

**In the headlines:**

- International cooperation crucial to safe flights, UN says at counter-terrorism meeting
- Human security approach 'central' to achieving sustainable development – UN officials
- Reconsider charges against Palestinian human rights defender, UN experts urge Israel
- Antibiotic resistance making gonorrhoea 'sometimes impossible' to treat – UN health agency
- Strengthening UN peacekeeping tops agenda as chiefs of defence meet in New York
- DR Congo's economy loses over \$1 billion to child undernutrition, finds UN-backed study
- Concerned about Liu Xiaobo, UN rights office urges access to jailed rights defender
- Rights defenders 'must not be silenced,' says UN office, urging Turkey to release activists
- UN chief 'deeply sorry' as Cyprus talks conclude without agreement
- UN conference adopts treaty banning nuclear weapons
- Funding shortfall threatens education for children in conflict, disaster zones – UNICEF

International cooperation crucial to safe flights, UN says at counter-terrorism meeting

A cargo plane arrives at an airstrip in the northern part of Mali.
Photo: UN Photo/ Marco Dormino

7 July – The global nature of aviation puts everyone at the same level of risk from potential terrorism, senior United Nations officials said today, calling for greater information sharing, resources and political will to keep flights safe.

“Terrorism is not someone else’s problem. States and industry must commit necessary resources and provide necessary governance,” the Secretary-General of the UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Fang Liu, told the opening of a special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee on “Terrorist threats to civil aviation.”

The concept note for the meeting cited recent attacks against airports in Belgium, Turkey and the United States, and the explosion of a terrorist bomb aboard Daallo Airlines flight 159, as “stark reminders

that landside attacks, the threat posed by insiders and airport staff, and the use of increasingly sophisticated improvised explosive devices are all significant concerns.”

The meeting aimed to give government representatives an opportunity to discuss enhanced security measures – such as explosive detection and new cargo rules, as well as new challenges, such as cybercrime and “porous airport perimeters.”

In her speech, Ms. Liu called for greater access to current threat information between States and within the local and federal authorities, as well as political will to work together.

“Aviation security authorities must be provided adequate information by the State’s own law enforcement and intelligence organizations, in order to create a meaningful and effective threat assessment,” said Ms. Liu.

She noted one “pointed” example of information sharing, such as the recent laptop restrictions imposed by the United States, which were then transitions to more extensive screening measures of passengers.

In his address, Jean-Paul Laborde, Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), said “more and more strict measures” are clearly needed “to address challenges of terrorism and to protect our lives.”

But effective work “can only happen through cohesiveness and cooperation, and this is what the Security Council does,” he said, urging governments to implement measures cited in recent resolutions related to aviation safety.

Last September, the Security Council unanimously adopted its first resolution to address terrorist threats to civil aviation. [Resolution 2309](#) (2016) urged governments to ensure that effective, risk-based measures are taken to protect airports, for example, to strengthen security screening procedures and utilize technology to detect explosives and other threats.

More recently, Security Council adopted [resolution 2341](#) (2017), which recognized the urgent need to ensure reliability and resistance of critical infrastructure.

Mr. Laborde stressed the importance of collecting and sharing advance passenger information (API) to detect the departure from, entry into, or transit through their territories of individuals on the Al-Qaida sanctions list.

He said only 57 countries are capable of implementing and sharing such information with INTERPOL, which has 68 million entries.

Reiterating the importance of sharing information and cooperation in his closing remarks, Mr. Laborde again spoke about the need to cut red tape and to implement the Security Council resolutions.

“Along with our hesitations and weaknesses, this is one area where multilateralism has its advantages,” he said.



Human security approach 'central' to achieving sustainable development – UN officials



Madagascar - Human security project for the prevention of violence and vulnerability reduction for the most vulnerable inhabitants of Antananarivo 24 October 2012. Photo: UN Trust Fund for Human Security

7 July – United Nations officials today highlighted the benefits of a human security approach to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as tackle a range of other issues, during a high-level event held at Headquarters.

“The human security approach is instrumental to sustainable development, inclusive peace, justice and the well-being and dignity of all people. It is in fact central to the 2030 Agenda,” said Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, addressing the event.

