Syrian Crisis
United Nations Response

A Weekly Update from the
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Secretary-General deplores abject failure to end suffering in Syria

Addressing a General Assembly debate on the Responsibility to Protect on 8 September, the Secretary-General urged governments and UN entities to do more to act early, prevent atrocities and support countries in protecting their citizens. Referring to Syria, he said that the parties to the conflict have shown wanton disregard for human life. "The conflict is a colossal tragedy for Syria and a shameful symbol of international divisions", he added. Mr. Ban deplored what he called "the abject failure to end the suffering of the Syrian people". That failure takes concrete expression in today's refugee crisis in Europe, he noted. The Secretary-General reiterated his appeal to the Security Council to take action to find a political solution based on the Geneva Communiqué.
http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=8950

UN Envoy calls on European countries to receive refugees with dignity

Speaking to reporters in Brussels on 7 September, Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura said that after five years of conflict, Syrians are giving up hope, with many fleeing to Europe as the fighting continues. While acknowledging that the arrival of Syrian refugees was placing enormous pressure on Europe, he urged the European Union to respond with dignity in receiving refugees. The Special Envoy also emphasized that Saudi Arabia and Iran had "substantial influence" on efforts towards a political solution. Talks between the two could contribute to ending the conflict provided the two countries were not alone at the table and had a "real discussion."
http://www.unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/29872-un-special-envoy-saudi-arabia-iran-key-to-ending-syria-war

UN refugee agency warns that worsening conditions in Syria drive thousands towards Europe

On 8 September, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) warned that conditions inside Syria and in neighboring countries continue to deteriorate and drive thousands of Syrians to risk everything on perilous journeys to Europe. UNHCR Spokesperson Melissa Fleming told reporters in Geneva that the last few months inside Syria had been brutal. Fighting had intensified in almost all governorates, with an increase in rocket and mortar attacks on Damascus, a rise in vehicle explosions in major cities like Lattakia, Aleppo, Homs, Hassakeh and Quamishli, and heavy bombardment in Zabadani and rural Damascus. In most parts of Syria, electricity was available only for two to four hours a day, if at all. Many regions struggled with water shortages. More than half the population lived in extreme poverty, said Ms. Fleming.
http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest_en%29/B7C37FDE8C3DB72EC1257EBA0036D50F?OpenDocument
http://www.unhcr.org/55eed5d66.html

UNHCR offers assistance to Hungary to deal with refugee crisis

On 8 September, the UNHCR Regional Coordinator for Europe, Vincent Cochetel, met the authorities in Budapest and extended the agency's assistance to deal with the increasing

number of refugees and migrants arriving in Hungary. Since January, over 150,000 refugees and migrants have crossed into Hungary from Serbia, a majority of those coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The UN refugee agency called on Hungarian authorities to improve the registration process and reception conditions of asylum seekers and to allow aid organizations to provide assistance at collection points near the border.
http://reliefweb.int/report/hungary/statement-vincent-cochetel-unhcrs-regional-refugee-coordinator-refugee-crisis-europe

UNHCR Chief says Europe is facing a defining moment
UN refugee agency chief António Guterres said on 5 September that the biggest influx of refugees into Europe for decades required a "massive common effort" and a break with the fragmented approach which has led Europe to fail to find an effective response. "More than 300,000 people have risked their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea so far this year. Over 2,600 didn't survive the dangerous crossing, including three-year-old Aylan, whose photo has just stirred the hearts of the world public," Mr. Guterres said. Noting that the European Union faced a "defining moment", the UNHCR chief laid out a set of guidelines that should underpin efforts to resolve the current refugee and migration crisis. He praised examples of generosity and moral leadership on the part of some countries and many private citizens, but reiterated his appeal for a collective strategy, including a renewed drive to settle conflicts.
http://www.unhcr.org/55e9793b6.html

Cultural heritage of Syria and Iraq must be safeguarded for future peace, say UN officials
At a joint press conference in Paris on 7 September, UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson and the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Irina Bokova, denounced the destruction of cultural heritage in Syria and Iraq as "crimes against humanity". "All of this shows the humanitarian crisis cannot be separated from cultural cleansing," said Ms. Bokova. "These are part of the same strategic imperative and must stand at the heart of all efforts for peacebuilding. The cultural heritage and diversity of this region must be safeguarded for future peace, as part of the identity of all humanity." She highlighted UNESCO's work with Member States to raise awareness and strengthen action, including through the #Unite4Heritage social media campaign.
http://en.unesco.org/news/preserving-cultural-heritage-and-diversity-syria-and-iraq-are-essential-irina-bokova-welcomes-1

UN Radio in Arabic
The courage of Asma and her brothers helped them to reach Austria
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177670/#.VfB5J_IVhBc

Ban Ki-Moon: The Syrian crisis is a "shameful symbol" of international divisions
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177630/#.VfB5bfIVhBc

Ban stresses the importance of European leaders to address the escalation of xenophobia and discrimination against immigrants and refugees
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177625/#.VfB5q_IVhBc

de Mistura: the key to solving the Syrian crisis is in the hands of Saudi Arabia and Iran
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177608/#.VfB54_IVhBc

UNHCR: the deteriorating situation in Syria is pushing thousands towards Europe
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177599/#.VfB6FfIVhBc

Peter Sutherland: History will judge Europe on the refugee issue
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177594/#.VfB6TPIVhBc

International commission: Europe and the Gulf states should do more to respond to the influx of immigrants and refugees
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177553/#.VfB7APlVhBc

Secretary-General calls on European leaders for an effective approach to share the responsibilities of migrants and refugees
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177536/#.VfB7YPlVhBc

