

Hello, and welcome to “As It Is,” our daily show for people learning American English!

I’m Christopher Cruise in Washington.

Today on the program, we hear about how dangerous the world can be for news reporters...

“They may call me ‘a dead man walking,’ but I report the news.”

And we mark the birthday of an American government agency that sent men to the moon.

“For the eyes of the world now look into space, to the moon and to the planets beyond.”

But first, we report on an eye-opening appeal for humanitarian aid.

UN Asks for Billions to Help Millions

The United Nations says it needs a record \$13 billion to help tens of millions of people around the world through the end of the year. A recent investigation found that the UN’s humanitarian needs are increasing and more money is required.

Kelly Jean Kelly reports...

In December, the United Nations launched an appeal to help 57 million people in 24 countries. In the months since then, the number of people needing help has increased to 73 million.

The United Nations blames the increase on the crisis in Syria and worsening conditions in countries such as the Central African Republic and Mali. To date, the United Nations has received more than five billion dollars as a result of its request.

Valerie Amos is the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. She says five billion dollars would be a huge amount of money in a normal year. But, she says, this is what she calls an extraordinary year requiring extraordinary measures.

"And people in the Central African Republic, Niger, Afghanistan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, and Chad -- among many others -- need help to feed their families, to treat malnourished children and to get safe drinking water and other essential supplies."

Valerie Amos says the United Nations needs to collect an additional \$8.6 billion by the end of the year because of the increasing needs. The UN official says she does not know how this will be done. But she says if the money is not raised, many people will be in danger.

"We're always focused on the people who are most vulnerable, who are most in need, and it means that some of those people don't get the safe water they need. They don't get the shelter that they need. They don't get the food that they need. They don't get the health care that they need."

Syria remains the biggest emergency. The United Nations estimates that nearly seven million people inside the country and about 1.8 million Syrian refugees need help.

But Ms. Amos says officials must not let the situation in Syria keep them from helping the millions of people in other areas -- such as those in the Central African Republic and Mali. She says many people there are also in need of help.

I'm Kelly Jean Kelly.

Simply Reporting the News Can Get You Killed...

Journalists and United Nations diplomats met with the UN Security Council earlier this month to demand increased protection for reporters.

Larry Freund was there and has this report...

Jan Eliasson is deputy secretary-general of the UN. He said more than 600 journalists have been killed over the past ten years. He said they were killed simply for performing what he called their "critical role in society."

"Every time a journalist is killed by extremists, drug cartels or even government forces there is one less voice to speak on behalf of the victims of conflict, crime and human rights abuses. Every journalist murdered or intimidated into silence is one less observer of efforts to uphold rights and ensure human dignity."

Mustafa Haji Abdinur was one of several journalists who spoke to the Security Council. He reports from Somalia for the French news agency AFP. He said he is known in the country as a “dead man walking.” He said he will never be discouraged, but noted that even speaking to the Security Council was risky.

“In showing my face to you and the world, I increase the threat of becoming attacked when I go back home. But I am a journalist. They may call me ‘a dead man walking,’ but I report the news.”

The United States ambassador to the UN, Rosemary DiCarlo said journalists are the Council’s eyes and ears in every corner of the world.

“Recognizing the value of the work of journalists reporting on conflict, this Council has an obligation to help protect those who provide us with so much vital information. We thank journalists around the world who risk their lives to seek the truth and shine light on the darkness for the entire world to see. The Security Council could not do its job without you.”

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad is an Iraqi who reports from his country for The Guardian newspaper. He told the Security Council that for at least the past ten years there has been a systematic hunting down of journalists. He said there is a belief that the killer of a reporter will not be caught -- or if he is caught, he will not be punished.

“If you, ladies and gentlemen, can make an effort to recognize journalists as part of a humanitarian effort to tell a story. Many of you hate us, by the way, I know that. It’s a sign that we are doing our job properly. But there has to be some sort of balance. Just let us be there, treat us as human beings. Just don’t kill us.”

Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson said more than 90 percent of those who kill journalists are never punished.

I’m Larry Freund.

Let’s Go To the Moon...Before the Russians Do!

Fifty-five years ago, on July 29th, 1958, President Dwight Eisenhower signed a law that created the American space agency. Eight months earlier, the Soviet Union had launched Sputnik One, the first man-made Earth satellite. Many American officials feared the country would lose the space race to the Russians, and they refused to let that happen.

The new space agency was called the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. It soon became known simply as NASA.

NASA soon began planning for a project to send an American to the Moon, and return him safely to Earth.

That goal would be stated by President John F. Kennedy.

“We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.”

Although President Kennedy did not live to see it, two American astronauts did land on the Moon and returned safely to Earth in 1969.

“For the eyes of the world now look into space, to the Moon and to the planets beyond.”

I’m Christopher Cruise, and that’s “As It Is” on The Voice of America.



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