As outlined by the General Assembly, human security is a people-centred framework based on national ownership, which according to Ms. Mohammed, aims to support governments in responding to threats impeding their people from living free from fear, want and indignity, while recognizing the complexity and interconnected nature of today’s challenges.

“It really does compel us to find coherent, comprehensive and integrated solutions that combine the expertise and resources of the United Nations system with those of governments, regional and sub-regional organizations, the private sector, civil society and communities on the ground,” she explained.

Based on lessons learned from over 15 years of supported programming by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, the approach promotes greater coordination, advancing integrated actions for concrete results in improving the lives of peoples and communities.

At the UN, said Ms. Mohammed, the Secretary-General has embarked on a series of review processes and reforms, including management, development and the peace and security architecture, to fulfil his vision of a UN system that is less fragmented and much more efficient.

“Their underlying premise – and promise – is prevention,” she noted. “Human security is an essential part of these processes.”

By considering current and emerging risks and vulnerabilities, human security is an effective tool for prevention, she added. The human security approach can also help guide efforts to bridge the gap between humanitarian assistance and longer-term development aid.

She went on to say that programmes supported by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security have illustrated “the power of catalytic interventions that pool resources and establish strong partnerships and better coherence of results on the ground.”

“Let us work together to advance prevention and promote inclusive solutions that enhance people’s ability to live together in peace and well-being, with much stronger confidence in a sustainable future,” she stated.

General Assembly President Peter Thomson opened the event saying, “human security provides us with a focussed, analytical lens and programming framework to aid the actions we are taking towards achieving the SDGs.”

He added that with its direct focus on people, “the concept of human security finds in the SDGs an agenda that is ultimately about creating the conditions – social, economic and environmental – in which humanity can flourish.”

Today’s event was organised by the UN Human Security Unit, in partnership with the Government of Japan and the Human Security Network (Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Slovenia, Switzerland,

Thailand and South Africa, as an observer).

Also addressing the event, Yukio Takasu, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Human Security, said that it is essential to identify and address the root causes of human insecurity, which are often interlinked and multifaceted.

“There is no simple, straightforward solution. Through the human security approach, we will be able to address deep-rooted insecurity and implement the SDGs effectively,” he stated.

“We have to identify first who has been left out in equitable progress and are at the greatest risk of falling behind... and take action on what needs to be done.”

He added that there is a consensus on the need to adopt an integrated approach to achieve the SDGs, which no single government, entity or international organization can do alone.

“We must strengthen a multi-stakeholder framework of cooperation at the national, regional and global levels. Partnership of all stakeholders, civil society and the private sector is absolutely essential for success.”

Reconsider charges against Palestinian human rights defender, UN experts urge Israel



Press briefing by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk (right). Photo: UN Photo/ Mark Garten

7 July – Voicing concern over the reactivation of charges – some of which date back a number of years – against a Palestinian human rights defender, two independent United Nations experts have called on Israel to strictly abide by international law in its dealings with rights defenders.

“On the information available to us, many of the charges against [Issa] Amro appear to be directed squarely at his lawful right to peacefully protest against the 50-year-old Israeli occupation,” said the Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, Michael Lynk, and the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, Michel Forst, in a [news release](#) today.

“If the Israeli military court convicts Mr. Amro on any of the charges against him, the convictions will be stained by reasonable doubts about the system’s ability to ensure justice,” they added.

According to the experts, the Israeli military court system – which all Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to – has a conviction rate above 99 per cent, which raises serious concerns about the system meeting many of the international standards of due process required under international human rights and humanitarian law.

Further, stating that Palestinian human rights defenders, including Mr. Amro, have faced a long pattern of harassment, intimidation, discriminatory treatment and physical interference from Israeli military and settler groups, the two experts underscored that the non-violent work of human rights defenders must not be disrupted and attacked by the authorities, even under a military occupation.

“Their rights to freedom of expression and assembly must be respected and protected,” they stressed.

According to the news release, Mr. Amro and Youth Against Settlements have campaigned against the Israeli military’s shutdown of the once-thriving Palestinian neighbourhood around Shuhada Street in Hebron, and against illegal Israeli settlements in and near the city.

