



Syrian Crisis

United Nations Response



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

No. 227/27 December 2017

Special Envoy for Syria attends Astana talks

Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura attended on 22 December a meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan, organized by the guarantors of the December 2016 ceasefire — namely Iran, Russia and Turkey. The Special Envoy noted that maintaining and enhancing the de-escalation of violence remains an essential contribution to the shaping of an environment conducive to political progress in Syria. In a statement, Mr. de Mistura voiced concern over the lack of progress on urgent humanitarian issues despite the establishment of de-escalation zones, calling for unhindered aid access throughout Syria. In particular, he said, it was urgent for the UN to be able to deliver life-saving assistance to all besieged locations, and undertake urgent medical evacuations from Eastern Ghouta. Following meetings in Moscow on 21 December with the Russian Defence and Foreign Ministers, the Special Envoy had further exchanges with guarantors in Astana on the convening of a congress of national dialogue in Sochi, to take place in January 2018. "The United Nations maintains its view that any political initiative by international actors should be assessed by its ability to contribute to and support the mandated political process under the United Nations in Geneva and the full implementation of resolution 2254 (2015)", he noted. Mr. de Mistura recalled his intention to convene a ninth round of intra-Syrian talks in Geneva in January. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2017-12-22/note-correspondents-statement-behalf-un-special-envoy>

Aid has not reached any besieged area in December

Speaking to journalists in Geneva on 21 December after meeting with countries with influence on the parties to the Syrian conflict, Special Advisor to UN Special Envoy Jan Egeland said that not a single person had received assistance in besieged areas in December. "In many months, we reached only 10 or maximum 20 per cent of people in besieged areas. In December, we haven't reached a single soul," he warned. Mr. Egeland said that inside "what is left of Syria," nearly 14 million people need humanitarian assistance and well over half of them get help every month. The international humanitarian task force has helped "dozens and dozens" of aid convoys reach previously inaccessible areas, but many other places still remain out of bounds, he said, calling for improved aid access to the country's most vulnerable communities in 2018. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58333#>

UNHCR scales up assistance to refugees as winter sets in

To help vulnerable refugees prepare for the winter, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is providing cash assistance of between US\$225-375 to help with additional costs such as fuel, clothing and medical expenses. Since November, 650,000 people have received payments out of a planned total of 800,000. Across the region, the refugee agency aims to assist a total of 3.81 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people with its winter assistance programme in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey, Jordan and Egypt.

However, the agency is facing a funding gap. Of the total US\$228 million requested to finance this year's winter programme, donations so far received amount to US\$143 million -- leaving a shortfall of around 37 per cent still needed to provide assistance to more than a million people.

<http://www.unhcr.org/5a3cfd384.html>

European Union donates €10 million to support Palestine refugees

The European Union (EU) announced on 22 December an additional EUR 10.5 million contribution to the 2017 Budget of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The donation will support education, access to health care, employment opportunities, and improved living conditions for millions of Palestine refugees. In recognition of the contribution, Pierre Krähenbühl, UNRWA Commissioner-General, stated: "Giving some half million students in UNRWA schools across the Middle East a sense of dignity and preserving their opportunities is particularly urgent at a time when the spaces in which they can develop and enjoy a normal childhood are shrinking so dramatically. This is particularly important in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in Gaza and in Syria."

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/european-union-donates-additional-eur-105-million-unrwa-crucial-time>

Security Council extends mandate of peacekeeping force in the Golan Heights

On 21 December, the Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) that monitors the Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Syria and Israel in the Golan Heights, for a period of six months, until 30 June 2018. Adopting unanimously resolution 2394 (2017), Council members condemned the use of heavy weapons by Syrian forces and armed groups in the area of separation, and emphasized that there should be no military activity in that area.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13135.doc.htm>

UN Radio in Arabic

Mandate of UN Disengagement Observer Force between Syria and Israel extended until next year

تمديد ولاية القوة الأممية لفض الاشتباك بين سوريا وإسرائيل حتى العام المقبل

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/270511/#.WkPecFVKtR0>

21 December 2017

de Mistura plans to hold the ninth round of Syria talks in January

دي ميستورا يعتزم عقد الجولة التاسعة من المحادثات السورية في شهر يناير

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/270589/#.WkPfm1VKtR0>

22 December 2017

Twitter

UN in Syria Retweeted UNICEF MENA – 27 December

@UNICEF distributed 5,000 winterization kits in Mabrouka, a makeshift camp in north-eastern #Syria, where more than 21,000 internally displaced people live. Half of them are estimated to be children.

UNHCR Syria Retweeted Sajjad Malik- 27 December

@UNHCRinSYRIA @UN @SYRedCrescent and partners distributed humanitarian assistance to 279 families/1061 in newly-accessible AlQuaryatein in Rural Homs #Syria. This was the first dispatch of assistance to this area since it became accessible after the defeat of ISIS in October 2017

OCHA Syria retweeted ICRC Syria✓@ICRC_sy – 26 December
Tonight the @SYRedCrescent with @ICRC team started the evacuation of critical medical cases from #EasternGhouta to #Damascus. #Syria

OCHA Syria@OCHA_Syria- 26 December
13.1 million people are in need of aid across #Syria. The most severe needs are in conflict areas and locations with a high concentration of displaced people.
See NEW Humanitarian Need Overview website <https://hno-syria.org/>

UNFPA-Syria@UnfpaSyria- 26 December
.@UNFPA is committed to provide young girls with opportunities in #ICT. Our local partner #NourFoundation #WGSS in Al Husseinia/ Rural Damascus is implementing #ICDL course for young girls

OCHA Syria@OCHA_Syria- 21 December
"Some have found their homes in ruins; others have found dead bodies and explosives in their houses, gardens and streets."
Read @MSF report of people's accounts on what they saw when they returned to #ArRaqqa #Syria
<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-booby-traps-and-landmines-conditions-awaiting-raqqa-s-returning...>

Social media campaigns

UNRWA Transforms the Lives of Palestine Refugees with Disabilities

On 3 December, UNRWA joins the rest of the world in celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This year's global theme, 'Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies for all', celebrates the important contribution persons with disabilities can make in their communities, when given equal opportunities. Removing barriers and facilitating inclusion can empower persons with disabilities to become agents of change in their own lives and communities, striving towards ending exclusion and promoting equality. UNRWA provides physiotherapy treatment and equipment for Palestine refugee children in Khan Dunoun refugee camp in Syria, Ahmad and Ali are among these beneficiaries.

www.unrwa.org/newsroom/photos/unrwa-transforms-lives-palestine-refugees-disabilities

#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/>