



Syrian Crisis **United Nations Response**



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

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Secretary-General appeals for nationwide ceasefire in Syria

Speaking at his year-end press conference at UN Headquarters on 16 December, the Secretary-General welcomed the international community's re-engagement in pushing for a political settlement of the Syria crisis. He announced that the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) will meet in New York on 18 December, followed by a meeting of the Security Council. "Syria is an open sore on the Middle East and the wider world. We are pressing for a nationwide cease-fire and for the start of negotiations in January on a political transition – and we must not relent", the Secretary-General said.

<http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/index.asp?nid=4305>

Secretary-General hails Saudi Arabia for convening Syrian opposition meeting

In a statement released on 11 December, the Secretary-General commended Saudi Arabia for its constructive efforts and leadership in convening the Syrian opposition conference in Riyadh on 9-10 December. Mr. Ban stressed the importance of maintaining the positive momentum of the efforts of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), allowing it to move forward and launch credible political negotiations among Syrians in January to implement the 2012 Geneva Communiqué and the ISSG Vienna statements.

<http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=9333>

The situation in Syria is a blot on our collective conscience, says UN Humanitarian Chief

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien wrapped up a three-day visit to Syria on 14 December aimed at reviewing ongoing humanitarian operations and seeking ways of strengthening access to all civilians in need. Speaking at a press conference in Damascus, Mr. O'Brien recalled that some 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced, 72% of the population have no access to drinking water and 2 million children are out of school. "This situation is unacceptable. A blot on our collective conscience", he noted. Mr. O'Brien expressed the hope that the constructive discussions he held with senior Government officials will translate into concrete improvements on the ground, particularly in delivering aid in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. During his trip, the UN humanitarian chief also visited communities in the Al Waer neighbourhood in Homs city where parties agreed to a cessation of hostilities.

<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/STATEMENT%20Eng%20FINAL%2014DEC2015%20as%20delivered.pdf>

UNICEF and WFP launch winter cash assistance programme for Syrian children in Jordan

As the harsh winter draws closer in Jordan, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) launched on 14 December a cash assistance programme for Syrian families in Za'atari and Azraq camps. The one-time grant will provide cash assistance through electronic vouchers (e-cards) which can be used at WFP-contracted markets to buy winter clothes. The initiative aims to benefit over 50,000 children living in the two refugee camps.

<http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/unicef-and-wfp-launch-second-joint-programme-help-syrian-children-weather-harsh-wi>

Over 300 combatants and their families evacuated from Al Waer (Homs)

The United Nations in Syria and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent evacuated over 300 combatants along with their families and the critically injured from Al Waer, in the city of Homs, on 11 December. In line with a local agreement between the Government and the local committee of Al Waer, evacuees were transferred to the Idlib governorate. In a similar operation carried out two days earlier, about 700 people were evacuated from Al Waer. "These urgently needed actions are critical as they allow humanitarian actors to reach thousands of people in these hard-to-reach locations and who are in desperate need of assistance," said Yacoub El-Hillo, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria. "This complex effort was the first ever undertaken in Al Waer," he added. On his side, UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura said that the UN's clear goal is to reach as soon as possible a nationwide ceasefire.

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/press-release-evacuation-combatants-their-families-and-critically>

Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon face dire poverty, warns World Bank

According to a study published by the World Bank Group and the UN refugee agency on 16 December, Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon are facing dire levels of poverty, with the situation expected to worsen in the near future. Nearly 1.7 million Syrian refugees registered in the two countries live in miserable conditions, often unable to afford the very basics including sufficient food, clothes and medicine. In Jordan, nine out of every ten registered refugees are either defined as poor or soon will be, the study found. "This report presents a sobering analysis of the profound poverty of Syrian refugees who have endured shock after shock. Their situation will only worsen unless there is a dramatic change in opportunity for them to support their own self-reliance and contribute to local economies," said Kelly T. Clements, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees.

