

We noticed that you are using an adblocker. If you are not already a member, please consider [a donation](#). Thank you!

wbur | WBUR News

U.N. Head Lists His Top Global Concerns For 2018

January 17, 2018

By [Malaka Gharib](#)



On the first day as head of the United Nations — January 1, 2017 — Antonio Guterres [pledged to make 2017](#) a year of peace.

But the year didn't turn out as he expected. In an [informal address](#) to member states at the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday, Guterres said

"peace remains elusive" — and "in fundamental ways, the world has gone in reverse."

In his speech, he shared his top priorities for the U.N. in 2018 — many of which touch on themes we cover in our blog about global health and development. His remarks have been edited for length.

Find justice for the Rohingya Muslims

"Cast out of their homes and country, and subjected to brutality both by military forces and others, they are under siege as a group — for who they are. They desperately need immediate, life-saving assistance, long-term solutions and justice."

Keep U.N. peacekeepers safe

"Our missions are increasingly deployed in difficult environments where there is little peace to keep. Many times ill-equipped, our peacekeepers are now deliberately targeted. This situation is not sustainable. It is time to sound an alarm."

Address the conflict in Yemen.

"It is time for the parties to enter into meaningful peace negotiations beyond efforts to ease the dramatic humanitarian catastrophe."

Help Africa solve its own problems

"I am a strong believer in African-led solutions to African problems. The African Union and the United Nations have a shared interest in strengthening mechanisms to defuse conflicts before they escalate and to manage them effectively where they occur."

Promote gender equality

"We can see, in the greater equality and inclusion of women, a fundamental tool to address these complex challenges. Women's meaningful participation in peace and security has been proven to make peace more sustainable. Women's equal participation in the labor force and equal pay would unlock trillions of dollars for our economies.

To achieve such gains, however, greater action is needed. My approach rests on three pillars.

First empowerment — empowering women and girls. Power is the heart of the matter. I have launched a road map for achieving gender parity at all levels of the United Nations. We have reached, far in advance, full parity in the 44-member United Nations Senior Management Group.

Second, preventing sexual exploitation and abuse against women. Our organization's first-ever victims' rights advocate is now in place, working closely with states and across the United Nations system.

Third, preventing and addressing sexual harassment. I reiterate my personal commitment to eliminating sexual harassment from our organization. I have set up a task force to review U.N. policies and capacities to investigate, to ensure accountability and to look at the support and protection offered to those affected."

[Copyright NPR 2018.](#)

Related:

- [U.N. Investigator On Extreme Poverty Issues A Grim Report — On The U.S.](#)

+ **Join the discussion**

