

Media Update

8 March 2016

United Nations - Pakistan

Statement

The United Nations Pakistan Country Team strongly condemns the terrorist attack yesterday on the premises of a local court in the Shabqadar area of Charsadda, which reportedly killed at least seventeen people and injured others.

The UN Pakistan Country Team notes with concern that the court was reportedly targeted over interpretations of law. We affirm that an independent judiciary and legal profession is essential for the fair administration of justice and protection of human rights.

The UN Pakistan Country Team extends our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims

UNICEF/UNFPA

Press Release

New multi-country initiative will protect millions of girls from child marriage – UNICEF/UNFPA

NEW YORK, 8 March 2016 – A new multi-country initiative to accelerate action to end child marriage will help protect the rights of millions of the world's most vulnerable girls, UNICEF and UNFPA said on International Women's Day.



The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage announced today will involve families, communities, governments and young people. This is part of a global effort to prevent girls from marrying too young and to support those already married as girls in 12 countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East where child marriage rates are high.

“Choosing when and whom to marry is one of life’s most important decisions. Child marriage denies millions of girls this choice each year,” said Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund. “As part of this global programme, we will work with governments of countries with a high prevalence of child marriage to uphold the rights of adolescent girls, so that girls can reach their potential and countries can attain their social and economic development goals.”

The new global programme will focus on five proven strategies, including increasing girls’ access to education, educating parents and communities on the dangers of child marriage, increasing economic support to families, and strengthening and enforcing laws that establish 18 as the minimum age of marriage.

“The world has awakened to the damage child marriage causes to individual girls, to their future children, and to their societies,” said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. “This new global programme will help drive action to reach the girls at greatest risk – and help more girls and young women realize their right to dictate their own destinies. This is critical now because if current trends continue, the number of girls and women married as children will reach nearly 1 billion by 2030 – 1 billion childhoods lost, 1 billion futures blighted.”

Child marriage is a violation of the rights of girls and women. Girls who are married as children are more likely to be out of school, suffer domestic violence, contract HIV/AIDS and die due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Child marriage also hurts economies and leads to intergenerational cycles of poverty.

The global community demonstrated strong commitment to end child marriage by including a target on eliminating it and other harmful practices in the Sustainable Development Goals. UNICEF and UNFPA call on governments and partner organizations to support the new Global Programme to help eliminate child marriage by 2030.

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage is being supported by Canada, the European Union, Italy, Netherlands, and the UK.

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Download multimedia material here: <http://uni.cf/1R1p80u>

About UNFPA

UNFPA is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. UNFPA works in over 150 countries and territories to expand the possibilities for women and young people to lead healthy and productive lives.

For more information about UNFPA and its work visit: www.unfpa.org

About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

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