



## Syrian Crisis United Nations Response



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

**No. 146/11 May 2016**

### **Independent Human Rights Commission of Inquiry condemns attacks on civilians**

On 11 May, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria strongly condemned recent attacks on civilians and civilians infrastructure, notably on hospitals and clinics in Aleppo city, and on an internally displaced persons' camp in Idlib. Since the attacks against Al-Quds hospital in Aleppo governorate on 27 April, there have been over a half dozen attacks on other medical facilities in the area, all of which are specifically protected sites under international humanitarian law. Scores of civilian victims and medical personnel have been wounded or killed in these attacks. "These incidents demonstrate the undeniable fact that this conflict has repeatedly exacted its heaviest toll on civilians," said Paulo Pinheiro, Chair of the Commission. "This flagrant disregard for international humanitarian law is not new, but rather is the continuation of a well-established trend of unlawfully attacking medical sites and personnel, places of refuge, and infrastructure necessary for civilian life," Pinheiro added.

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19949&LangID=E>

### **Secretary-General and other UN officials express outrage at attacks on camp for displaced Syrians**

The Secretary-General on 6 May expressed outrage at the attack on a camp for displaced persons near Sarmada, close to the border with Turkey in north-western Syria. "Those responsible for the seemingly calculated attack against civilians in the camp, which could constitute a war crime, must be held accountable," Mr. Ban said, calling once again on the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. The Secretary-General urged Member States to take immediate collective and decisive action to bring the tragedy in Syria to an end. Echoing the Secretary-General, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad unreservedly condemned the airstrike on the Sarmada camp. "Given that tent settlements have been in these locations for several weeks, and can be clearly viewed from the air, it is extremely unlikely that these murderous attacks were an accident. It is far more likely they were deliberate and amount to a war crime." Similarly, Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien called for an immediate, independent investigation into the attack. "All parties to this appalling conflict should understand that they will one day be held accountable for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law," he said. The United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, also expressed his outrage on May 9 at the ongoing "indiscriminate and seemingly calculated" attacks against civilians and civilian objects in Syria.

<http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=9679>

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19927&LangID=E#sthash.PSPBYNS0.dpuf>

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-38>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53892>

### **Special Envoy continues efforts to revive cessation of hostilities**

Speaking to reporters in Geneva on 9 May, UN Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi said that Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura remains hopeful that the parties will come back to the table for peace talks soon. The Envoy, he added, was working very hard with the co-chairs and the members of the International Syria Support Group to revive the cessation of hostilities so that talks could resume in an environment conducive to progress on the political transition.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest\\_en%29/9D0927D7A273607DC1257FAF0043CEA3?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest_en%29/9D0927D7A273607DC1257FAF0043CEA3?OpenDocument)

### **Aid convoys reach besieged towns**

On 4 and 8 May, two inter-agency convoys delivered life-saving assistance to 3,250 people in the hard-to-reach town of Qaratien in Rural Homs. On 6 May, an inter-agency convoy in the town of Bloudan in Rural Damascus delivered relief items, including water and sanitation and health and education supplies for 35,000 beneficiaries. This was the second of two convoys to Bloudan since mid-March. Over 780,000 people living in besieged or hard-to-reach areas have been reached by inter-agency operations since the beginning of 2016. While welcoming this progress, the UN reiterates its call for unconditional, unimpeded and sustained access to all the 4.6 million people in besieged and hard-to-reach locations across Syria.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/db160509.doc.htm>

### **UN-OPCW probe mechanism visits Syria**

A team of investigators of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), mandated to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria, visited Damascus last week. They met with Syrian authorities and reviewed information related to the nine cases identified for investigation in the Mechanism's first report to the Security Council in February 2016. This was the second visit by the investigators to the Syrian capital, which will be followed by another one next month. The mandate of the JIM is to identify to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups, or governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in Syria.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/dc3631.doc.htm>

### **Humanitarian operations to support Palestinian refugees continue near Damascus – UN agency**

Despite intense fighting between armed groups inside the Yarmouk Palestine refugee camp, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reported that it has been able to continue its humanitarian operations in Yalda, near Damascus, since 2 May. "UNRWA has provided vital commodities and essential services to Palestine refugees and other vulnerable civilians from Yarmouk, Yalda, Babilla and Beit Saham," the agency's spokesperson, Chris Gunness, stated.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53859>

