



Syrian Crisis United Nations Response



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

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Secretary-General says the “Islamic State” is a threat to Iraq, Syria and the region

Speaking to journalists at UN Headquarters on 12 August, the Secretary-General said that the so-called “Islamic State” is a threat to Iraq, Syria and the region. “I condemn in the strongest possible terms the systematic persecution of individuals from minority populations and those who refuse the extremist ideology of “IS” and associated armed groups”, he said. While noting that the situation of displaced people from among the Yazidis and other minorities was harrowing, the Secretary-General said that UN humanitarian personnel is in the area and we are doing what we can to deliver food and water. The Secretary-General also appealed to the international community to do even more to provide protection to the civilians trapped in the Sinjar Mountain area of Iraq.

http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments_full.asp?statID=2320#.U-ppcGN5Dkc

WFP Chief sees food operation in Damascus, voices concern at rising number of Iraqi refugees in north eastern Syria

The World Food Programme Executive Director, Ertharin Cousin, wrapped up a one-day visit to Damascus on 12 August where she met with WFP staff, senior government officials and visited a WFP food distribution centre. In the last few weeks, WFP has made significant progress in Syria, reaching more people in besieged and difficult-to-reach areas thanks to improved access through cross-line and cross-border food deliveries. More than 300,000 people in besieged and hard-to-reach areas received WFP food through cross-line convoys in July – twice the number of people reached using cross-line convoys in June. However, the already struggling northeast of Syria has started receiving an influx of people fleeing the violence in the Sinjar Mountain into the neighbouring governorate of Al Hasakeh in Syria. “We are facing another humanitarian tragedy with displaced families fleeing their homes and arriving to an area in Syria where its population is already suffering a war and a drought. It is an area that is very difficult to reach, as all supply routes to Al Hasakeh have been inaccessible for some time,” said Cousin. WFP has started distribution of ready-to-eat food to more than 3,000 people and plans to airlift more food to cover the urgent and rising needs.

<http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/sddf>

Destruction of sarin gas precursors completed aboard U.S. Ship

On 13 August, the OPCW announced that all precursor chemicals for sarin gas that were removed from Syria and trans-loaded onto the U.S. maritime vessel Cape Ray in early July have been destroyed with neutralisation technology aboard the ship. The destruction operations were continuously monitored and verified by a team of OPCW inspectors. The Cape Ray has now begun operations to neutralise 19.8 metric tonnes of sulfur mustard, a blistering agent, which are all that remains on the vessel.

<http://www.opcw.org/news/article/us-completes-destruction-of-sarin-precursors-from-syria-on-the-cape-ray/>

Syrian crisis takes heaviest toll on region's women and girls - UNFPA

Latest UN estimates show that women and girls are bearing the brunt of the Syrian crisis as it sends shockwaves through the region. Some 10.8 million people are affected by the emergency in Syria, including 432,000 pregnant women. In neighbouring countries – Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey – there are around 3 million Syrian refugees, an estimated 76,000 of whom are pregnant women, according to the July data from UNFPA, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey. Conditions for women and girls remain harsh, even for those who have escaped the conflict zone. UNFPA and partners are scaling up efforts to assist families by raising awareness of the dangers of child marriage, providing sexual and reproductive health services, and supporting survivors of abuse and violence.

<http://www.unfpa.org/public/cache/offonce/home/news/pid/18217;jsessionid=0DB0B740F5636099D3328A29BEB88E8A.jahia02>

OHCHR report documents dire situation of detainees in Aleppo Central Prison

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report on 12 August documenting “indescribable suffering” that detainees and prisoners at Aleppo Central Prison endured during a year-long siege by opposition armed groups. OHCHR says that inmates have reportedly been subjected to serious human rights violations and abuses by Government officials, as well as by several armed opposition groups, and their conditions of detention are believed to be dire following their recent transfer to other places of detention. A number of political detainees and prisoners who were transferred from the Aleppo Prison remain unaccounted for. In the report, OHCHR expressed concerns about their safety and well-being. Additionally, the report states that between December 2013 and March 2014, at least 30 individuals reportedly died of starvation. OHCHR also received satellite imagery analysis purporting to show the existence of a burial site on prison grounds.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14938&LangID=E>

Select UN stories on web and radio:

UN agency provides assistance for hundreds fleeing town near Lebanon's border with Syria

As violence escalates in Lebanon, the United Nations refugee agency ([UNHCR](#)) and its partners are distributing humanitarian supplies in the north-eastern Bekaa Valley to both Lebanese and Syrian refugees who had fled the town of Aarsal, close to the Syrian border. The agency's spokesperson, Arianne Rummery said on 8 August that UNHCR has been working together with Lebanese Government and other partners to provide humanitarian aid, including hygiene and baby kits, mattresses, blankets, bread and canned food, to the refugees.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48450>

UN Radio in Arabic:

Ertharin Cousin: WFP is making progress in Syria, but challenges remains

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/141348/#.U-uGzaPTlhk>

U.S. completes destruction of Sarin Precursors from Syria on the Cape Ray

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/141362/>

Messages posted on UN social media platforms:

UN Twitter account:

#Syria: @WFP food assistance reached a total of 3.7million people in July.

<http://bit.ly/1pWTHXO> 3:00 PM - 10 Aug 2014

One man's story - unable to return home to Syria & uncertain if he will find asylum in Europe

<http://rfg.ee/z2vhg> - 11 Aug 2014

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=>

OPCW-UN Joint Mission

<http://opcw.unmissions.org/>

UN humanitarian agencies

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/>