



Syrian Crisis United Nations Response



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

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UN closely monitoring evacuation of civilians in four besieged towns

UN Deputy Spokesman Farhan Haq told reporters on 29 March that the UN has received reports of an agreement between parties to the conflict to evacuate people from the besieged towns of Madaya and Zabadani in rural Damascus and Foah and Kefraya in Idleb. The UN was not part of the negotiations or the agreement, he noted. "We are monitoring the developments closely and remain concerned for the safety and protection of the estimated 60,000 people in need in the besieged four towns. Any evacuation of civilians must be safe, voluntary and to a place of their choosing. It is imperative that all those who are displaced through such agreements are allowed to return voluntarily, in safety and in dignity, to their homes as soon as the situation allows".

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/ossq/noon-briefing-highlight>

Secretary-General calls for an end to fighting in Syria, reiterates need for political solution

Speaking at the Summit of the League of Arab States on 29 March at the Dead Sea, Secretary-General António Guterres noted that it was time to end the fighting in Syria and expressed the hope that the Astana political process would achieve an effective ceasefire. "We will do everything we can to enable the Geneva-based political talks to lead to genuine negotiations. By now it should be clear to all involved that while fighting terrorism is essential, any success will prove ephemeral without a political solution that allows the Syrian people to freely decide their own fate", he stated.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2017-03-29/secretary-generals-address-summit-league-arab-states-prepared>

Solidarity with Syrian refugees is in the interest of global security, says Secretary-General

During a visit to Syrian refugees hosted in the Zaatari camp in Jordan on 28 March, the Secretary-General made a strong appeal to the parties to the conflict to understand "that we must make peace". He stressed that the conflict was not only a tragedy for the Syrian people but also a threat to the stability of the region and of the world. "This is the moment for all countries that are involved, directly or indirectly in the conflict, to put aside their differences and understand that now there is a common interest and the common interest from the fact that they are all threatened by the new risk of global terrorism". While visiting the camp, the Secretary-General toured several projects run by UN agencies benefitting 80,000 residents. Speaking to the press afterwards, Mr.

Guterres called on the international community to increase humanitarian assistance and solidarity with countries like Jordan and Lebanon hosting Syrian refugees. "Solidarity with Syrian refugees is also a way to be able to express our capacity to guarantee global

security. It's not only an act of generosity. It's also an act of enlightened self-interest", he noted.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2017-03-28/secretary-generals-press-remarks-zaatari-refugee-camp>

UN aid convoy delivers aid to 25,000 people in rural Damascus

A UN-International Committee of the Red Cross-Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoy reached 25,000 people in Bludan in rural Damascus with food and emergency assistance on 28 March. This was the first convoy to the area in nine months. An additional convoy delivered aid on the same day for 84,000 people in Talbiseh, in Homs. The UN continues to call for safe, sustained and unimpeded access to all Syrians in need, particularly the five million people living in besieged areas.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2017/db170328.doc.htm>

WHO raises alarm about the health situation for 300,000 people besieged in Eastern Ghouta

The World Health Organization expressed grave concern at the deteriorating health situation in Eastern Ghouta, rural Damascus, where more than 300,000 people are besieged, and called for immediate access to provide medical assistance. The agency warned on 27 March that all three public hospitals and 17 health care centres in Eastern Ghouta are not functioning. The number of children suffering from trauma injuries is alarmingly high: 30% of all patients with war-related injuries are children. "Time is running out for the people of Eastern Ghouta. As health needs increase, available resources are being depleted day by day. Our main goal now is to provide access to lifesaving care for thousands of vulnerable men, women and children immediately," said Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Syria.

<http://www.emro.who.int/syr/syria-news/who-concerned-at-deteriorating-health-situation-in-east-ghouta-syria-calls-for-immediate-and-unimpeded-access.html>

Senior UN official urges immediate release of detained and missing UN staff

As the United Nations marked the International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members on 25 March, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis Kevin Kennedy called for the immediate release of more than two dozen staff held in detention or missing in Syria. "While we have secured the release of many of our UN colleagues, we call for the unconditional and immediate release of those colleagues who remain in custody and for parties to the conflict to reveal the fate of those still missing", he said. Mr. Kennedy also paid tribute to the hundreds of aid workers who have been killed since the start of the conflict. A total of 28 UN staff continue to be detained or missing, the majority of them staff working with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/RHC%20Statement%20on%20International%20Day%20of%20Solidarity%20with%20Detained%20and%20Missing%20Staff%20Members.pdf>

