



Syrian Crisis **United Nations Response**



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

No. 129/13 January 2016

UN Special Envoy meets with five permanent members of Security Council in Geneva

In a statement issued on 13 January, United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura said he had asked for a meeting with senior officials of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council ("the P5") to update them on his latest regional travels and the resulting impressions about preparations for the Geneva Talks. During the meeting, Mr. de Mistura drew the P5 senior officials' attention on "the crucial importance for the people of Syria to see sustained and unimpeded access to a number of besieged areas in the lead-up to the Talks". The P5 officials undertook to press for immediate action in support of this effort in the coming days. The Special Envoy and his team will continue working hard to issue the invitations in order to ensure maximum inclusivity, with a view to starting the intra-Syrian Geneva Talks on 25 January.

<http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/index.asp?cuff=3>

On 10 January, Special Envoy de Mistura concluded his latest round of regional consultations with meetings in Tehran. Following his discussions, he said he held useful exchanges with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Deputy Foreign Minister Hussein Amir-Abdollahian. The Envoy updated his interlocutors on preparations for the upcoming Geneva Talks. Like he had done in Saudi Arabia on 5 January, he asked and obtained the assurance that current tensions in the region would not affect the engagement of their government in supporting the Vienna process and facilitating the holding of the Geneva Talks.

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

Humanitarian convoys reach besieged western towns for the first time in three months

A convoy of 47 aid trucks departing from Damascus entered the besieged town of Madaya on 11 January with humanitarian supplies aimed at 40,000 people trapped in dire conditions. On the same day, an additional convoy of 21 trucks departing from Homs reached Foah and Kefraya in the Idlib province with food and health supplies for over 20,000 people. It was the first aid convoy to reach people in these locations over the past three months, a spokesperson for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said. Aid workers described people's situation as in Madaya as "miserable" and said they saw severely malnourished children. OCHA announced that additional deliveries would be made to Madaya, Foah and Kefraya in the course of the week as well as to Zabadani.

http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest_en%29/823125FF947B16E7C1257F38004592E5?OpenDocument

UN official describes dire conditions in Madaya

Speaking by telephone from Damascus at a press briefing on 12 January, Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria Yacoub El Hillo gave an account of the terrible situation in Madaya after returning from the besieged town. "We saw thousands of people in desperation,

thousands of people who are severely malnourished, older people who were in clear dire physical condition because of lack of regular access to food," he said. He stressed that sieges must be lifted throughout Syria, where the UN and its partners are equally concerned about the 4.5 million people living in hard-to-reach areas, including nearly 400,000 in 15 besieged locations without access to the aid that they desperately need. "The sieges can no longer be tolerated," Mr. El Hillo stated. "Many people have lost their lives while waiting. Many more will die if the world does not move faster", he warned.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52988>

Use of starvation and siege has become a routine, UN humanitarian chief tells the Security Council

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien briefed the Security Council on 11 January on the aid deliveries to the three besieged towns of Madaya, Foah and Kefraya. The operation was jointly undertaken by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Mr. O'Brien stressed that the situation in Madaya was far from unique; almost 400,000 people in Syria were trapped in areas besieged by the various parties to the conflict. The use of siege and starvation as a method of war had become routine and systematic, with complete disregard for civilian life, he said.
http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest_en%29/823125FF947B16E7C1257F38004592E5?OpenDocument

UN agencies seek US\$ 7 billion in vital new funding for Syria

As Syria's conflict is heading towards a sixth year, UN humanitarian and development agencies on 12 January appealed to Member States for US\$7.73 billion in new funding for 2016 to help 22.5 million people in Syria and across the region. The appeal comprises two main elements: help for an anticipated 4.7 million refugees in neighbouring countries by the end of 2016 as well as 4 million people in communities hosting them, and support for 13.5 million displaced and conflict-affected people inside Syria itself. "While the influx to Europe has finally focused the attention of the world on the Syria crisis and the epic levels of human suffering it produces, the biggest burden by far is shouldered by communities and governments in the region," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. "We must stop Syrian refugees sliding deeper into abject poverty, boost their hope in their own future and that of their country, and do more to help those hosting them," Grandi added. Key strategic directions in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for 2016 include greater investment in education and increased opportunities for vocational training and livelihoods for refugees and host communities.
<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/un-agencies-warn-humanitarian-needs-growing-syria-and-region-nearly-us8>
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/20..>

Donors pledged over \$250 million to educate Syrian refugee children, but more is needed

The U.N. envoy for global education, Gordon Brown, announced on 12 January that donors have pledged \$250 million to offer primary and secondary education to one million Syrian refugee children this year. New funds have come from a \$150 million contribution by the European Union and \$120 million raised in the Gulf from the private and public sectors. However, it is only the first instalment in the plan to raise \$750 million needed this year for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. "The death voyages to Europe will not fall but soar in 2016 as long as Syria's six million displaced children and two million refugee children are exploited and denied any opportunity within the region", Mr. Brown said. The Envoy added that he will try to raise the additional \$500 million during events next month at the United Nations, the World Economic Forum in Davos and the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria.
<http://educationenvoy.org/press-release-un-press-briefing/>

UNESCO condemns the murder of Syrian journalist Ruqia Hassan

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, expressed indignation following reports that confirmed the killing of Syrian journalist Ruqia Hassan. "I condemn the murder of Ruqia Hassan," she said on 8 January. "I wish to pay tribute to this journalist's courageous stand for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the most difficult of circumstances and her defiance of the brutal campaign that violent extremists are waging to suppress individuals' freedom to think, speak and act." The journalist and media activist had written about daily life in the Syrian city of Raqqa, which she refused to leave when it was occupied by Daesh. She was kidnapped last July and killed in September, but her murder was only confirmed last week.

