



Syrian Crisis

United Nations Response



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

No. 96 – 27 May 2015

SE de Mistura meets delegations from Iran, UAE, Jordan, Lebanon, EU and political groupings and civil society from Syria

On 27 May, in the framework of the Geneva Consultations, the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria met with a delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran, led by Mr. Mohsen Naziri Asl, Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva. Ambassador Asl shared the views of his government regarding the Syrian crisis. Separately, Mr. de Mistura also met with a delegation from the United Arab Emirates, led by Mr. Fares Al Mazrouei, Assistant Foreign Minister for Security and Military Affairs. Mr. Al Mazrouei shared his Government's perspectives on the Syrian conflict. At the end of the consultations on 27 May, Mr. de Mistura stressed the importance of the contribution of the regional countries to a political solution to the Syrian conflict. He also underscored an urgent need to find ways to end the bloodshed in Syria. In this respect, the Special Envoy reiterated his support to humanitarian pauses in fighting as called for by the World Food Programme (WFP), so farmers in Syria can safely harvest and transport crops in the coming weeks within the country to reach all Syrians in need.

Earlier on 24 May, Mr. de Mistura met with a delegation of the Assyrian Democratic Organization, and the Syrian Turkmen Council. He shared views with them on a political solution in Syria and the ongoing conflict on the ground. "Today I heard again about the importance of preserving Syria's social fabric and taking into account the diverse views from all corners of the country," Mr. de Mistura said. He stressed that "the United Nations will continue supporting efforts towards an all-inclusive Syrian-led political process."

On 22 May, the Special Envoy met with the Islamic scholar Muhammad Al Habash and Hind Kabawat and Asma Kftarou from a civil society organization called 'Tastaqil. He also received a delegation from the Kurdish National Council, with whom he shared views on ways to end the conflict, with due respect for Syrian diversity while maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. He also met with Najla Riachi Assaker, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the UN in Geneva, and discussed ways to support Syria in launching a political process, as well as the urgent need to alleviate the humanitarian suffering and its impact on the neighbouring countries. Mr. de Mistura also received with deep sadness news of

the kidnapping of a priest, Father Jacques Mourad, on 21 May in Homs, describing the "grave act" as being unfortunately not the first of its kind and "one of the sad consequences" of the raging conflict.

On 21 May, Mr. de Mistura received a delegation from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, led by Mr. Nawaf Al Tal, Adviser to the Foreign Minister. Mr. Al Tal shared his Government's assessments of the situation in Syria, the extent of the humanitarian suffering and its impact on the neighboring countries, as well as ways to end the conflict there through diplomatic efforts. In his separate meeting with a delegation of the European Union, led by EEAS Managing Director Mingarelli, the Special Envoy heard the EU's emphasis on a search for a political solution to the Syrian crisis. Mr. Mingarelli reiterated the EU's full support for the OSE-led effort to create a conducive environment for the resumption of a meaningful political process. The Special Envoy also met with Ms. Basma Kodmani, Executive Director of the Arab Reform Initiative, Mr. Samir Aita, member of the Syrian Democratic Forum, and Mr. Nabil Kassis of the Al-Waed party. At the end of the day, Mr. de Mistura observed that, "deepening humanitarian and security concerns, as well as the evolving priorities of the people in Syria, are outpacing discussions over a political solution in Syria. The ISIL/Daesh offensive on Palmyra is a stark reminder of that", he stressed. Mr. de Mistura also took note of calls on the United Nations to redouble efforts to help Syrian and regional actors reach an agreement on a peaceful future Syria.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50943>

WFP calls for humanitarian pause to allow farmers to harvest crops

WFP is calling for a humanitarian pause in fighting in Syria to let farmers harvest their crops and get them to market. In a statement issued on 26 May the Executive Director of WFP, Ertharin Cousins, said: "Without a humanitarian pause by both sides, providing unhindered access to Syrian food and opening up corridors for transport, people will still go hungry, despite a good harvest, and prices for food will remain high."

