

Media Update

20 August 2021

United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF AND TRIBUTE TO THE VICTIMS OF TERRORISM

21 August 2021

Today, we remember and pay tribute to all victims and survivors of terrorism. We stand in solidarity with those whose loved ones have been killed, those who still suffer from physical and psychological harm, and those communities and societies that have been permanently scarred by terrorist acts.

We support survivors by listening to and amplifying their voices, upholding their rights and providing the support, justice and dignity to which they are entitled. This year's observance focuses on the importance of connections, especially during the ongoing pandemic, which continues to restrict movements, limit peoples' ability to see loved ones and, for victims and survivors, denies them the opportunity to come together to support each other.

Connection can be a powerful agent of healing, helping terrorism survivors around the world to feel heard, seen and less alone. Connections between survivors, victims' associations, civil society and Member States are also crucial in helping better uphold the rights and support the needs of victims now and in the future. I look forward to seeing how we can further these efforts during the first ever United Nations Global Congress of Victims of Terrorism to be held later this year.

The United Nations is committed to a world free from terrorism. On this International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism,

and on all days, let us stand in solidarity with all victims and survivors so we may support them in healing their trauma and bring them hope.

United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

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MESSAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE BASED ON RELIGION OR BELIEF 22 August 2021

Today we honour and remember the victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief.

Across the world, we continue to witness a rise in hate speech, intolerance, and even physical violence and attacks on individuals, groups, and sites, purely because of their religious beliefs or significance.

This violence often goes hand-in-hand with the infringement of other fundamental rights, including the right to freedom of thought or conscience. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has fueled racism, stigma, and disinformation, often targeting ethnic and religious minorities, has further exacerbated this dangerous convergence.

Despite the risks, victims continue to speak out with great courage to defend their rights. I stand in full solidarity with them — and with the determined efforts of civil society actors, community and faith leaders, to mobilize against any act of violence or discrimination.

States have the primary responsibility to prohibit and deter discrimination and violence and to protect the human rights of religious minorities and ensure that perpetrators of these crimes are held accountable. At the same time, the international community must do more to support the victims of these heinous acts, as well as those who are working to address the root causes of intolerance and hate. I have made tackling this issue a priority, including through initiatives

like the Call to Action for Human Rights, the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, and the UN Plan to Safeguard Religious Sites.

Freedom of religion or belief is a human right, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Today, this right is being tested.

Let us commit to turning the tide on this appalling trend, to building more inclusive and peaceful societies, where diversity is celebrated as a richness that strengthens us all.

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

Children in four South Asian countries at ‘extremely high risk’ of the impacts of the climate crisis - UNICEF

According to a first-ever report of its kind, children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are extremely vulnerable to climate change risks such as heatwaves and floods

KATHMANDU, 20 August 2021 – Young people living in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are among those most at risk of the impacts of climate change, threatening their health, education, and protection, according to a new UNICEF report launched today. In addition Nepal and Sri Lanka are among the top 65 countries most impacted globally.

‘*The Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children’s Climate Risk Index*’ (CCRI) is UNICEF’s first child-focused climate risk index. It ranks countries based on children’s exposure to climate and environmental shocks, such as cyclones and heatwaves, as well as their vulnerability to those shocks, based on their access to essential services.

Pakistan, Bangladesh Afghanistan and India are among four South Asian countries where children are at extremely high risk of the impacts of the climate crisis, with a ranking of 14, 15, 15 and 26 respectively. While Nepal is ranked 51, Sri Lanka is at 61st place. Bhutan is ranked 111, with children at

relatively lower risk. Approximately 1 billion children live in one of the 33 countries classified as “extremely high-risk”, including the four South Asian countries.

“For the first time, we have clear evidence of the impact of climate change on millions of children in South Asia. Droughts, floods, air pollution and river erosion across the region have left millions of children homeless and hungry, and without any healthcare and water,” said George Laryea-Adjei, UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia. “Together, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic have created an alarming crisis for South Asian children. The time to act is now - if we invest in water, healthcare and education, we can protect their futures from the impacts of a changing climate and degrading environment.”