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/director_general_condemns_the_murder_of_syrian_journalist_rugia_hassan/#.VpaFAlGw3Y

UN Radio in Arabic

Humanitarian and development agencies appeal to donors to provide \$8 billion to assist millions affected by the Syrian conflict

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189062/#.VpZ_Y_krKUK

UN agencies warn about growing humanitarian needs in Syria and the region

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189040/#.VpZ_kvkrKUK

After reaching Madaya, Kefraya and Fouaa, UN Resident Coordinator calls on all parties in Syria to provide sustainable and safe access for humanitarian aid

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/188972/#.VpZ_zvkrKUK

Aid workers in Madaya confirm horrific reports on the situation in the city

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/188937/#.VpaANvkrKUK>

Humanitarian aid trucks reach Madaya

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/188866/#.VpaAmfkrKUK>

UNICEF is doing its utmost to ease the winter impact on Syrian refugee children

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/188842/#.VpaAw_krKUK

Special Envoy de Mistura describes his meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister as useful, as he continues his consultations in the region

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/date/2016/01/09/>

UNESCO condemns the killing of Syrian journalist in Raqqa

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/188734/#.VpaBnPkrKUK>

UN Twitter

United Nations @UN 13 January

On #Syria: @WFP has delivered food to people in Madaya, Fouaa & Kefraya. What this means: <http://j.mp/1mYglpa>

United Nations Retweeted UN Refugee Agency @Refugees 13 January

40+ trucks delivered life-saving food + blankets to 1000s trapped inside #Madaya
<http://trib.al/dbTyWxT>

United Nations Retweeted UN Refugee Agency @Refugees 16h16 hours ago

Driven by starvation, Syrians forage for grass. The latest from #Madaya:
<http://trib.al/1KUmaML>

United Nations Retweeted UN News Centre @UN_News_Centre 12 January
#Syria: @UN officials give first-hand accounts of 'horrible' desperation in besieged towns
<http://bit.ly/1OZO7Gx>

United Nations Retweeted OCHA Syria @OCHA_Syria 12 January
Watch: how to get truckloads of humanitarian aid to #Madaya #Foah #Kafraya #Syria
with @UN @ICRC @SYRedCrescent

United Nations Retweeted World Food Programme @WFP 12 January
Food for the people in besieged Syrian towns is arriving. WATCH as #UN convoys cross
their last checkpoint.

United Nations Retweeted WHO @WHO 12 January
WHO has delivered 7.8 tonnes of medical suppl., eg. antibiotics, IV fluids, emergency
trauma kits to #Madaya, #Syria

United Nations Retweeted UN Geneva @UNGeneva 12 January Geneva, Switzerland
UN #Syria Envoy de Mistura is in Geneva, holding intensive internal discussions with his
team in prep. for intra-Syrian talks in Geneva.

United Nations Retweeted World Food Programme @WFP 12 January
A first-hand account of the UN convoy entering #Madaya #Syria from a @WFP team
member.

United Nations Retweeted OCHA Syria @OCHA_Syria 11 January
#UN-led humanitarian convoy about to enter #Madaya #Syria with emergency supplies
together w @ICRC @SYRedCrescent

UN FACEBOOK

Jens Laerke, Spokesperson for United Nations OCHA, briefs the press at UN Geneva
about the first humanitarian aid convoy to get through to the besieged Syrian town of
Madaya since last October.
<https://www.facebook.com/UN.Geneva/videos/982194298493040/?theater>
13 January

"There is nothing available in Madaya...in the market obviously there is nothing."
A convoy of more than 40 trucks delivered life-saving food and blankets overnight to
thousands of people trapped inside rebel-held Madaya, Syria, where more than 40,000
civilians have been cut off in dire conditions without aid for nearly three months.
The UNHCR representative in Syria, who was on the convoy, said that the first four
trucks rolled into the town shortly after dark yesterday in the bitter cold. They were
immediately surrounded by shivering children and adults, some showing clear signs of
malnourishment and desperately asking for food.
<http://www.unhcr.org/569539c46.html>
12 January

Here is a first-hand account by a World Food Programme team member in the UN
convoy entering the besieged town of Madaya in Syria.
The UN has received credible reports of people dying from starvation and being killed or
injured while trying to leave the area, which has been encircled by pro-Government
forces and last received UN humanitarian aid in October.
You can help WFP deliver life-saving food aid here: www.wfp.org/donate
12 January

As conflict lays waste to Syria's rich cultural heritage, exiled artists in Za'atari refugee camp recreate major landmarks in miniature as a gesture of defiance.

UNHCR shares their inspiring story.

<http://tracks.unhcr.org/2016/01/syrias-landmarks-restored-in-miniature/>

9 January

UN INSTAGRAM

"It was freezing cold, raining non-stop, with not a drop of fuel, so it was pitch black throughout Madaya. A child said, 'Give us anything; biscuits, bread, anything.' The children look so weak and fragile. A family told our team that they sold their car for three kilos of rice. There is not a single piece of fruit or vegetable in the whole town." -- First-hand account by a #UnitedNations World Food Programme team member in the UN convoy that finally reached the besieged town of Madaya in Syria with life-saving aid (photos top and bottom) yesterday.

The #UN has received credible reports of people dying from starvation and being killed or injured while trying to leave the area, which has been encircled by pro-Government forces and last received UN humanitarian aid in October.

Those of you wishing to help WFP deliver life-saving food aid can do so online at

www.wfp.org/donate

Photos: #WFP

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BAcjd1GTDNq/?taken-by=unitednations>

12 January

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>