

New York, US, April 4 (Infosplusgabon) - United Nations Secretary-General Antonion Guterres on Friday stressed that there should be only one fight in our world today, as he issued a loud clarion call to join “our shared battle against COVID-19”.

A UN statement said 10 days ago, he called for an immediate global ceasefire to help people in war-torn regions receive life-saving aid to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

“We know the pandemic is having profound social, economic and political consequences, including relating to international peace and security,” the UN chief said, in a virtual press conference outlining the impact so far of the ceasefire appeal.

The statement said he cited sustained restrictions on movement by governments everywhere, and factors that could contribute to rising discontent and political tensions, but maintained that “the global ceasefire appeal is resonating across the world”.

He said that the call has been endorsed by 70 Member States, regional partners, non-State actors, and others.

“Religious leaders – including Pope Francis – have added their moral voice in support of a global ceasefire, as have citizens through grassroots mobilization online,” Guterres told reporters.

Although a substantial number of fighters and militias have accepted the call, the UN chief stressed that “there is a huge distance between declarations and deeds – between translating words into peace on the ground, and in the lives of people”.

He acknowledged the “enormous difficulties” in implementing a truce to halt conflicts that have festered for years, where “distrust is deep”, and recognised that “any initial gains are fragile and easily reversible”.

The UN chief observed that in many critical situations, there has been no let-up in fighting, and in some, conflicts have even intensified.

“We need robust diplomatic efforts to meet these challenges,” he asserted. “To silence the guns, we must raise the voices for peace”.

Mr. Guterres explained that he and his envoys are engaging with conflict actors to help push forward ceasefires.

Turning to Libya, he said that the warring parties have welcomed calls to stop the fighting, but clashes have escalated drastically on all frontlines, obstructing efforts to effectively respond to COVID-19.

“I urge both parties, and all others directly and indirectly involved in the conflict, to immediately halt hostilities to allow authorities to effectively address the COVID-19 threat”, underscored Mr. Guterres.

For all nations in conflict, the UN chief made a special appeal to those with influence on warring parties “to do everything possible for the ceasefire to become a reality”.

FIN/INFOSPLUSGABON/IYT/GABON2020

© Copyright Infosplusgabon