<https://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/pauses-syrian-fighting-during-harvest-vital-meet-country-food-needs>

http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50964#.VWXK-E_BzRa

Thousands flee Palmyra, UNHCR steps up aid

UNHCR and its partners are preparing aid for some 11,000 people who fled the ancient Syrian town of Palmyra and surrounding villages when they were overrun by ISIL this week. About 8,000 people have found shelter in the village of Al-Qarayateen and a further 3,000 fled to nearby Furglus village. In a statement issued on 22 May, UNHCR said that the displaced are staying with relatives or in schools in the villages, which are located about 75 kilometres to the west of Palmyra. The Al-Birr Society, a local implementing partner, has started to distribute UNHCR aid and prepare reception centres. "People are arriving exhausted, scared and in increasing numbers," said Bhajat Al Arandas, an Al-Birr Society official.

<http://www.unhcr.org/555f386b9.html>

Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator calls on UN Member States to find political solution

Violence and suffering in Syria continue to escalate, with 12 million people currently displaced, nearly 440,000 besieged and more than 200,000 people killed since the onset of violence five years ago. In an interview on 20 May, Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator Yacoub El Hillo, who has led the UN's humanitarian response in Syria since 2013, sounded the alarm on the impact of the violence on civilians and on the country's institutions, and called on UN Member States to step up to the plate and find a political solution.

<http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/%E2%80%9Csyrians-haven%E2%80%99t-given-world-should-not-give-them%E2%80%9D>

UNRWA conducts humanitarian operations in Yarmouk

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) conducted humanitarian operations in Yalda, Babila and Beit Saham on 25 May, providing health services, vaccinations, dental services, fresh water and child nutritional supplements. Humanitarian activities continue in Tadamoun, to the north-east.

<http://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/emergency-reports/yarmouk-situation-update-34>

UNESCO Director calls for immediate end to hostilities in Palmyra

The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, has called for an immediate end to hostilities in Palmyra (Syria) following reports from several sources that armed extremist groups had infiltrated the World Heritage site, where fighting was ongoing. "I am deeply concerned by the situation at the site of Palmyra. The fighting is putting at risk one of the most significant sites in the Middle East, and its civilian population," said Ms. Bokova in a statement on 20 May.

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/unesco_director_general_calls_for_immediate_cessation_of_hostilities_in_palmyra/#.VWtXsE_BwXA

Ban praises Ireland's 'compassionate leadership' on migration and refugees

As he wrapped up a visit to Ireland on 26 May, the Secretary-General congratulated the country on its "fruitful and strong" relationship with the United Nations over the past 60 years and looked forward to a continued partnership as the world tackled several significant challenges. "Ireland has been a steadfast supporter of peacekeeping and an important contributor across the global agenda," said Ban Ki-moon during a press encounter with Enda Kenny, the Prime Minister of Ireland. "I highly commend such compassionate leadership of Taoiseach Kenny with regard to the resettlement of many refugees who are in need of such help," said Mr. Ban. He said he had seen on his visit some of the support that Ireland provides in resettling people who have fled some of the world's conflict areas, including Syria and Afghanistan.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50963>

Concluding Ireland visit, UN chief tells refugee community world must provide 'safe avenues of migration'

The international community must intensify efforts to provide regular and safe avenues of migration and access to protection, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon declared on 25 May during a visit to a community of resettled refugees. Addressing a gathering of people hailing from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Myanmar, Sudan and Syria, Mr. Ban recalled his time as a child during the Korean War when he fled, along with his family, into the hills surrounding his village. "As we climbed in the rain, I looked back on the only world I knew: where I had played, where I had gone to school, where I had lived with my family; all of it was in flames. Our lives went up in smoke," he remembered.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50959>

Lebanon: as security challenges grow, top UN official in country urges end to political vacuum

The vacuum in the post of Lebanon's presidency has undermined the country's ability to address a range of growing security, economic and social challenges, the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Sigrid Kaag, warned on 25 May. In a press release marking the one-year point since Lebanon has been without a president, Ms. Kaag observed that the vacuum had contributed to "political polarization at a time when Lebanon must make a united effort to safeguard the country from the impact of the Syrian crisis." There has been a presidential vacuum in Lebanon since the term of Michel Sleiman came to an end on 25 May 2014. UN officials and the Security Council have repeatedly urged the Lebanese Parliament to elect a new leader without delay.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50961>