UNICEF: Authorities in Gevgeliya are registering only half of the refugees
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177431/#.VfB7xPlVhBc

Antonio Guterres: What Europe is seeing is a refugee crisis and not an influx of migrants
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177594/#.VfB6TPlVhBc

Syria: UNRWA looks into 10 suspected typhoid cases in Yalda
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177360/#.VfB83_lVhBc

UNICEF calls for the protection of children of migrants and refugees, and says, stopping conflict will end the misery of so many people
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177344/#.VfB9MPlVhBc

Sergio Pinheiro: The suffering in Syria is unimaginable, and the international community should help stop the bloodshed in Syria
http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/177317/#.VfB9cflVhBc

UN Twitter
United Nations @UN 9 September
See latest @OCHA_Syria Humanitarian Snapshot of #SyriaCrisis http://bit.ly/1VKksRt

United Nations @UN 9 September
What are common health problems of refugees & migrants arriving in the European Region? @WHO_Europe Q&A is here: http://j.mp/1VKZJwK

United Nations retweeted
UN Spokesperson @UN_Spokesperson 8 September
Ban Ki-moon: "I deplore abject failure to end suffering of Syrian people. That failure takes expression in today's refugee crisis in Europe"

United Nations retweeted
UN Refugee Agency @Refugees 8 September
This is a primarily #refugee crisis. All states must honour their obligations in keeping with international law. http://trib.al/QSHxa58

United Nations @UN 6 September
Watch: An overwhelming welcome in Vienna for thousands of refugees arriving from Hungary http://youtu.be/Yd5ZNpvXI5c

United Nations retweeted
UN Refugee Agency @Refugees 5 September
Earlier today: Syrian refugees walk toward Austria after getting off buses from Hungary. http://trib.al/K1Gd56B

United Nations @UN 5 September
New: Key guidelines for dealing with Europe's refugee crisis from @Refugees chief Antonio Guterres http://trib.al/qRhOzc2

United Nations retweeted
UN Refugee Agency@Refugees 4 September
Europe is facing a moment of truth. Our 6-point plan reaffirms the values it was built upon: http://trib.al/9sP7GVU

OCHA Syria @OCHA_Syria 9 September
Worsening conditions inside Syria and the region fuel despair, driving thousands towards Europe. More: @UNHCRinSYRIA http://bit.ly/1O0JSJb

UNHCR-Syria @UNHCRinSYRIA 9 September
Humanitarian Snapshot: learn the exact numbers http://bit.ly/1KTQJ5a @UNOCHA @Refugees #Syria #Iraq

UN Facebook
United Nations 5 September at 3:35pm via UNHCR
"Now we are breathing the air of freedom here."
Walid, a Syrian refugee in Hungary, helped organize some 1,000 refugees march out of Budapest towards the Austrian border. The group had walked 25 km when they stopped to rest. Hours later at 2am, Hungarian buses arrived to take them the rest of the way to Austria.
When the refugees spilled out of dozens of buses on the Austrian side of the border, they looked dazed, exhausted but guardedly happy. They were met by volunteers from the Austrian Red Cross and the Austrian Order of Malta holding handwritten signs saying 'welcome', and handing out clothes, food, water and milk, blankets and rain gear.
Europe is at a defining moment and must prepare to receive as many as 200,000 new refugees. This is a huge step forward but much more needs to be done.

Ongoing social media campaigns on Syria

#4Syria campaign was launched on 20 March 2015 on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to highlight the Syrian conflict, which has entered its fifth year. The campaign calls for an end to the conflict and seeks to raise funds for UNRWA's programmes to support Palestinian refugees from Syria. It features testimonies of Palestine refugees; voices that, amid the tragedy, brim with positive energy and determination, as well as documents highlighting UNRWA's emergency work in the region. View the campaign at: http://www.unrwa.org/syria-crisis/syria4thanniversary

#SaveYarmouk was launched in January 2015 to shed light on the grave deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yarmouk, following the escalation of fighting. The campaign includes stories and updates from Yarmouk as well as recorded voices of residents describing the horrible conditions in which they are living. With no access to regular food supplies, clean water, health care, electricity or heating fuel, Yarmouk's civilian population is on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe. For those who wish to support UNRWA's work in Syria, donation is possible through the campaign's website: http://www.unrwa.org/crisis-in-yarmouk.

#ChildrenofSyria
UNICEF and its partners are committed to keeping Syrian children from becoming a 'lost generation'. Critical efforts are being made to minimize the impact of the crisis on children – including in the life-saving areas of health, nutrition, immunization, water and sanitation, as well as in the future of children, through education and child protection.
http://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syria/
http://childrenofsyria.info/

Relevant links to UN Secretariat, Agencies, Funds and Programmes on Syria
DPI Focus Page on Syria:
http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusRel.asp?infocusID=146&Body=Syria&Body1=

UN System agencies :
UN Women: http://www.unwomen.org/
UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org/media/index.html
WFP: http://www.wfp.org/countries/syria
OCHA: http:/unocha.org/syria , twitter.com/ocha_syria , facebook.com/UNOCHA.Syria
WHO: http://www.who.int/countries/syr/en/
UNHCR: http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4f86c2426.html
OHCHR: http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/NewsSearch.aspx?CID=SY
UNRWA: http://www.unrwa.org/

UN on social media:
Twitter: https://twitter.com/UN
Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/
YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/unitednations
Tumblr: http://united-nations.tumblr.com/

Photo galleries:
UNHCR: http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c25d.html
UNRWA: http://www.unrwa.org/photogallery.php
OCHA: http://www.unocha.org/media-resources/photo-gallery
UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org/photography/photo_2013.php#UNI82253
IRIN: http://www.irinnews.org/photo/