



Syrian Crisis United Nations Response



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

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100 truckloads of humanitarian supplies delivered to besieged towns; second meeting of Humanitarian Task Force to take place on 18 February

The second meeting of the Task Force on Humanitarian Access in Syria will take place on 18 February in Geneva, according to a statement issued by the Spokesperson of the special Envoy for Syria. The meeting will be co-chaired by the Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, and the Senior Advisor to the Special Envoy Jan Egeland, and will be attended by representatives of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG). The purpose of this meeting is to further take stock of the status of humanitarian access to besieged areas with an initial focus on the locations referred to in the statement of the ISSG last week. Humanitarian access to these areas will be a first step towards full, sustained, and unimpeded access throughout the country, as demanded by Security Council resolutions, the ISSG and international humanitarian law. "Humanitarian delivery is not only important, it is essential," Mr. de Mistura said. "There are now more than 400,000 people living in areas besieged by the Government, by the opposition and by Daesh." He referred to the U.N. humanitarian mission to some besieged locations that started today as a "test for the capability of the UN to deliver humanitarian assistance and for all parties on the ground to allow this to take place, as per the decisions reached last week in Munich." The U.N.'s resident and humanitarian coordinator in Syria, Mr. Yacoub el-Hillo said, "Today, we reached five besieged towns in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. The convoys contained life-saving aid including food, medical supplies and equipment, vaccines, water and sanitation items for almost 100,000 people in need of aid." Praising the courage of dedicated staff on the ground, Mr. Egeland said that "brave humanitarian workers were able to deliver today 100 truckloads of life-saving aid to besieged areas in Syria. This is hopefully the beginning of the end of Syrian civilians' suffering."

In a statement issued earlier on 17 February, the UN Spokesperson announced that UN and Syrian Arab Red Crescent operations were underway to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance to over 100,000 people in the besieged areas of Moadamiyeh, Madaya and Zabadani in Rural Damascus; and in Foah and Kafraya in Idlib. The inter-agency convoys are carrying food supplies, medicine and health and nutrition assistance.

<http://www.un.org/sg/spokesperson/highlights/index.asp>

<http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/index.asp?nid=4371>

UN Special Envoy meets Syrian Foreign Minister in Damascus

Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, arrived in Damascus on 16 February and had a meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Al-Moualem on the need for unhindered humanitarian access to all besieged areas in Syria. Speaking to reporters afterwards, Mr. de Mistura said that the convoys are coordinated by the UN country team and that it is the duty of the Government of Syria to want to reach every Syrian person wherever they are and allow the UN to bring humanitarian aid.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/db160216.doc.htm>

Intra-Syrian talks to resume by 25 February in Geneva

At a press briefing in Geneva on 16 February, interim Director of the UN Information Service, Ahmad Fawzi, said that Special Envoy de Mistura intends to resume the Intra-Syrian talks by 25 February, and earlier if possible. "Mr. de Mistura is trying to convince those with influence over the warring parties to persuade them to come to the table and "stop the madness", he noted.

http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest_en%29/DF33D881668A4C1FC1257F5B004E09FA?OpenDocument

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53246>

UN agencies condemn airstrikes against medical facilities and schools

The UN humanitarian agencies condemned the air attacks against medical facilities on 15 February in northern and southern Syria, which reportedly killed more than 45 people and injured dozens of others. Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria, Yacoub El Hillo, and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Crisis in Syria, Kevin Kennedy, warned that all seven health facilities are now out of service, of which three are permanently closed. Two of the hospitals were supported by the United Nations. On the same day, two schools were also struck in northern Syria. The Humanitarian Coordinators recalled that directing attacks against civilian infrastructures such as medical facilities may amount to a war crime. In a joint statement, they demanded an end to attacks on health facilities and schools and calls on all parties to the conflict to take all measures to protect civilians, as required under international humanitarian law.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53240#.VsSInubgW3Y>

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/joint-statement-attacks-hospitals-and-schools-syria-damascus-16-february>

Palestine refugees in Yarmouk receive aid for the first time in months

For the first time in months, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA) delivered urgently needed humanitarian assistance to the besieged population of the Yarmouk refugee camp, near Damascus. Aid deliveries began on 14 February and continued for three consecutive days. The agency provided some 1,200 food parcels to civilians in the localities of Yalda, Babila, Beit Saharm and Yarmouk. Residents of the besieged communities said their greatest needs include food, access to clean water and health care. UNRWA is coordinating closely with other humanitarian partners and hopes this renewed access, facilitated by the Syrian authorities, will lead to sustained operations in the area.

