



Syrian Crisis **United Nations Response**



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

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Special Envoy continues intense preparations for Intra Syrian talks

Answering questions from journalists, the Director a.i. of the United Nations Information Service in Geneva, Ahmad Fawzi said on 19 January that Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, was intensively occupied with preparations for the Intra Syrian Talks announced for 25 January, in order for them to start next week. The Envoy was expecting the countries spearheading the International Syrian Support Group (ISSG) to come to an understanding on who among the opposition should be invited. The Secretary-General had urged countries that have an influence to redouble their efforts to reach that agreement, said Mr. Fawzi, so the Special Envoy could send out invitations. On 19 January, Mr. de Mistura briefed the Security Council by video link from Geneva, and was in touch with both Security Council members and the Secretary-General. The Special Envoy was also in contact with members of the ISSG to find agreement on the list of participants for the talks.

http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest_en%29/97D77FB15AE470E4C1257F3F0047790F?OpenDocument

Aid deliveries continue in western besieged towns

Briefing the media in Geneva on 19 January, an OCHA spokesperson said that further aid deliveries had reached the Syrian towns of Madaya, Zabadani, Kefraya and Foah in western Syria. Fuel in particular was delivered to the locations in a joint operation with UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). This was the third convoy to reach the besieged towns and the UN was planning to deliver more aid. A diverse range of aid was needed – additional food, nutrition and health services – and it was an ongoing operation, he stressed.

http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest_en%29/97D77FB15AE470E4C1257F3F0047790F?OpenDocument

UN agencies raise the alarm about the situation in Deir-Ez Zor

UN humanitarian agencies voiced concern on 18 January about sharply deteriorating conditions for about 200,000 people, including women and children, in the besieged eastern city of Deir-Ez-Zor. Residents there need urgent humanitarian assistance, particularly food, nutrition and health supplies. UN agencies also reported severe cases of malnutrition and deaths due to starvation. While approval has been secured for an emergency UN airlift to deliver humanitarian assistance to the area, fierce clashes in the vicinity of the airport have prevented the operation from proceeding, the agencies said.

<http://www.unocha.org/media-centre/noon-briefing/daily-brief-18-january-2016-sharply-deteriorating-conditions-besieged-deir-e>

High Commissioner for Refugees urges greater efforts to end the conflict

On his first overseas trip since he took up office, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visited the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan. Speaking at a press conference on 18 January, the UN refugee chief urged the international community to make greater efforts to end the conflict in Syria. "If a settlement of the conflict is not found, this crisis will not end and we will continue year after year to ask the international community for huge amounts of money to support refugees that – until there is peace – will not want to go back." Mr. Grandi urged governments to take advantage of two global conferences in London in February and Geneva in March to pledge more financial support for refugees and host countries, and increase the number of legal resettlement places for those escaping the conflict.

<http://www.unhcr.org/569d17876.html>

UN is acting impartially, neutrally and independently, says UN Humanitarian Chief

In a reply to an NGO open letter on Syria on 17 January, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien expressed his frustration about the situation in besieged areas and its toll on children, women and men. While noting that the UN Coordinator in Syria, his team, the United Nations and its partners have taken repeated risks to reach people in need, in some cases coming under direct fire from parties to the conflict, he said that they remain undeterred from the mission. Mr. O'Brien also underscored that in providing aid to people in need, the UN is acting impartially, neutrally and independently. "The UN is neither too close to any party nor acting in such a way to encourage the use of siege tactics. It is our duty to act impartially, neutrally and independently, and to have contact with all parties to negotiate unimpeded and safe access to those in need", he said. The UN relief chief reiterated that only a political solution for peace and the respect for international humanitarian law by all parties will make the biggest difference for Syrians seeking assistance and for humanitarian organisations' ability to provide it.

<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/ERC%20Stephen%20OBrien%20letter%20to%20Syria%20NGOs%2017Jan2016.pdf>

Syrians live a nightmarish reality, UN official tells the Security Council

"The people of Syria continue to live in a nightmarish reality dictated by a conflict that respects few rules and obeys no laws", UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Kyu-Wha Kang told the Security Council on 15 January during a briefing. She recalled that for more than four years, the humanitarian community has demanded that the conflict be brought to an end, that civilians be protected from the relentless violence and access be granted for life-saving humanitarian assistance. Ms. Kang noted that throughout the years of the conflict, 80 requests for inter-agency cross line convoys to besieged and hard-to reach areas, out of a total of 113, went unanswered.