### **UNRWA keeping Palestine refugees in Syria warm**

"Five years ago, I fled Yarmouk. We were trapped for an entire week inside our home when fighting started. With my husband and our five kids, we sought refuge in Akqaba, Damascus," says Hanane. "We left everything behind: our possessions, our house, our neighbours... We lost everything." Sixty-year-old Hanane, who now lives in a small rented house, explains that the mattresses distributed by UNRWA are a basic substitute for the furniture [she] can't afford. "These mattresses bring me and my family some of the comfort we lost. Even if this is not sufficient, it is still rewarding and I thank God every minute of the day for this additional support," she says with a smile on her face.

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/keeping-palestine-refugees-syria-warm>

### **UNRWA chief calls for greater assistance to Palestine refugees**

Speaking at a meeting on the sustainability of UNRWA at the UN Headquarters in New York on 4 May, Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl described the situation in Syria as catastrophic in human terms. "Of the pre-war population of 560,000 Palestine refugees", he noted, "450,000 remain and 95% need emergency aid. With millions of Syrians suffering the effects of the conflict, Palestine refugees may be overlooked," he added. The UNRWA chief urged the international community to address the refugee needs, symbolized by Palestinians in the devastated landscapes of Aleppo and of Yarmouk where suffering has reached new heights.

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/remarks-commissioner-general-kr%C3%A4henb%C3%BChl-unrwa-sustainability>

### **UN Radio in Arabic**

Commission of Inquiry on Syria condemns recent attacks in Aleppo

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/200568/#.VzNIb4QrKUK>

Adama Dieng supports SG's repeated calls to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/200335/#.VzNKAIQrKUK>

Secretary-General expresses outrage over attack on a camp in Idlib, Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/200163/#.VzNK5YQrKUK>

High Commissioner for Human Rights condemns the bombing of an IDP camp in Sarmada and expresses concern about the developments in Hama Prison

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/200061/#.VzNLJ4QrKUK>

UNHCR expresses its shock at reports on people displaced by bombing in Idlib

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/200055/#.VzNLr4QrKUK>

### **Facebook**

Palestine refugees who have fled the conflict in Syria to neighbouring countries are particularly vulnerable. Their legal status is precarious, their freedom of movement limited and they often lack civil registration. Many live in constant fear of arrest and deportation back to Syria. #Syria5Years #RememberUs- 8 May

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.118302834882959.10295.105171192862790/1082935555086344/?type=3>

"My staff, along with other organizations, will leave no stone unturned in their efforts to research and record evidence of what appears to be a particularly despicable and calculated crime against an extremely vulnerable group of people, most of whom were forced to flee their homes in Aleppo in February because of earlier sustained aerial attacks there"- United Nations Human Rights chief Zeid on the bombing of two camps for displaced people in Syria.

<https://www.facebook.com/unitednationshumanrights/photos/a.209013462448802.61782.207918945891587/1378082445541892/?type=3&theater>-6 May

## **Twitter**

Zeid calls Syria camp bombing "despicable" - full @UNHumanRights chief statement is here: <http://j.mp/1WcH6ol> pic.twitter.com/aiBA3O9qOh- 7 May

Syria 2016 UN Humanitarian Operations 63 convoys 22 airdrops 778,175 people helped <http://bit.ly/1Zg0nmX> @UNOCHA pic.twitter.com/CrKTnpqj0a - 5 May

@UNRWA humanitarian operations to support Palestinian refugees continue near Syrian capital <http://bit.ly/1VLe4fB>- 5 May  
[https://twitter.com/UN\\_News\\_Centre/status/728223264326168576](https://twitter.com/UN_News_Centre/status/728223264326168576)

## **Instagram**

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<https://www.instagram.com/p/BFI1pZjx4EV/?taken-by=unrwa>

A Syrian girl arrives at a #refugee camp this week.