Their activities have included running a community centre, organizing protest marches and opposing the many restrictions

placed by the military on daily Palestinian life, it added.

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.

Antibiotic resistance making gonorrhoea 'sometimes impossible' to treat – UN health agency



Gonorrhea tests can be done on urine samples or samples of body fluid from the area where the infection is suspected. Photo: WHO/G. Hampton

7 July – Gonorrhoea is becoming harder to treat due to antibiotic resistance, the United Nations health agency today cautioned, adding that there is a need for better prevention and treatment of the disease that infects an estimated 78 million people each year.

“The bacteria that cause gonorrhoea are particularly smart. Every time we use a new class of antibiotics to treat the infection, the bacteria evolve to resist them,” said Dr. Teodora Wi, Medical Officer, Human Reproduction, at the UN World Health Organization (WHO).

Data from 77 countries show that “antibiotic resistance is making gonorrhoea – a common sexually-transmitted infection – much harder, and sometimes impossible, to treat,” according to the agency.

WHO noted that the current “last-resort treatment” in the form of extended-spectrum cephalosporins (ECS) has now shown resistance in more than 50 countries. As a result, the agency issued updated global treatment recommendations in 2016, advising doctors to give 2 antibiotics: ceftriaxone and azithromycin.

The development of a new antibiotic for gonorrhoea “is not attractive for commercial pharmaceutical companies,” WHO said, noting that only three candidate drugs are currently in the research-and-development pipeline.

The treatments are taken only for short periods of time, unlike medicines for chronic diseases, and they become less effective as resistance develops, meaning that the supply of new drugs constantly needs to be replenished, according to the agency.

Gonorrhoea can be prevented through safer sexual behaviour, WHO stressed. It pointed to decreasing condom use, increased urbanization and travel, poor infection detection rates, and inadequate or failed treatment for the estimated 78 million people infected each year.

“These cases may just be the tip of the iceberg, since systems to diagnose and report untreatable infections are lacking in lower-income countries where gonorrhoea is actually more common,” said Dr. Wi.

Women are particularly at risk, potentially leading to pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility, as well as increased risk of HIV.

Earlier this year, WHO announced that it is classifying antibiotics into three categories – Access, Watch and Reserve – to preserve the effectiveness of “last resort” antibiotics.

Strengthening UN peacekeeping tops agenda as chiefs of defence meet in New York



Around 100 countries send their Heads of armed forces to UN Headquarters to discuss strengthening of UN peacekeeping. Photo: UN Photo/Manuel Elias

7 July – In the ongoing effort to improve the overall performance of United Nations peacekeeping missions, the heads of the armed forces of around 100 countries met at UN Headquarters in New York today to discuss issues such as rapid deployment, training, increasing the number of female peacekeepers, and conduct and discipline.

“Our partnership has never been more important. Across the globe, armed conflict scars countless civilians and destabilizes entire regions,” Secretary-General António Guterres told participants at the Chiefs of Defence Conference, via a [video message](#).

Expressing gratitude to the men and women serving in peacekeeping, Mr. Guterres noted that UN “blue helmets” brave danger so others can enjoy safety.

He also welcomed the Conference’s focus on gender, with a view to increasing the number of female peacekeepers, and integrating a gender perspective into UN peace and security actions.

“When we have greater gender balance in our forces, we boost our protection outreach – and we reduce the chances of sexual exploitation and abuse,” he highlighted, urging all troop-contributing countries to deploy more women as well as to help integrate a gender-sensitive perspective in strengthening peace.

In the same vein, Jane Holl Lute, the Special Coordinator on improving UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse, also underscored the need to stand together against the individual misconduct of some troops, which she said “seriously injures the vulnerable and undermines the mission and name of the United Nations.”

“Only through the continued personal leadership of the chiefs of defence forces, and others, will we effectively prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse,” she said, adding: “We are in this endeavour together, and together, we can root out this scourge.”

Trust of those served must not be broken

In his opening remarks, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, highlighted that recent developments – whether geostrategic shifts, emergence of new threats or large budget cuts – call for greater urgency to strengthen the performance of peace operations.

