



Syrian Crisis United Nations Response



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

No. 239/21 March 2018

Fierce fighting in Eastern Ghouta and Afrin causes massive displacement, warns UNHCR

UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, sounded the alarm over the deepening of the humanitarian crisis in Syria as fierce fighting in Eastern Ghouta, rural Damascus and Afrin caused massive new displacement. In Eastern Ghouta alone, more than 45,000 Syrians had fled their homes in recent days, the agency said on 20 March. UNHCR is responding to urgent humanitarian needs on the ground, but renewed its call for the protection and safety of both the newly displaced and of hundreds of thousand civilians, still trapped by fierce fighting. All existing shelters are extremely congested and overcrowded and lack basic sanitation, it said. The agency and its partners have been working around the clock to provide life-saving assistance. This is in close coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), UN agencies and other humanitarian actors. Meanwhile, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), said that it had not been able to deliver aid in the past 20 days in the northwestern town of Afrin. UNICEF is responding to the immediate needs of about 20,000 families who have been displaced to villages surrounding Afrin, but there are still an estimated 100,000 people, half of whom are children, in Afrin district – and they too need urgent humanitarian assistance.

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/briefing/2018/3/5ab0d5b64/fierce-fighting-eastern-ghouta-rural-damascus-afrin-causes-massive-new.html>

[https://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpBriefingsLatest_en\)/66BC8C52518E84D5C125824F00613629?OpenDocument](https://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpBriefingsLatest_en)/66BC8C52518E84D5C125824F00613629?OpenDocument)

UN relief official in Syria urges humanitarian access amid catastrophic situation in Afrin and Eastern Ghouta

The UN in Syria on 19 March urgently appealed for help to stem the catastrophic situation for tens of thousands of people from East Ghouta and Afrin. Civilians in these besieged areas are facing harrowing humanitarian conditions. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria, Ali Al-Za'tari said that the UN and its partners are fully mobilized to deliver aid on the spot. He urged all parties to facilitate access to all people in need and to protect civilians and relief workers.

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/afrin%20and%20EG%20%281%29.pdf>

Procedural vote blocks holding of Security Council meeting on human rights situation in Syria

The Security Council failed on 19 March to hold a public meeting on the human rights situation in Syria – which would have featured a briefing by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein – following a procedural vote called by Russia. Speaking before the vote, France's Representative Francois Delattre said his country and six other members had requested the meeting from a belief that human rights could not be dissociated from the dynamics of the Syrian conflict. "Human rights are a fundamental aspect of the crisis," he said, and the Council needed to have all necessary

information to understand the situation. Human rights were the source of the violence and its worsening, to the detriment of international peace and security.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13255.doc.htm>

Concrete steps urgently needed to protect civilians, Secretary-General tells the Security Council

Amid a massive exodus of civilians, the Secretary-General was deeply concerned by the desperation shown by the people fleeing from Eastern Ghouta and Afrin. In a statement on 16 March, he said he profoundly regrets that resolution 2401, demanding a cessation of hostilities throughout Syria, has not been implemented, urging all parties to guarantee the protection of civilians. "Any evacuation of civilians must be safe, voluntary, and in strict accordance with protection standards under international humanitarian and human rights law", he said. The Secretary-General called on the Security Council to stand united and take concrete steps to urgently end the tragedy.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-03-16/statement-secretary-general-syria>

Violence escalates in many parts of Syria, Special Envoy tells the Security Council

Briefing the Security Council by videoconference on 16 March, Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura noted that while a ceasefire had been holding in Douma for the previous six days, fighting had continued in other parts of eastern Ghouta. Violence also escalated across many other parts of Syria, he said, including Afrin, Foah, Kefraya and Idlib. He renewed his call for the implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 2401 on a cessation of hostilities. The Envoy noted disturbing new reports of the use of chlorine as a weapon, while adding that we are not in a position to confirm these reports. Mr. de Mistura said that the United Nations remains concerned about the situation of three million people in besieged and hard-to-reach areas across Syria.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2018-03-16/note-correspondents-briefing-staffan-de-mistura-special>

Twitter

UNICEF@UNICEF- 20 March

70% of people evacuated from Eastern Ghouta, Syria, are women and children
#ChildrenUnderAttack @nytimes <http://uni.cf/2pnhBpi>

UNICEF RetweetedFran Equiza@franequiza

Today we went to #Nashabieh #EasternGhouta. A month ago this area was under siege. 20km from here the fighting is still ongoing. Today Unicef is here delivering for the #ChildrenOfSyria who have suffered for too long.

UNICEF@UNICEF- 20 March

"Every woman and girl has the right to choose what they want in life." Hanan, a Syrian refugee.

When you empower one woman, you empower a community.

#ENDviolence

OCHA Syria@OCHA_Syria- 20 March

An estimated 98,000 people were displaced from #Afrin district. The majority are women, children, and elderly people who urgently need water, hygiene, sanitation, medical care and other basic services.

Read full report: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/turkey-syria-latest-developments-afrin-district-19-mar-2018> ...

OCHA Syria@OCHA_Syria -19 March

The @UN in #Syria urgently appeals for funds to stem catastrophic situation for people from #EastGhouta #Afrin. Calls on parties to facilitate access and protect civilians, medical workers, service providers and aid workers.

OCHA Syria@OCHA_Syria-19 March

98,000 people from #Afrin district have been as displaced by escalating violence. The @UN is responding to people in need with food, health, nutrition, WASH, protection and NFIs with far more aid planned in the coming days.

OCHA Syria ✓ @OCHA_Syria -18 March

98,000 people from #Afrin district have been as displaced by escalating violence. The @UN is responding to people in need with food, health, nutrition, WASH, protection and NFIs with far more aid planned in the coming days. <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-afrin-district-facts-and-figures-updated-18-march-2018>

OCHA Syria@OCHA_Syria- 17 March

Since 11 March, an estimated 20,000 people left #EastGhouta. Insecurity and fierce hostilities continue to endanger people raising serious concerns for the protection of civilians.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/ocha-flash-update-no-2-syria-crisis-east-ghouta-17-march-2018> ...

UN News@UN_News_Centre- 17 March

"Let us hope that this ceasefire holds, because it is at least one good news among very bad news," said UN Staffan de Mistura about #Syria's East #Ghouta <http://bit.ly/2FEi9kJ>

UN Political Affairs@UN_DPA- 16 March

De Mistura: @UN ready to offer good offices to all parties to make concrete contribution to implementation of res 2401, in all areas of Eastern Ghouta; and facilitate discussion, ceasefire, evacuations. But not ready to facilitate ultimatums from any side.

<http://www.un.org/undpa/en/speeches-statements/16032018/syria> ...

António Guterres@antonioguterres-16 March

I am deeply concerned by the desperation of the people fleeing from Eastern Ghouta and Afrin in Syria. The UN and its partners are ready to bring life-saving aid to all those in need. We must have safe and unimpeded humanitarian access. <http://bit.ly/2G2IGJ0>

Social media campaigns

UNRWA Global fund-raising campaign

UNRWA launched in January 2018 the #DignityIsPriceless global campaign in response to the unprecedented funding reductions by the U.S. Government to protect the dignity of Palestine refugees by providing emergency food assistance to the most vulnerable, and by not disrupting the education of their children and healthcare for families. Through a call to action, UNRWA aims to raise five hundred million USD (500\$M). #FundUNRWA #DignityIsPriceless

<https://www.unrwa.org/donate>

#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, more than 15 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/>