New round of intra-Syrian talks kicks off in Geneva

Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura launched on 23 March the fifth round of intra-Syrian talks in Geneva. Speaking to the press following visits to Riyadh, Moscow and Ankara, Mr. de Mistura said he had been engaging and seeking advice from all regional stakeholders. He noted that despite a recent surge of military activities, all his

interlocutors had stressed the need for the Geneva talks to go ahead, building on the previous round of the talks.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpPages\)/F46B53A74C9D449CC12580EE0034E3A0?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpPages)/F46B53A74C9D449CC12580EE0034E3A0?OpenDocument)

Special Envoy de Mistura calls on Iran, Russia and Turkey to uphold ceasefire

In a statement on 25 March, Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura expressed deep concerns over the recent escalation of fighting in Damascus, Hama and elsewhere in Syria. "The growing violations in recent days are undermining the ceasefire regime addressed through the Astana meetings, with significant negative consequences for the safety of Syrian civilians, humanitarian access and the momentum of the political process". The Envoy said that he had addressed letters to the Foreign Ministers of Iran, Russia and Turkey, the three guarantor States of the ceasefire that took effect on 30 March, to appeal to them to undertake urgent efforts to uphold the ceasefire regime.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpPages\)/7803D950A8A34C85C12580F000510088?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpPages)/7803D950A8A34C85C12580F000510088?OpenDocument)

Defending the cultural heritage is a security imperative - UNESCO Director-General

In a briefing to the Security Council on 24 March, the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Irina Bokova called the deliberate destruction of heritage, a war crime and tactic of war in the global strategy of cultural cleansing. Defending cultural heritage was a security imperative, inseparable from that of defending human lives. "From Palmyra to the Shrine of Mosul, cultural heritage sites were symbols of unity, bearing witness to the dialogue of cultures that had always existed. Violent extremists know this, and that is why they seek to destroy it," she told the Security Council. She added that in a global movement launched by UNESCO, some 50 States had strengthened their legislation and were sharing data to dismantle trafficking routes, she continued. Outlining steps countries by countries — from France to Italy — to protect cultural heritage, she said that UNESCO was focused on coordinating international action.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12764.doc.htm>

UNICEF speaks out against attack on school in ar-Raqqa

As a fresh round of peace talks started in Geneva, UNICEF Regional Director Geert Cappelaer condemned on 23 March an attack on a school in Ar-Raqqa sheltering internally displaced families which resulted in the death of 53 civilians, including 12 children. "Children are being deprived of their basic right to life. They are being denied their right to an education. Those events remind us once again that there is no safe place for children in Syria. Children are under attack", he said urging all parties to the conflict to redouble their efforts to find a political solution to end the conflict.

https://www.unicef.org/media/media_95455.html

UN Radio in Arabic

Secretary-General: Failure to support refugees only helps terrorism

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/237639/index_search.html

الأمين العام: الفشل في دعم اللاجئين يعني مساعدة الإرهاب

2017-03-28

Secretary-General visits Zaatari camp and calls for increased solidarity with refugees

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/237687>

الأمين العام يزور مخيم الزعتري ويدعو إلى تعزيز دعم اللاجئين

2017-03-28

UN expresses concern about the safety of more than 400,000 civilians in the populated areas of Ar-Raqqa

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/237626>

الأمم المتحدة تعرب عن القلق إزاء سلامة أكثر من 400 ألف مدني في المناطق المأهولة بالسكان في الرقة

2017-03-27

WHO calls for immediate access to Eastern Ghouta in light of the deterioration of health situation

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/237607>

منظمة الصحة العالمية تدعو إلى الوصول الفوري إلى الغوطة الشرقية في ظل تدهور الوضع الصحي

2017-03-27

Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura expresses concern over recent escalation of fighting in Syria

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/237487/index_search.html

دي مستورا يعرب عن القلق إزاء تصاعد القتال الأخير في سوريا

2017-03-25

UNESCO chief stresses need for urgent action to address the destruction and looting of cultural heritage

http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/237321/index_search.html