<http://www.unhcr.org/567185d71509.html>

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23228>

UN human rights officials speak out against intolerance and Islamophobia

The UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, and the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Jennifer Welsh, expressed grave concern at the outpouring of intolerance and hate speech in public discourse and in the media, which has focused particularly on Muslims. In a statement issued on 14 December, they said that in recent weeks, there have been numerous acts of intimidation and violence against Muslims and Muslim sites as well as discriminatory, xenophobic and racist statements. Some of these statements have referred to all Muslims - and all refugees and asylum seekers from Syria and Iraq - as "terrorists", they added. "This is unacceptable. Refugees from Syria and Iraq are fleeing precisely the kind of violence that we in the West also fear. To turn them away when they are seeking refuge is an affront to our common humanity", the two UN officials stated.

http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/SAPG%20Intolerance%20and%20Islamophobia%20statement_FINAL.pdf

UN Radio in Arabic

WFP starts local production of fortified bars of dates in Syria to support school feeding

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/186987/#.VnGYR0orKUK>

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs concludes visit to Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/186786/#.VnGZakorKUK>

UNHCR contributes to the resettlement of thousands of Syrian refugees in Canada
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/186762/#.VnGZm0orKUK>

Secretary-General commends the constructive efforts led by Saudi Arabia to hold the Syrian opposition meeting
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/186704/#.VnGZ70orKUK>

More than 300 fighters and their families evacuated from Al Waer neighbourhood in Homs
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/186627/#.VnGaIUorKUK>

UN TWITTER (@UN)

Thousands have died trying to reach Europe in 2015 - latest from @refugees is here:
<http://trib.al/4Yfx7Dp> pic.twitter.com/eK8SH1pNvE- 15 December

@WFP provides food to 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon & Turkey
<http://j.mp/1jYR4IZ> pic.twitter.com/hQrvsc9i3T - 14 December

@UNReliefChief calls Syria a "blot on our collective conscience" urging for aid access
<http://bit.ly/1P3jf4G> pic.twitter.com/bjrRJMnh7 - 14 December

"Don't give terror groups propaganda" - @Refugees chief Guterres at @Ted this week
<http://trib.al/RQZc8wF> pic.twitter.com/gswlzbk0ty - 13 December

#UNHCR calls for solidarity with Syria's neighbours who host huge number of @refugees
<http://trib.al/jfL9eJh> pic.twitter.com/3xKaapqeHr - 11 December

UN FACEBOOK

The UN Refugee Agency welcomes news of the arrival in Canada last night of the first group of Syrian refugees under a recently announced humanitarian programme which will provide a new life for 25,000 Syrian refugees- 11 December
<http://www.unhcr.org/566ab3756.html>

UN INSTAGRAM

Palestine refugees in #Syria – 14 December
The protracted crisis in Syria has deepened the vulnerability of #Palestine refugees living in the country with more than 280,000 having been internally displaced at least once, leaving behind their homes, family members and livelihoods. ...
https://www.instagram.com/p/_TAjcbzDCg/?taken-by=unitednations

Ongoing UN social media campaigns:

#4Syria campaign was launched on 20 March 2015 on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to highlight the Syria conflict, now in its fifth year. The campaign calls for an end to the conflict and seeks to raise funds for UNRWA programmes supporting Palestine refugees in Syria as well as those displaced outside the country. It features testimonies of Palestine refugees, as well as documents highlighting emergency work carried out by UNRWA in the region. View the campaign at: <http://www.unrwa.org/syria-crisis/syria4thanniversary>

#myvoicemyschool is a youth advocacy project born in the classroom. Palestine refugee youth in Syria study and discuss quality education with their peers in the UK and

Belgium. Through live video conversations and customized teaching materials, students and teachers explore how education can help them achieve their aspirations. Each class will define and develop an advocacy project to promote and share their ideas.

<http://www.unrwa.org/myvoicemyschool>

ShareTheMeal is a smartphone application launched by the UN World Food Programme in November 2015 to support refugee children who have fled the conflict in Syria to neighboring countries. The free app is available for iOS and Android app stores worldwide. Users can make donations and start sharing meals with hungry children. Contributions will benefit Syrian refugee children in Jordan who are part of WFP's school meals programme.

<http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-launches-free-app-smartphone-users-help-feed-syrian-refugee-children>

**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](https://www.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/>