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/assistant-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-deputy-emergency-1>

UNICEF dismayed by situation of civilians in Madaya

The UN Children's Fund on 15 January expressed shock about the dire situation of the residents of Madaya. The agency, which was part of a UN, SARC, and ICRC joint convoy, said that the people they met were exhausted and extremely frail. Doctors were emotionally distressed and mentally drained, working round the clock with very limited resources to provide treatment to children and people in need. "It is simply unacceptable that this is happening in the 21st century", UNICEF said, noting that across Syria, there are 14 other "Madayas". These are locations where different parties to the conflict have been using siege as a tactic of war, depriving children and innocent civilians from accessing lifesaving supplies and services.

http://www.unicef.org/media/media_89820.html

Use of starvation as a weapon of war is a war crime warns Secretary-General

Speaking to the press after presenting his priorities for 2016 to the General Assembly on 14 January, the Secretary-General reminded all the parties to the Syria conflict that the use of starvation as a weapon of war is a war crime. "All sides – including the Syrian government which has the primary responsibility to protect Syrians – are committing this and other atrocious acts prohibited under international humanitarian law", Mr. Ban said. He called on all States that can make a difference and particularly members of the International Syria Support Group to press the parties for sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Syria. " Other urgent measures are needed – such as the immediate end to the use of indiscriminate weapons in civilian areas, including through shelling and air strikes by any of the parties. This is fundamental to the credibility of the renewed political process", the Secretary-General stressed.

http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/speeches/statments_full.asp?statID=2885#.Vp04kLgW3Y

UNRWA appeals for over US\$ 800 million for Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) launched on 14 January a US\$ 817 million emergency appeal for Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory. The majority of the estimated 450,000 Palestine refugees in Syria are displaced and 95 percent of them rely on UNRWA for assistance. Tens of thousands have fled to Lebanon and Jordan where, despite the generosity of host countries, they face increasing marginalization and despair. "In the absence of prospects for political solutions, UNRWA will mobilize its humanitarian experience and commitment to address the multiplicity of emergency needs facing Palestine refugees", said Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl. "We will also steadfastly advocate for an improved respect of their rights", he added.

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/unrwa-appeals-over-us-800-million-syria-and-occupied-palestinian-territory>

UN Radio in Arabic

The United Nations plans to hold Syrian talks on January 25th

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189584/#.Vp-z5PkrKUK>

Filippo Grandi from Jordan says: five years on the Syrian war has increased the vulnerability of refugees and the fragility of the host communities

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189524/#.Vp-0NvkrKUK>

Delivery of humanitarian assistance to besieged areas in Syria continues

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189531/#.Vp-0cPkrKUK>

The United Nations expresses concerns about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Deir-Ez-Zor

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189491/#.Vp-0tPkrKUK>

Kyu-Wha Kang: The use of siege and starvation became a routine in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189339/#.Vp-1cPkrKUK>

United Nations humanitarian convoys reached besieged areas in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189298/#.Vp-18PkrKUK>

UNICEF confirms cases of acute malnutrition among children in Madaya

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189269/#.Vp-2IPkrKUK>

Syrian family: A long journey from Homs in search of safety

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189233/#.Vp-2UfkrKUK>

The first mobile medical clinic arrives to Madaya

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189234/#.Vp-2t_krKUK

Ban Ki-moon: the deliberate starvation is used as a weapon of war in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189206/#.Vp-26fkrKUK>

UNRWA appeals to provide \$ 817 million for Palestine refugees in Syria and the occupied territories

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/189175/#.Vp-3ifkrKUK>

UN Twitter

United Nations @UN January 19

Syria: @UNRightsWire expert warns against deliberate starvation of civilians – 400,000 ppl at risk in 15 locations <http://ow.ly/XgyLB>

United Nations Retweeted UN News Centre @UN_News_Centre January 19

Overnight aid deliveries reach 4 Syrian towns while situation in east 'extremely grave' – @UN <http://bit.ly/1JfYnYU>

United Nations Retweeted Stephen O'Brien @UNReliefChief January 18

@UN doing everything in our power - impartially, neutrally, independently - to reach ppl in besieged parts of #Syria <http://ow.ly/XeGtx>

United Nations Retweeted Syrian Red Crescent @SYRedCrescent January 18

18/01 @SYRedCrescent in cooperation with .@UN and.@ICRC delivered #relief aid convoy to #Zabadani in rural Damascus

United Nations Retweeted UN Refugee Agency @Refugees January 18

Our @RefugeesChief urges focus on Syria crisis during Jordan visit to @ZaatariCamp: <http://trib.al/ItJKqAc>

United Nations Retweeted UN News Centre @UN_News_Centre January 15

'You cannot let more people die on your watch' in #Syria, @UN relief official tells #UNSC <http://bit.ly/1n1l60x>

Ongoing UN social media campaigns:

A lifeline to Palestine refugees in Syria is a video published by UNRWA on 14 January 2016 on YouTube. It describes the heightened humanitarian and protection needs amongst the increasingly vulnerable Palestine refugee population. Of the 450,000 Palestine refugees in Syria, 95 percent rely on UNRWA humanitarian assistance and 60 percent are internally displaced. UNRWA humanitarian and human development response is a lifeline. Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoPA-ThBO4Q&feature=youtu.be>

#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>

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>