Children’s Climate Change Risk Index for South Asia, UNICEF 2021

Country Name	Children’s Climate Risk Index (CCRI) Rank	Climate and environmental shocks	Child vulnerability to climate change shocks	Emissions Per Capita (Mt)
Pakistan	14	8.7	6.4	0.98
Afghanistan	15	7.3	7.9	0.20
Bangladesh	15	9.1	5.1	0.51
India	26	9.0	4.6	1.80
Nepal	51	7.5	4.2	0.43
Sri Lanka	61	7.0	3.3	1.00
Bhutan	111	4.3	3.3	1.83

The report found that these South Asian children are in constant danger from riverine floods and air pollution, but also that investments in child health, nutrition, and education can make a significant difference to protect children from climate change.

South Asia is home to over 600 million children and has the highest number of young people globally. South Asian countries are among the most vulnerable globally to the impacts of climate change. Extreme climate-related events - heatwaves, storms, floods, fires and droughts - affect more than half of the region's population every year and continue to burden South Asian countries’ economies. Rising global temperatures and changing weather

patterns have put the futures of millions of children living in climate-vulnerable areas in South Asia at constant risk. Worse, before they can recover from one disaster, another one strikes, reversing any progress made.

The report also reveals a disconnect between where greenhouse gas emissions are generated, and where children are enduring the most significant climate-driven impacts. The 33 extremely high-risk countries, including four from South Asia, collectively emit just 9 per cent of global CO2 emissions. Conversely, the 10 highest emitting countries collectively account for nearly 70 per cent of global emissions.

“The frightening environmental changes we are seeing across the planet are being driven by a few but experienced by many in South Asia,” added Laryea-Adjei. “We must urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions and work together as a community to build greater resilience in South Asia. Children and young people are at the heart of this change, with almost half of 1.8 billion people below the age of 24 in South Asia.”

Compared to adults, children require more food and water per unit of their body weight, are less able to survive extreme weather events, and are more susceptible to toxic chemicals, temperature changes and diseases, among other factors. Without the urgent action required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally, children will continue to suffer the most.

Young people across South Asia are championing the cause.

In **Bangladesh**, exposures to cyclones, droughts, floods and river erosion moved Tahsin, 23, to action. Through the youth organization he established, Tahsin and 400 children and young people from across the country are cleaning up public spaces, selling the plastic they collect to recycling centres and planting trees. In **Pakistan**, 14-year-old Zymal started producing biodegradable bags in order to clean up her country from the plastic pollution. In **India**, a youth filmmaker Divy is traveling across the country and spreading awareness about global warming and Gavita developed a water budgeting app.

In light of these findings, UNICEF is urgently calling on governments, businesses and relevant actors to:

1. **Increase** investment in climate adaptation and resilience in key services for children.
2. **Reduce** greenhouse gas emissions. Countries must cut their emissions by at least 45% (compared to 2010 levels) by 2030 to keep warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

3. **Provide** children with climate education and greens skills, critical for their adaptation to and preparation for the effects of climate change.
4. **Include** young people in all national, regional and international climate negotiations and decisions, including at COP26.
5. **Ensure** the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is green, low-carbon and inclusive, so that the capacity of future generations to respond to the climate crisis is not compromised.

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Notes to Editors:

Read the report [here](#). (Website will go live at 0546 Nepal Time (0001 GMT) 20 August 2021)

Download multimedia content [here](#).

The CCRI was developed in collaboration with several partners including the Data for Children Collaborative. In order to make the report more accessible to global youth, UNICEF also collaborated with Climate Cardinals, an international youth led non-profit which translates climate change research and information so that they can reach as many young people and leaders as possible.

About Maldives: Maldives was not included in the report due to lack of global data. However, the Government of Maldives is committed to addressing the country's vulnerability to climate change and its debilitating effects on children, women and other vulnerable communities.

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

For more information about UNICEF's work for children in South Asia, visit www.unicef.org/rosa and follow UNICEF ROSA on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

For more information about UNICEF South Asia's regional climate change campaign - One Planet, One Love, One Youth - click [here](#).

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