“Now, more than ever before, peacekeepers need to be up to the challenge of the mandates they are given,” he said, calling for continued support for peacekeeping operations.

Stressing the need to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse, he called for putting in place measures to ensure that only troops with impeccable backgrounds are deployed, and that rigorous and consistent measures are employed to make certain that those responsible are held accountable for their acts.

“The success of our missions depends upon the confidence and trust placed on us by the populations we serve. When this trust is broken, our credibility is indelibly damaged,” he underscored.

More needs to be done to overcome the scale of challenges

Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Field Support – which provides administrative, finance, logistical and technical support to peacekeeping and political missions around the world – spoke of efforts underway to improve service delivery and to produce better value for money.

In particular, he noted a new environmental strategy to guide UN efforts to deliver support in a responsible manner as well as steps to improve medical support to peacekeepers to prevent the avoidable loss of lives.



“But we need to do more together,” he added. “We simply cannot accept that 30 of the 287 military medical facilities in peacekeeping missions either have not deployed or are deployed with sub-standard equipment.”

In particular, Mr. Khare highlighted the need for more female participation in peacekeeping, urging the chiefs of defence to redouble their efforts to contribute female personnel to serve in missions.

He also called on them to ensure that uniformed contingents deploy rapidly and with the equipment and training required to carry out the tasks that they have been mandated.

Held under the theme *Meeting the Challenges*, the conference also included the participation of military representatives from the African Union, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as the Force Commanders of the UN peacekeeping missions in Mali (MINUSMA), Central African Republic (MINUSCA), South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

DR Congo’s economy loses over \$1 billion to child undernutrition, finds UN-backed study



A baby has the circumference of the middle of the upper left arm measured for signs of malnutrition. The red (12cm) area is severe malnutrition, the yellow (13cm) is moderate malnutrition and the green (14cm) is good. Photo: UNICEF/ Connelly

7 July – The economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is losing as much as 4.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to the effects of child undernutrition, according to a United Nations-backed study released today.

The social and economic costs of undernutrition are estimated at 1.637 billion Congolese francs, or more than \$1 billion a year.

“These results call on all of us to act now to avoid future losses caused by hunger,” said UN World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director Claude Jibidar in a news release.

“I’m convinced that with the understanding we now have of the terrible economic and social impact of malnutrition on children, we and our partners can work with the Government to make a real difference to this alarming situation.”

The Cost of Hunger in Africa study was undertaken by the Government of DRC in collaboration with WFP, the African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The study shows that the losses are incurred each year through increased healthcare costs, additional burdens to the education system and reduced workforce productivity.

According to the report, DRC could save up to around \$383 million by 2025 if the prevalence of underweight children is reduced from 11 to 5 per cent, and if stunting – low growth for age – is reduced from 43 to 10 per cent.

“Africa has the potential to reap a demographic dividend from a young, educated and skilled workforce,” said Kefilwe Moalosi, speaking on behalf of AUC and NEPAD. “But this potential can only be harnessed if we continue to invest in the health and nutrition of its people, particularly its women and children, and secure the necessary economic growth.”

The Cost of Hunger in Africa study has been conducted in 11 African countries. Their economies suffer an estimated annual loss associated with child undernutrition that is equivalent to between 1.9 per cent and 16.5 per cent of GDP. Results are due to be released soon in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The study is being planned for Mali and Mauritania.

Concerned about Liu Xiaobo, UN rights office urges access to jailed rights defender



Source: OHCHR

7 July – The United Nations human rights office today expressed great concern about the health of Liu Xiaobo and urged access to the jailed Nobel laureate and his wife, Liu Xia.

“We are very concerned at reports that Liu Xiaobo’s health has seriously deteriorated over the past 24 hours,” a spokesperson for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Liz Throssell, told reporters in Geneva.

She said OHCHR has been engaging with Chinese authorities about the situation of Mr. Liu and his wife, but has not received further information from the Government for more than 24 hours.

“The welcome request for medical support for Liu Xiaobo should be responded to urgently, and amid these latest reports of the deterioration of his health, we believe the UN should be granted access to both Liu Xiaobo and Liu Xia,” Ms. Throssell said.

