak and have provided support to over 200 oral rehydration centres across the country where patients are screened and given immediate medical care. UNICEF is also supporting diarrhoea treatment centres for the most severe cases.

UNICEF is helping to provide chlorinated drinking water and to disinfect wells, water tanker filling stations, and water storage reservoirs. Households have received basic hygiene information and been provided with water treatment tabs and hygiene kits containing soaps and washing powders.
UN: 3,000 to 5,000 suspected new Yemen cholera cases daily

Suspected cholera outbreak is spreading quickly in war-ravaged Yemen, with an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 new cases every day, the U.N. children’s agency said.

Geert Cappelaere, the Middle East director of UNICEF, said in an interview with The Associated Press that 70,000 suspected cases of cholera have been reported in the past month in 19 of Yemen’s 22 governorates.

He voiced his concern that cholera cases could double every two weeks -- to 130,000 and then about 300,000 cases -- unless more aid is delivered.

Cholera death toll in Yemen rises to 676: WHO

At least 676 people have died since a cholera epidemic broke out in war-torn Yemen in late April, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

In a Twitter post on Monday, WHO said more than 86,400 suspected cases of cholera had been registered in 19 Yemeni provinces.

International organizations -- including the WHO, UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross -- have recently stepped up the delivery of medical supplies to Yemen, where local health authorities are struggling to cope with the outbreak.

Yemen has fallen into civil war in 2014 after Houthi rebels overran capital Sanaa and other provinces.

In 2015, Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies launched a massive air campaign aimed at reversing Houthi gains and shoring up Yemen’s Saudi-backed government.

According to UN officials, more than 10,000 Yemenis have been killed in the conflict to date, while more than 11 percent of the country’s total population have been displaced from their homes.
UNFPA MOURNS PASSING OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With profound sadness, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund; announces that its Executive Director, Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, passed away suddenly at his home last night. He was 68 years old.

“This is a devastating loss for UNFPA and for the people, especially women, girls and youth, he dedicated his life to serving, starting from when he became a doctor in Nigeria. UNFPA expresses its deep sympathy to his family and prays that they have the fortitude to bear this great loss.”

Dr. Osotimehin was bold and never afraid of a challenge and his strong leadership helped keep the health and rights of the world’s women and girls high on the global agenda. He understood that the world’s 1.8 billion young people are truly its greatest hope for the future.

UNFPA is dedicated to continuing Dr. Osotimehin’s grand vision for women and young people and will continue to stand up for the human rights and dignity of everyone, particularly the most vulnerable adolescent girls.

He vigorously championed three major transformative goals of zero preventable maternal deaths, zero unmet demand for family planning and the elimination of harmful practices against women and girls. UNFPA urges all to honour his legacy by rallying around those global goals.

Dr. Osotimehin, a physician and public health expert, became UNFPA’s fourth Executive Director on 1 January 2011, with the rank of United Nations Under-Secretary-General.

Before this appointment, Dr. Osotimehin was Nigeria’s Minister of Health. Prior to that, he was Director-General of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS, which coordinated HIV and AIDS work in Nigeria.

Dr. Osotimehin qualified as a doctor from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in 1972, and went to the University of Birmingham, England, where he got a doctorate in medicine in 1979. He was appointed Professor at the University of Ibadan in 1980 and headed the Department of Clinical Pathology before being elected Provost of the College of Medicine in 1990. Dr. Osotimehin received the Nigerian national honour of Officer of the Order of the Niger in December 2005. He led several councils, including in the World Economic Forum.

He was married, had five children and several grandchildren.
The celebration of the World Day Against Child Labour

Under the 2017 theme; "In conflicts and disasters, protect children from child labour", Yemen along with other countries commemorated the World Day Against Child Labour on 12th June 2017.

The event was sponsored by the Child Labour Unit at Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSAL) with the technical and financial support from ILO.

A one-day gathering was organized for 120 children from both displaced and host communities to document their stories of the journey to displacement and the consequences that have been affecting their lives, including the school attendance and the likelihood to work at an early age. In addition, the activity was attended by high figures from MoSAL, Workers and Employers Organizations, Journalists as well as Cohort of activists.

The aim of the activity is to keep the momentum to publicise the child labour issues, including the newly emerged types due to conflict and to sensitize media outlets and decision makers with real stories and factual lessons for better address child labour challenges.

