



Syrian Crisis **United Nations Response**



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

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Special Envoy de Mistura wraps up visit to Damascus

The UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, ended on 17 June a three-day visit to Damascus, which took place in the framework of the Geneva Consultations. During his trip, Mr. de Mistura met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Foreign Minister Walid al-Mouallem, with the aim of listening to their views in the context of the Geneva Consultations, which are aimed at operationalizing the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012. In the course of his meetings, Mr. de Mistura also emphasized the necessity of protecting civilians. He reaffirmed that the use of barrel bombs is unacceptable, and that it is an obligation under international humanitarian law for any government, in all circumstances, to protect its civilians.

The Special Envoy stressed that the heavy bombings on Douma by Government forces on 16 June, which caused significant civilian casualties, calls for a strong condemnation. "No context justifies the indiscriminate targeting of civilian areas or the use of collective punishment by a government", he said.

While in Damascus, Mr. de Mistura also reiterated his strong condemnation of the attacks on civilians by armed opposition forces that coincided with his presence in the country, such as the 15 June attacks in Aleppo that caused significant civilian casualties and mortar shelling that hit central Damascus the following day.

Additionally, the Special Envoy highlighted the dire humanitarian situation on the ground and called for greater access to besieged areas and conflict-affected communities, particularly in light of the month of Ramadan. Mr. de Mistura also met with more than 30 political parties, religious figures and civil society organizations based inside the country, to hear their views in the context of the Geneva Consultations.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/db150617.doc.htm>

<http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/Syria/FinalCommuniqueActionGroupforSyria.pdf>

Over 23,000 refugees escape latest fighting at border town and cross into Turkey

More than 23,000 refugees have fled across the border into Turkey's Sanliurfa province since early June, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said on 16 June. According to Turkish authorities, some 70 percent of these refugees were women and children.

"Since June 3, when the latest fighting erupted, people have been allowed across the border between the two countries at the Akcakale crossing and at several points between Sanliurfa and Syria's Raqqa province," a UNHCR spokesperson told reporters in Geneva. Most of the refugees are Syrians escaping fighting at the border town of Tel Abyad, and also include more than 2,000 Iraqis from the cities of Mosul, Ramadi and Falujjah.

<http://www.unhcr.org/558034c59.html>

Turkey hosts largest number of child refugees from Syria, says UNICEF

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported on 16 June that Turkey now hosted the largest number of child refugees from Syria, even more than Lebanon. According to a UNICEF spokesperson, children accounted for 54 per cent of the 1.8 million refugees in Turkey: around 900,000 child refugees, compared to 670,000 in Lebanon. UNICEF staff in Turkey continue to monitor the situation and work in the fields of nutrition, hygiene, child protection and immunization.

http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpBriefingsLatest_en%29/9E24D40FE78A1607C1257E66003D3D5F?OpenDocument

Human Rights Chief urges Member States to act to end nightmare in Syria

Addressing the 29th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 15 June, High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called on representatives of "States with influence in the region to exert that influence, singly and collectively, to reverse the living nightmare that Syria has become for its people, and to encourage more constructive choices by all actors". The UN Human Rights Chief particularly welcomed the recent call by the Russia Federation for accountability regarding allegations of use of barrel bombs filled with chlorine gas. "All sides must be held accountable for violations. There will never be sustainable peace where impunity prevails", he noted.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16074&LangID=E>

UN officials condemn increased use of indiscriminate weapons against civilians

On 12 June, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, along with Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect Jennifer Welsh, Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Rita Izsák, and Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, strongly condemned the rising number of government aerial attacks in Syria and the use of indiscriminate weapons, such as barrel bombs, including in civilian populated areas. "Government air strikes have reportedly killed more than a hundred civilians in the past week. Employing means or methods of combat which cannot distinguish civilian from military objectives is a clear violation of international humanitarian law," they said in a statement.

The UN officials also warned that such attacks could escalate retaliatory action by non-state armed groups against religious and ethnic minorities perceived to support the government and consequently, increase their vulnerability.

<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/Special%20Advisers%20and%20Special%20Rapporteurs'%20statement%20on%20the%20situation%20in%20Syria.pdf>

UN Twitter (@UN):

16 June: Syria: UN special envoy arrives in Damascus for talks with Government officials
<http://j.mp/1dGYjCn>

16 June: <<https://twitter.com/UN/status/610846829668741120>>
55,000 refugees have reached Greece, from Turkey in 2015 - a huge strain on islands
<http://unhcr.org/557ffe639.html> @Refugees

14 June: <<https://twitter.com/UN/status/610012565259718656>>
People with disabilities in Syria need the world's attention - @UN_Radio explains
<http://bit.ly/1JKsapQ> #Action2015 #ForPeople

Ongoing social media 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/>

UN Radio in Arabic

From Aleppo to Lesbos island: a quest for treatment

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/171476/#.VYGRIVhBc>

UNHCR: 55 thousand refugees arrived in Greece since the beginning of the year

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/171462/#.VYGRUVhBc>

23 thousand Syrians flee the fighting in Syria into Turkey's Sanliurfa province

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/171440/#.VYGSCfIVhBc>

Staffan de Mistura visits Damascus at the invitation of the Syrian government

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/171355/#.VYGS8vIVhBc>

Geneva consultations: Deputy Special Envoy meets representatives of Syrian civil society organizations and a Palestinian delegation

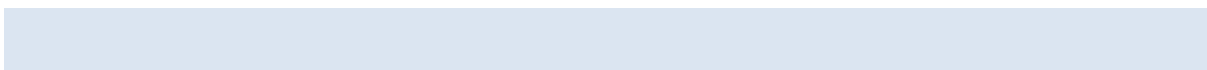
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/171347/#.VYGTJ IVhBc>

High Commissioner for Human Rights: the conflict in Syria is one of the most mind numbing crises of our time

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/171343/#.VYGTcPIVhBc>

Kuwait announces payment of its commitments of half billion dollars to support the Syrian humanitarian response

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/171095/#.VYGUXfIVhBc>



**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 :

UN Women: <http://www.unwomen.org/>

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/>