The deadly attacks on camps for internally displaced persons that took place on 5 May in #Syria "has all the hallmarks of a war crime," says #UnitedNations human rights expert Chaloka Beyani. Most of those in the camps had fled fighting and air attacks on Aleppo since February. "There can be no justification for such atrocities against those who had already been forced to flee their homes due to conflict and are at their most vulnerable living in tents and reliant on humanitarian assistance," said the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons. "A targeted attack against them would constitute an abhorrent and criminal violation of international humanitarian and human rights law and standards." Regram @unitednationshumanrights

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BFIE1npTDN8/?taken-by=unitednations>-7 May

## **Social media campaigns**

**@ShareTheMeal:** On 27 April, WFP announced its award-winning phone application would support fundraising efforts for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. ShareTheMeal's fundraising goal in Lebanon will support 1,400 refugee children aged 3-4 in Beirut for a full year. Through the app, smartphone users can join thousands of other people in making donations and support a selected community and monitor progress. Since November 2015, the app has been available globally and has received several awards for its design and innovative character.

[www.sharethemeal.org](http://www.sharethemeal.org)

**#ActofHumanity:** UNICEF launched on 29 March a series of animated films entitled "Unfairy Tales" to help frame positive perceptions towards the tens of millions of children and young people on the move globally. The Unfairy Tales are part of an initiative, #actofhumanity, emphasising that children are children, no matter where they come from, and that every child has rights and deserves a fair chance.

UNICEF will engage audiences with social media messaging to use the hashtag #actofhumanity to share stories about refugees and migrant children. The Unfairy Tales, plus the real stories behind the animation and other media assets can be seen at:

<http://weshare.unicef.org/Package/2AMZIF3BZ9S>

**#RememberUs - #Syria5Years** is an advocacy and fundraising campaign to tell the story of Palestine refugees in Syria after five years of armed conflict. In the last five years, the Palestine refugees of Syria have been experiencing tremendous hardship with

over 60 per cent of the 560,000 registered with UNRWA displaced throughout Syria and further afield. Through the campaign, UNRWA remembers the victims to the Syrian conflict, in particular the Palestine refugees, many of whom have lost their communities, family members, houses and livelihoods. To date, 16 UNRWA staff members have lost their lives in the armed conflict in Syria. This is the largest death toll for any single United Nations agency working in Syria.

<http://www.unrwa.org/syria5years>

Arabic: <http://goo.gl/vVRZRw>

**#MyVoiceMySchool-** #Myvoicemyschool, running for a second year, is an educational project linking Palestine refugee youth in Syria with their peers in England and Belgium. Through live video conversations and customized teaching materials, students and teachers explore how education can help them meet their future aspirations.

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.995861277127106.1073741879.105171192862790/995861320460435/?type=3&theater>

**#IamSyrian** is a global engagement campaign on social media platforms launched by the World Food Programme (WFP) at the London Syria conference in February 2016. It offers global citizens the opportunity to show solidarity with the Syrian people by sharing their stories, sending messages of support and demonstrating how the world continues to care about their plight. The campaign will culminate in an exhibition at the UN General Assembly in September 2016.

<https://www.facebook.com/WorldFoodProgramme/photos/a.59121880177.81015.28312410177/10153310768060178/?type=3&theater>

**#Unite4Heritage** is a global movement run by UNESCO that aims to celebrate and safeguard cultural heritage and diversity around the world. Launched in response to the unprecedented attacks on world heritage sites, the campaign calls on everyone to stand up against extremism and radicalization by celebrating the places, objects and cultural traditions that make the world such a rich and vibrant place.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1254/>

### **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 :**

UNICEF: <http://www.unicef.org/media/index.html>

WFP: <http://www.wfp.org/countries/syria>

OCHA: <http://unocha.org/syria>, [twitter.com/ocha\\_syria](https://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/>

UNESCO: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/syria-crisis-response/>

UNESCO Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage Project:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/beirut/areas-of-action/culture/syria/emergency-safeguarding-of-the-syrian-heritage/>

UNESCO Observatory of Syrian Cultural Heritage <https://en.unesco.org/syrian-observatory/>

UNESCO Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/syria-crisis-response/bridging-learning-gaps/>

#### **UN on social media:**

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UN>

Flickr: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/un\\_photo/](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](http://www.unicef.org/photography/photo_2013.php#UNI82253)  
IRIN: <http://www.irinnews.org/photo/>