The Gathering was organized at the famous Kentucky Garden of Sanaa City, where the following sub-activities will be undertaken:

- Organizing an introductory and awareness session for participating children, decision makers in the salvation government, parliamentarians, constituents, as well as the journalists and media outlets,
- Distributing Printed T-Shirts, Caps and brochures with the 2017 theme slogan,
- Viewing the children’s drawings where they will be given the drawing materials to express on their views on child labour.
UNIC Tokyo will be organizing the Student Photo Contest along with Sophia University and also special cooperation from Getty Images Japan.

Following the success of last year’s contest, which amassed a total of 624 entries from 47 countries as far and wide as Afghanistan and Brazil, UNIC is running the photo contest once again to promote awareness of SDGs among students worldwide; we are encouraging participants to choose one or more of the 17 SDGs that interests them most, and express what it means to them through a photograph.

This year, we have added new awards such as the TOGETHER Award and the Concept Award. We would truly appreciate the cooperation and support of other UNICs and UN-related offices to spread our ongoing project.

❖ Deadline: Wednesday 30 August 2017
[ Announcement of Results & Awards Ceremony: 24 October 2017/UN Day ]

❖ Qualifications: College and undergraduate students, graduate students, vocational school students (Applicants can be of any nationality)

❖ Awards (subject to change depending on content and number of applications):
  • Grand Prize (Foreign Minister’s Award) 1 Prize
  • Award of Excellence 3 Prize
  • Special Award (TOGETHER Award) 1 Prize
  • Special Award (Concept Award) 1 Prize
  • Award of Recognition

❖ Judges:
Leslie Kee, Photographer
Akira Ono, Photo and Multimedia Editor, The Asahi Shimbun
Yuichi Kimura, Comedian, YOSHIMOTO CREATIVE AGENCY CO., LTD.
Hiroaki Mizushima, Professor, Department of Journalism, Sophia University
Mark Garten, Chief of the UN Photo Unit, Audio-Visual Services Section, DPI

❖ Judging Panel for the TOGETHER Award:
Representatives from the ILO, IOM, UNHCR, UNIC Tokyo, UNICEF and UNU

❖ Judge for the Concept Award:
Getty Images Japan

❖ Prize Money and Goods: presented by organisers, special cooperating partner, other cooperating partners

SDGs Student Photo Contest 2017 (Official Site):
https://communityassignments.gettyimages.com/en/community-assignments/sdgs_2017/the-brief#.WQhIdROLS70

UNIC Tokyo - SDGs Student Photo Contest 2017 Press Release:
http://www.unic.or.jp/news_press/info/24153/?lang=en

❖ Organisers: UNIC Tokyo, Sophia University

❖ Special Cooperation: Getty Images Japan

❖ Endorsed by: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Global Compact Network Japan (GC-NJ), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs

❖ Cooperating Partners: Fast Retailing Co., Ltd., Nikon Corporation, SIGMA Corporation

❖ Media Partner: The Asahi Shimbun

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

The secretary-general

Last year, at the UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS), the international community took steps to mobilize a multifaceted, collective response to the full range of issues related to drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Governments came together to chart a new path forward that is more effective and humane, and leaves no one behind.

UNGASS was a ground-breaking moment that provided a detailed and forward-looking blueprint for action. Together, we must honour the unanimous commitments made to reduce drug abuse, illicit trafficking and the harm that drugs cause, and to ensure that our approach promotes equality, human rights, sustainable development, and greater peace and security.

I know from personal experience how an approach based on prevention and treatment can yield positive results. As Prime Minister of Portugal, I used the flexibility afforded by the three international drug control conventions to introduce non-criminal responses to the possession of drugs for personal use. Greater resources were allocated to prevention, treatment, and social reintegration programs, including harm reduction measures.

Portugal now has one of the lowest death rates for drug use in Europe. In 2001, Portugal had the highest rate of HIV amongst injecting drug users in the region; since the introduction of the new policy, this rate, and rates of all sexually transmitted diseases, have decreased dramatically. Overall drug use rates have also fallen.

I am proud of these results and hope this experience will contribute to the discussion and encourage Member States to continue exploring comprehensive and evidence-based solutions.

The UNGASS follow-up process provides us with an institutional framework to learn from each other and share best practices. It is vital that we examine the effectiveness of the War on Drugs approach, and its consequences for human rights.

Despite the risks and challenges inherent in tackling this global problem, I hope and believe we are on the right path, and that together we can implement a coordinated, balanced and comprehensive approach that leads to sustainable solutions.

This would be the best possible way to implement the UNGASS recommendations and to have a positive impact on the lives of millions of people around the world.