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/yarmouk-situation-report-51>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53230>

Security Council receives first report of joint chemical weapons investigation body

The Secretary-General submitted the first report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)–UN Joint Investigative Mechanism to the Security Council on 12 February, in line with resolution 2235 (2015). The report provides an overview of the work of the Mechanism, including a review of incidents where the OPCW-UN fact finding missions determined that chemicals were used or likely used as weapons in Syria and identifies potential cases for further investigation. In submitting the report, the Secretary-General reminded that full cooperation from the Government and all parties in Syria remains essential to enable the Mechanism to carry out its mandate. The Security Council is expected to examine the report on 22 February.

<http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/index.asp?nid=4373>

Senior UN rights Advisers sound alarm on lack of protections of civilians

The Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, and the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, Jennifer Welsh, expressed alarm at the deepening humanitarian emergency and lack of protection of civilians in Syria. "Civilian populations in Syria are in a dire situation and in desperate need of protection," the Special Advisers said in a statement on 12 January. "They are subjected on a daily basis to indiscriminate air strikes, deliberate starvation, denial of medical care, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture. These acts must stop immediately", they stressed. While welcoming the ISSG members' decision to use their influence to ensure that all parties allow sustained humanitarian access to populations, they urged the group to ensure this is implemented on the ground without delay.

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/statement-special-adviser-secretary-general-prevention-genocide-and>

High Commissioner for Human Rights gravely concerned about situation in Aleppo

High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, on 11 February, voiced "utmost alarm at the worsening human rights situation in Aleppo and other parts of Syria. "Shocking violations and abuses are committed on a daily basis", he said, deploring that the warring parties do not appear to care in the slightest way about the death and destruction they are wreaking across the country. "The deliberate starvation of civilians as a method of warfare constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law," Zeid said. "The targeting of civilians, including thousands of children, is abhorrent and may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Those responsible for such acts, including under command responsibility, must be brought to justice," he added.

<http://ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=17033&LangID=E>

UN Radio in Arabic

OHCHR Spokesperson: The huge number of attacks on hospitals in Syria raises a big question mark about the failure of parties to respect medical facilities

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/191959/>

UN Special Envoy describes his meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister as useful

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/191964/>

United Nations concerned about report of attacks on Syrian hospitals and schools

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/191912/>

Two UN Officials call on the international community to take timely and decisive steps to protect populations in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/191797/>

USG for Humanitarian Affairs welcomes the International Syria Support Group's agreement on halt in fighting

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/191742/>

Possibility of humanitarian access within days into the besieged areas in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/191722/>

UN Twitter

Increasing acts of violence against @refugees across Europe jeopardizes their safety
<http://trib.al/iqHk5c8> pic.twitter.com/O0LDD9jyWQ -16 February

#UNHCR is very concerned by restrictive measures in Europe keeping @refugees & migrants out
<http://trib.al/IAbs8LD> pic.twitter.com/THSIGFcR67 -15 February

80K+ refugees + migrants arrived in Europe by boat during 1st 6 weeks of 2016
<http://trib.al/jV5YMwe> via @Refugees pic.twitter.com/1HS1VuCarM -14 February

Latest: @UN-backed task force seeks aid access to besieged areas in Syria without delay
<http://bit.ly/1Qco1k9> - 13 February

UN FACEBOOK

Lebanon is home to more than a million Syrian refugees. Around half of these refugees are children and 180,000 of them are still out of school. Step into the lives of Mustafa and Sarah, two teenagers forced to leave their home behind, in this new 360 video. 13 February

<https://www.facebook.com/ukdfid/videos/vb.41230335599/10153837066500600/?type=2&theater>

Social media campaigns

Joint appeal to end suffering in Syria #SyriaCrisis

More than 120 humanitarian organizations and UN agencies issued a joint appeal on 21 January, urging the world to raise their voices and call for an end to the Syria crisis and to the suffering endured by millions of civilians. The appeal outlines a series of immediate, practical steps that can improve humanitarian access and the delivery of aid to those in need inside Syria. People can "[sign the appeal](#)" by liking, sharing, and retweeting it.

<http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/more-100-humanitarian-organizations-and-un-agencies-urge-public-join-them-speaking>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWBni3P4Ok8>

#MyVoiceMySchool- On 25 January in London and 27 January in Brussels, the #MyVoiceMySchool project will connect European students with Palestine refugee students to discuss the importance of education in their lives. The calls are taking place a few days ahead of the 'Supporting Syria and the Region, London 2016' conference on 4 February. The #MyVoiceMySchool project has connected Palestine refugee students in Homs, Damascus and Rif Damascus with peers in Brussels and London.

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/european-and-palestine-refugee-students-syria-connect-skype-advocate>

#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 neighbouring 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

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/>