



Syrian Crisis United Nations Response



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

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Geneva II Conference

During a press conference at the conclusion of the Paris Summit on Peace and Security in Africa on 7 December, the Secretary-General said that preparations were ongoing for the Geneva II conference. Recalling that a further preparatory meeting was scheduled for 20 December in Geneva, he noted that he would try to send out invitations by the end of December for the conference that would start on 22 January 2014, as scheduled. The conference would include the Syrian Government and opposition, among other key actors, he added.

<http://www.un.org/sg/offthecuff/index.asp?nid=3202>

Secretary- General voices concern at targeting of religious representatives

Following the abduction of 12 nuns from Saint Tecla Orthodox Convent in Ma'aloula, in the Rif Damascus governorate, the Secretary-General appealed for their safety and well-being. He reiterated his call for the protection of civilians throughout Syria, stressing that the United Nations rejects any targeting of persons based on their religion, community or ethnic affiliation.

<http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=7346>

OPCW-UN Joint Mission

As part of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission's efforts to garner support from Member States for the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons, the OPCW Director General met with the Norwegian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on 11 December.

"This challenging undertaking requires solid international cooperation and strong collective commitment in order to be conducted safely and as swiftly as possible", stated Director General Üzümcü. He also announced that the detailed plan for the destruction of Syrian chemicals out of Syria will be presented next week.

<http://opcw.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=6576&ctl=Details&mid=10358&ItemID=10437&language=en-US>

UN agencies chiefs condemn attacks on medical personnel and facilities

In a joint statement on 7 December, the Heads of OCHA, WHO and UNICEF strongly condemned attacks on medical personnel and facilities by all parties in Syria. Noting that over 60 percent of public hospitals had been damaged or are out of service, they stressed that health facilities must be respected and protected in all

circumstances and should not be used for military purposes. Attacks against health facilities can be considered a war crime under international law.

<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Joint%20Statement%20on%20Syria,%20OCHA,%20UNICEF,%20WHO%206Dec2013.pdf>

Aid airlift to start in north-eastern Syria

UNHCR and WFP announced on 10 December that they will start airlifting aid from Iraq to north-eastern Syria by the end of the week. Up to 12 cargo flights are expected to airlift food and relief supplies such as blankets, plastic sheets and sleeping mats from Erbil in northern Iraq to Hassakeh in Syria's north-east, with the permission of both governments. "The number of vulnerable people in Hassakeh is estimated at 50,000 to 60,000 but we are still doing assessments. Hassakeh has been out of reach for a long time," Amin Awad, Director of UNHCR's Middle East and North Africa bureau, told journalists in Geneva. Over the past year, UNHCR has assisted more than 3 million displaced and vulnerable people in Syria, working with selected local NGO partners and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

<http://www.unhcr.org/52a71ee16.html>

Select UN stories

Over 23 million children to be vaccinated in mass polio immunization campaign across Middle East

CAIRO, AMMAN, 9 December 2013 – The largest-ever immunization response in the Middle East is under way this week, aiming to vaccinate more than 23 million children against polio in Syria and neighbouring countries over the coming weeks. The campaign, carried out by national and local health authorities supported by UNICEF, WHO and other partners, is in response to an outbreak of the virus-borne disease in Syria, where 17 cases have so far been confirmed, and to the detection of the virus in other parts of the Middle East. Inside Syria, the activities aim to reach 2.2 million children, including those who live in contested areas and those who were missed in an earlier campaign. <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/over-23-million-children-be-vaccinated-mass-polio-immunization-campaign>

Relevant links

DPI Focus Page on Syria:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusRel.asp?infocusID=146&Body=Syria&Body1=>

OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria: <http://opcw.unmissions.org>

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

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

OCHA: <http://www.unocha.org/crisis/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/>