She added that given the urgency and seriousness of the situation, High Commissioner Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein will continue to closely follow developments in the situation.

Mr. Liu was jailed in 2009 after calling for political reforms in China. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 for “his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.”

He is reportedly in grave medical condition and has been diagnosed with liver cancer.

Rights defenders ‘must not be silenced,’ says UN office, urging Turkey to release activists



Elizabeth Throssell, OHCHR. Photo: UN Photo/ Violaine Martin

7 July – The United Nations today voiced grave concern about the arbitrary detention and arrests of human rights defenders in Turkey and called on the Government to ensure that activists can carry out their work in a safe and enabling environment without fear.

“Human rights defenders must not be silenced,” Liz Throssell, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), told a press briefing in Geneva.

OHCHR has received reports that eight Turkish human rights defenders and two international experts were detained on the Büyükada Island near Istanbul on Wednesday, 5 July, while taking part in a training workshop on digital security and protection for human rights defenders.

Their detention period has now been extended to seven days and they are reportedly being interrogated over allegations of “membership of an armed terrorist organisation,” noted Ms. Throssell.

“We fear they are now at significant risk of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment,” she added.

The detainees include Idil Eser Ilknur, the Director of Amnesty International Turkey; Ilknur Üstün of the Women's

Coalition; Veli Acu and Günel Kursun of the Human Rights Agenda Association; Nalan Erkem, Seyhmuş Özbekli and Özlem Dalkiran of Helsinki Citizens Assembly; and Nejat Tastan of the Equal Rights Watch Association. One Swedish and one German national, who facilitated the training, were also detained along with the owner of the hotel where the workshop was taking place.

This new wave of detentions is “deeply worrying,” according to OHCHR, as it comes a month after the Chairperson of Amnesty International Turkey, Taner Kiliç, was arrested, along with 22 other lawyers. Mr. Kiliç and six others remain in custody.

The Office is also extremely concerned about two other human rights defenders – Nuriye Gülmen, a university lecturer, and Semih Özakça, a school teacher – who went on hunger strike in March in protest against their arbitrary dismissal in the context of last year’s sweeping purges.

“We call upon the Turkish Government to release and reinstate them in their jobs without delay, and to ensure adequate compensation for their unlawful arrest and dismissal,” said Ms. Throssell.

OHCHR said that in the context of the state of emergency, the Government seems to have criminalized the legitimate exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of opinion and expression, using emergency decrees that fail to meet international human rights standards.

UN chief ‘deeply sorry’ as Cyprus talks conclude without agreement



Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during press conference after the Cyprus talks. Photo: UN Photo/ Jean-Marc Ferré

7 July – Secretary-General António Guterres says that he is “deeply sorry” that, despite very strong commitments and the engagement of all delegations, the United Nations-facilitated Conference on Cyprus concluded without reaching an agreement.

“Unfortunately [...] an agreement was not possible and the conference was closed without the possibility to bring a solution to this dramatically long-lasting problem,” Mr. Guterres told the press in the early hours of Friday in the Swiss town of Crans-Montana, where the talks took place.

However, he noted that, in spite of the closure of the Conference, initiatives can still be pursued and developed in order to address the issues that were being discussed.

“The UN role is the role of a facilitator and we will always be at the disposal of the parties willing to come to an agreement, if that would be the case,” he added.

The Conference had begun on 28 June in the hopes of reaching a comprehensive settlement to the conflict that has divided the Mediterranean island for more than four decades.

In his remarks, Mr. Guterres also expressed his appreciation to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders as well as to the representatives of the guarantors – Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom – and the European Union, which served as an observer.

He also thanked the UN team, led by Espen Barth Eide, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, for doing everything possible to bring closer together the positions of the different delegations.

UN conference adopts treaty banning nuclear weapons



The remains of the Prefectural Industry Promotion Building, later preserved as a monument - known as the Genbaku Dome - at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. UN Photo

7 July – Countries meeting at a United Nations conference in New York today adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the first multilateral legally-binding instrument for nuclear disarmament to have been negotiated in 20 years.