On-going campaigns

#4Syria campaign was launched on 20 March 2015 on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to highlight the Syrian conflict, which has entered its fifth year. The campaign calls for an end to the conflict and seeks to raise funds for UNRWA's programmes to support Palestinian refugees from Syria. It features testimonies of Palestine refugees; voices that, amid the tragedy, brim with positive energy and determination, as well as documents highlighting UNRWA's emergency work in the region. View the campaign at: <http://www.unrwa.org/syria-crisis/syria4thanniversary>

#SaveYarmouk was launched in January 2015 to shed light on the grave deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yarmouk, following the escalation of fighting. The campaign includes stories and updates from Yarmouk as well as recorded voices of residents describing the horrible conditions in which they are living. With no access to regular food supplies, clean water, health care, electricity or heating fuel, Yarmouk's civilian population is on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe. For those who wish to support UNRWA's work in Syria, donation is possible through the campaign's website: <http://www.unrwa.org/crisis-in-yarmouk>.

#ChildrenofSyria

UNICEF and its partners are committed to keeping Syrian children from becoming a 'lost generation'. Critical efforts are being made to minimize the impact of the crisis on children – including in the life-saving areas of health, nutrition, immunization, water and sanitation, as well as in the future of children, through education and child protection.

<http://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syria/>

<http://childrenofsyria.info/>

TWITTER

.@ILO report: Unemployment on rise in areas of Jordan hit hardest by Syrian refugee crisis. <http://bit.ly/1dfT513>
- 19 May 2015

Civilians in Yarmouk facing vulnerability of highest severity, says @UNRWA
<http://ow.ly/N5o3U>
- 18 May 2015

Refugees endure worsening conditions in 5th year of Syria conflict. Help @refugees here: <http://j.mp/1Ef9x6G>
<https://twitter.com/UNHCRJo/status/599094410836516864>
- 18 May 2015

"Syrians haven't given up. The world should not give up on them." - RC/HC El Hillo:
<http://ow.ly/NeFBp> #Syria
25 May 2015

UNOCHA @UNOCHA
#Syria: @UN convoys and beneficiaries reached under UNSC resolutions 2165 & 2191:
http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/system/files/documents/files/cnv_syr_un_consignments_and_beneficiaries_under_unsc_resolution_2165_and_2191_150510.pdf
25 May 2015

FACEBOOK

The vulnerability of Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Yarmouk camp is of the highest severity. Without access, the most basic humanitarian needs of up to 18,000 civilians, including 3,500 children, continue to be left unmet.
<http://j.mp/1JU9GkV>
-18 May 2015

Meet three Syrian refugees who are using their ingenuity to make life better for themselves and those around them. They are the inventors of Azraq, a refugee camp in Jordan.

<http://tracks.unhcr.org/2015/03/the-inventors-of-azraq/>

-13 May 2015

The situation in Syria has turned into the world's largest displacement crisis with some 7.6 million people currently internally displaced," UN expert on internally displaced persons (IDP) Chaloka Beyani warned at the end of a mission to Syria.

<http://sm.ohchr.org/1FdHvdq>

-26 May 2015

UN Radio in Arabic:

WFP calls for a humanitarian truce to enable farmers in Syria to harvest and transport crops

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/169548/#.VWXPxvIVhBc>

Ban Ki-moon praises Ireland's efforts to resettle Syrian refugees

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/169511/#.VWXQOfIVhBc>

Security Council expresses concern about smuggling cultural heritage items in Palmyra and other sites by ISIL and other groups in order to generate income to carry out terrorist operations

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/169403/#.VWXQIPVhBc>

Special Envoy for Syria continues consultations in Geneva

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/169331/#.VWXRtvIVhBc>

UNESCO calls on all parties to prevent the destruction of Palmyra

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/169163/#.VWXSJfIVhBc>

UNESCO Director-General urges stopping hostilities in Palmyra "immediately"

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/169122/#.VWXT0vIVhBc>

Zaatari camp: Enabling Syrian women to cope with negative mechanisms

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/169114/#.VWXUYvIVhBc>

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 humanitarian 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>

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/>