



Syrian Crisis United Nations Response



**A Weekly Update from the
UN Department of Public Information**

No. 115/ 7 October 2015

High Commissioner Zeid calls on EU countries to ensure migration policy is grounded in human rights

Ahead of a high-level European Union meeting on 8 October, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called on EU Member States to ensure that discussions of migration policy are grounded firmly on the need to protect the human rights of all migrants.

Zeid welcomed the earlier decision by the European Union on the relocation of 120,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy, as well as the commitment to provide more funding to improve conditions for the millions of Syrians displaced to neighbouring countries. However, he urged the EU "to move away from the flawed view of law enforcement as the main, or sole, panacea to migration challenges". "Narrow exclusion-focused policies have clearly failed," Zeid noted. "Increased border control and surveillance have not reduced the number of new arrivals – they have only forced them to use more dangerous routes, leading to increased human rights abuses and loss of life", he said.

<http://reliefweb.int/report/world/eu-migration-policy-will-fail-unless-comprehensive-and-grounded-human-rights-zeid>

UNESCO condemns destruction of Arch of Triumph in Palmyra

The Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Irina Bokova, on 5 October strongly condemned the destruction of the Arch of Triumph in Palmyra – an iconic 2,000-year-old monument inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. "This new destruction shows how terrified by history and culture the extremists are. Palmyra symbolizes everything that extremists abhor: cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, the encounter of different peoples in this centre of trading between Europe and Asia", she said. UNESCO pledged to make every effort, at its level and in close cooperation with the International Criminal Court, to ensure that the perpetrators of these acts of destruction are brought to justice.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco-director-general-condemns-the-destruction-of-the-arch-of-triumph-in-palmyra-extremists-are-terrified-of-history/#.VhQgoZfgW3Y>

UNHCR and Brazil strengthen partnership to help Syrian refugees

On 5 October, Brazil's Secretary of Justice, Mr Beto Vasconcelos, and the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN Office in Geneva, Ms. Regina Cordeiro Dunlop, signed an agreement with UNHCR to enhance cooperation on Brazil's special visa programme for people affected by the Syrian conflict.

"Despite the geographical distance, 8,000 people have already received these special visas and will be able to rebuild their lives in our country," said Mr Vasconcelos. "This 'open-door' policy was recently extended for two more years, and we continue to seek ways to improve its implementation and results. It is possible to do more. We need to do more", he added. Under the agreement, the UN refugee agency and Brazil agreed to a set of activities to make the process of granting special visas more efficient and secure.

Not only Syrian nationals, but also others affected by the Syrian conflict can benefit from this programme.

<http://reliefweb.int/report/brazil/brazil-and-unhcr-strengthen-partnership-help-refugees-fleeing-syria-conflict>

General Assembly speakers call on UN to invoke compassion amid waves of refugees

Concluding the UN General Assembly 70th general debate on 3 October, speakers called on the United Nations to invoke the spirit that had underpinned its founding 70 years ago: one of compassion and dignity. Much of the debate centred on refugees fleeing violence in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. In meeting their needs, "I urge you, show compassion", said the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Maldives, recalling that the Charter's first words — "We the Peoples" — had made clear that human life was at the heart of the United Nations. People were fleeing barbarism carried out in the name of Islam, acts she condemned. "As such, the situation must be called what it was: a refugee crisis, not a migrant crisis," she stressed.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/ga11701.doc.htm>

UN suspends aid operations in Idlib province after upsurge in fighting

Due to the recent surge of military activities in the Idlib province, the United Nations announced on 2 October the suspension of planned humanitarian operations as part of the implementation of the ceasefire agreement in the towns of Zabadani, Madaya, Fua, and Kefraya. The spokesperson of Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura said that the UN team and humanitarian partners had made all necessary preparations and were in place to immediately implement the humanitarian provisions of the agreement. The UN called on all concerned parties to fulfil their responsibilities in the protection of civilians and reach the necessary understandings in order to implement this agreement as soon as possible.

http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpPages%29/4D6470DBEAF92917C1257E59004FAC2D?OpenDocument

Secretary-General discusses Syria situation with Russian Foreign Minister

The Secretary-General met on 1 October with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergei Lavrov, to discuss the latest developments in Syria, including the campaign against ISIL and other terrorist groups. They agreed that any air strikes should be carried out with strict observance of international humanitarian and international human rights law.

The Secretary-General reiterated that all feasible precautions must be taken to avoid civilian casualties. It was noted by the UN side that terrorist groups targeted by the military campaign should be exclusively those specified in the relevant UN Security Council resolution and that the use of indiscriminate munitions, in particular barrel bombs, should immediately cease.

The Secretary-General and the Foreign Minister agreed on the need for a full and comprehensive political solution to the conflict in Syria.

<http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/index.asp?nid=4195>

Secretary-General concerned about growing xenophobia

Speaking at a meeting of the UN Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends in New York on 1 October, the Secretary-General said that the situation in Syria should prick the conscience of people as the country is facing the worst humanitarian disaster.

While praising the solidarity and compassion shown by neighbouring countries in sheltering Syrian refugees, he voiced concerns about "the growing xenophobia on the part of too many groups and even leaders". Mr. Ban also warned that the "wars will not end tomorrow and we need to provide relief today".

<http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=9086>

UN Twitter

United Nations @UN 5 October

Violent extremists will never be able to erase history - @UNESCO on Palmyra
<http://goo.gl/5NEVNr> #Unite4Heritage

United Nations @UN 5 October

Violent extremists will never be able to erase history - @UNESCO on Palmyra
<http://goo.gl/5NEVNr> #Unite4Heritage

UN Radio in Arabic

UNESCO condemns the destruction of the Arc de Triomphe in Palmyra

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/180656/#.VhVydfIVhBc>

Antonio Guterres: loss of hope in a political solution one of the reasons for Syrians fleeing to Europe

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/180634/#.VhVy4fIVhBc>

The United Nations stopped its humanitarian assistance in some of areas in Syria because of the military escalation

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/180461/#.VhV0H_IVhBc

The EU and UNICEF partnership supports the education for Syrian children

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/180376/#.VhV0dvIVhBc>

Ongoing UN social media campaigns:

#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, 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 challenging 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>.

#myvoicemyschool is an educational project linking Palestinian refugee youth displaced by the Syrian conflict with their peers in England. Through live video conversations and customized teaching materials, students and teachers explore how education can meet their future aspirations. Each class will define and develop an advocacy project to promote and share their ideas.
<http://www.unrwa.org/myvoicemyschool>

#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/>