“The treaty represents an important step and contribution towards the common aspirations of a world without nuclear weapons,” the spokesperson for Secretary-General António Guterres said following its adoption.

“The Secretary-General hopes that this new treaty will promote inclusive dialogue and renewed international cooperation aimed at achieving the long overdue objective of nuclear disarmament,” Stéphane Dujarric added.

The treaty – adopted by a vote of 122 in favour to one against (Netherlands), with one abstention (Singapore) – prohibits a full range of nuclear-weapon-related activities, such as undertaking to develop, test, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as well as the use or threat of use of these weapons.

“We feel emotional because we are responding to the hopes and dreams of the present and future generations,” said Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez of Costa Rica, who serves as the President of the conference that negotiated the treaty in response to a mandate given by the UN General Assembly.

She told a news conference at UN Headquarters that with the treaty the world is “one step closer” to a total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The treaty will be open for signature to all States at UN Headquarters in New York on 20 September 2017, and enter into force 90 days after it has been ratified by at least 50 countries.

However, a number of countries stayed out of the negotiations, including the United States, Russia and other nuclear-weapon States, as well as many of their allies. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) did not join the talks either.

In a joint press statement issued today, the delegations of the United States, United Kingdom and France said they “have not taken part in the negotiation of the treaty... and do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to it.”

“This initiative clearly disregards the realities of the international security environment,” they said. “Accession to the ban treaty is incompatible with the policy of nuclear deterrence, which has been essential to keeping the peace in Europe and North Asia for over 70 years.”

In response to questions on the joint statement, Ms. Whyte Gómez recalled that when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was adopted decades ago, it did not enjoy a large number of accessions.

Opened for signature in 1968, the Treaty entered into force in 1970. Then in 1995, the Treaty was extended indefinitely. A total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States that are the permanent members of the UN Security Council – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In the beginning, it was unimaginable that those States would be parties to the NPT, she noted. “But the world changes and the circumstances change.”

She added that the *hibakusha*, survivors of nuclear bombs, have been the driving force in the creation of the nuclear weapons prohibition treaty. The experiences they have been sharing “touch the human soul,” she said, adding that the negotiations were a “combination of reason and heart.”

Funding shortfall threatens education for children in conflict, disaster zones – UNICEF



Although she used to be in Grade 6, 12-year old Ayesha, who fled to Turkey from the Idlib Governorate of Syria does not attend school. Photo: UNICEF/Shehzad Noorani

7 July – Some 9.2 million children living in emergency countries will miss out on schooling unless the international community contributes an additional \$820 million, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned at the start of today's G20 summit.

“Without education, children grow up without the knowledge and skills they need to contribute to the peace and the development of their countries and economies, aggravating an already desperate situation for millions of children.” said Muzoon Almellehan, UNICEF's latest – and youngest – Goodwill Ambassador, speaking from Hamburg, Germany, where she is representing UNICEF at the summit.

“For the millions of children growing up in war zones, the threats are even more daunting: not going to school leaves children vulnerable to early marriage, child labour and recruitment by armed forces,” Ms.

Almellehan said.

The UN agency has requested \$932 million for its education programmes in conflict and disaster zones, but has received less than \$115 million.

The greatest needs are in the Central African Republic and Yemen, where the funding gaps are above 70 per cent.

Students are missing out on opportunities to learn in Iraq and Syria, as well. According to a survey cited by UNICEF, pursuing educational opportunities was mentioned as one of the factors leading families and children to flee their homes.

A survey of refugee and migrant children in Italy revealed that 38 per cent of them headed to Europe to gain access to learning opportunities. In Greece, one in three parents or caretakers said that seeking education for their children was the main reason they left their countries for Europe.

UNICEF said that for children who have experienced the trauma of war and displacement, education can be life-saving.

“When I fled Syria in 2013, I was terrified I would never be able to return to school. But when I arrived in Jordan and realized there was a school in the camp, I was relieved and hopeful,” said Muzoon. “School gives children like me a lifeline and the chance of a peaceful and positive future.”

Secretary-General António Guterres is also participating in the two-day summit of the G20, which includes leaders from 19 countries and the European Union.