مسؤول دولي يشدد على ضرورة العمل العاجل للتصدي لتدمير ونهب التراث الثقافي

2017-03-24

Twitter

United Nations@UN- 28 March

#Jointogether to end Syria conflict & to help refugees restart their lives-

@AntonioGuterres <http://bit.ly/2oeqCyP>

United Nations@UN- 28 March

"It's time to end this conflict." @ZaatariCamp in Jordan hosts about 80,000 Syrian

@refugees. See more: <https://www.instagram.com/unitednations/>

OCHA Syria @OCHA_Syria - 27 March

Read renewed call for immediate release or information of over 2 dozen staff held in detention or missing in #Syria

UN Spokesperson @UN_Spokesperson- 27 March

.@antonioguterres reiterates his full support for his Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura.

We must all ensure the success of the Geneva talks.

OCHA Syria @OCHA_Syria- 26 March

Escalations of hostilities puts hundreds of thousands of people in besieged #EastGhouta

#Syria at risk <http://ow.ly/TG5s30agEa1>

UN Geneva@UNGeneva- 26 March
Stand #WithRefugees by knowing & sharing the facts about Syrian refugees
<http://trib.al/OLhDXyV> #SyriaCrisis
#JoinTogether.

UN Geneva@UNGeneva- 25 March
.@UN Envoy "deeply concerned" by escalation of fighting in Syria, asked guarantor States of ceasefire to help uphold it #SyriaTalks

UN Geneva@UNGeneva – 24 March
"Not expecting miracles, breakthroughs or breakdowns, but building on previous round with incremental steps" - @UN Envoy #SyriaTalks

UN Geneva@UNGeneva – 24 March
In light of importance of broadest possible support, @UN Syria Envoy S. de Mistura will meet with League of Arab States FMs #SyriaTalks

UN Geneva@UNGeneva – 24 March
Today we discussed substance, tomorrow meetings w/ all invitees continue. All 4 baskets of issues to be discussed- S. de Mistura #SyriaTalks

Facebook

UNRWA cash assistance provides me with the means to purchase basic goods in the local market and pay the rent for our apartment," says 65-year-old Rasmiyeh Hussein, who had to flee Yarmouk in December 2012.

Thanks to donors like ECHO, UNRWA is able to support Palestine refugees in Syria with US\$ 74 per person during each round of cash assistance.

European Commission - Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid Operations - ECHO

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.118302834882959.10295.105171192862790/1370375633009000/?type=3&theater>

Thanks to donors like the Government of Japan, the Agency hires exceptional teachers to provide quality education to approximately 46,000 Palestine refugee students enrolled in 101 UNRWA-managed schools in Syria. #forPalestinerefugees

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.118302834882959.10295.105171192862790/1374218875958009/?type=3&theater>

Social media campaigns

#Shareyourwarmth- UNRWA launched its winter fundraising campaign #shareyourwarmth in December 2016 to support the needs of this vulnerable population affected by the Syrian crisis and bring respite during the cold months.

<http://www.unrwa.org/galleries/photos/families-face-hardship-during-winter-khan-dunoun-shelter>

#My Voice-My School is an UNRWA project launched in 2015 and implemented by Digital Explorer to connect schools in Gaza, Syria, Lebanon with schools in Europe and USA through Skype exchanges. Through live video conversations and customized teaching materials, students and teachers explore how education can help them meet their future aspirations. www.unrwa.org/myvoicemyschool

@ShareTheMeal: In April 2016, the World Food Programme launched its phone application to support fundraising efforts for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. ShareTheMeal's fundraising aims to support 1,400 refugee children. Through the app, smartphone users can join thousands of other people in making donations and support a selected community and monitor progress. Since the launch of the campaign, nearly 7.5 million meals have been shared.

www.sharethemeal.org

#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/>

#NoLostGeneration: The initiative was launched by UNICEF and partners in 2013 to focus attention on the plight of children affected by the Syrian crisis. By articulating real concerns about the possible 'loss' of a generation of children to the effects of violence and displacement, the initiative put education and child protection at the centre of the response inside Syria and across the refugee hosting countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt).

<http://nolostgeneration.org/about>

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, facebook.com/UNOCHA.Syria

WHO: <http://www.who.int/countries/syr/en/>

UNHCR: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4f86c2426.html>

UNFPA: <https://www.unfpa.org/emergencies/crisis-syria>

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/

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