

 **Syrian Crisis**

United Nations Response

**A Weekly Update from the**

**UN Department of Public Information No. 189/ 15 March 2017**

**UN Secretary-General: peace in Syria is a moral and political imperative for the Syrians and for the world**

In a statement on the sixth anniversary of the start of the Syrian conflict on 15 March, Secretary-General Antonió Guterres made two urgent appeals to the parties. “First, make the most of the 30 December 2016 ceasefire established by the guarantors of the Astana meetings, enhance it further, and ensure that humanitarian aid can reach all those in need in Syria without any obstacles. Second, all those with influence on the parties must strive to overcome their differences and work together to put an end to the conflict, namely contributing to the success of the intra-Syrian negotiations in Geneva.”

Peace in Syria is a moral and political imperative both for the Syrian people and for the world -- an imperative that cannot wait”, he stressed.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2017-03-15/statement-secretary-general-syria>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56356>

**As the conflict marks its sixth year, more than 13 million Syrians continue to depend on humanitarian aid**

Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O’Brien said on 15 March that the toll taken on civilians since the start of the Syria conflict was inexcusable. “Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed. As I speak, more than six million people are displaced within Syria. They are among the 13.5 million people in Syria who are in dire need of humanitarian aid”. Mr. O’Brien pledged that the UN and partners will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the millions of Syrians who will require critical humanitarian assistance for months and likely years to come. “We join Syrians in hoping that 2017 will be the year the carnage finally ends”, he said. Also warning of the growing humanitarian needs, High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi stressed that Syria was at a crossroads. “Unless drastic measures are taken to shore up peace and security, the situation will worsen”, he noted.

<https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/USG-ERC%20message%20on%20Syria%2015.03.17.pdf>

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/statement-un-high-commissioner-refugees-filippo-grandi-6th-anniversary>

**Health care a casualty of war**

Over the past 6 years, the health services across Syria have seriously deteriorated with more than half of public hospitals and primary health centres having either closed or only partially functioning, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on 15 March. According to Dr Peter Salama, Executive Director of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, "Substantial health needs in Syria continue to be unmet and resources to support the health workforce and health system are stretched to the limit." Many barriers to access remain, including security threats for health care workers and availability of medicines and equipment. "On this sad anniversary of the start of war in Syria and before more lives are lost, WHO calls for systematic and unhindered access to all areas to deliver life-saving medicines, vaccines and medical supplies."

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2017/syria-six-years/en/>

**Syria is the worst man-made disaster since World War II- UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Speaking at a debate of the Human Rights Council on Syria on 14 March, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein, said that the entire country had become a torture-chamber. “As the conflict enters its 7th year, this is the worst man-made disaster the world has seen since World War II”, he noted. The High Commissioner announced that his office was moving as fast as possible to set up the Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the most serious crimes in Syria, in line with General Assembly resolution 71/248. ”Ensuring accountability, establishing the truth and providing reparations must happen if the Syrian people are ever to find reconciliation and peace. This cannot be negotiable”, Zeid stated.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21366&LangID=E>

**Investigative panel warns that civilians continue to bear the brunt of the brutal violence in Syria**

In its latest report issued on 14 March, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria said that Government and pro-Government forces continue to conduct airstrikes on vital civilian infrastructure including hospitals, schools and water stations. Hundreds of civilians were killed in these attacks, which were intended to deprive the population of basic goods and services essential to their survival, the report found. The investigative panel noted that the suffering of the population was aggravated by obstruction to the delivery of humanitarian aid. “While the world’s eyes were on Aleppo, Syrian civilians across the country, and in particular children, continued to fall victim to tactics that favoured military gains over respect for international law and human life,” said Commission Chair Paulo Pinheiro.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/IndependentInternationalCommission.aspx>

**2016 was the worst year for Syria’s children- UNICEF**

Grave violations against children in Syria are the highest on record in 2016, said UNICEF in an assessment of the conflict’s impact on children released on 13 March. The UN children agency found that killing, maiming and recruitment of children increased sharply last year. At least 652 children were killed – a 20 per cent increase from 2015. After six years of war, nearly 6 million children now depend on humanitarian assistance, a twelve-fold increase from 2012. “The depth of suffering is unprecedented. Millions of children in Syria come under attack on a daily basis”, said Geert Cappelaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

<http://us7.campaign-archive2.com/?u=5eb1a46c176e09c237df0913f&id=f353d9ed06&e=2d3fbcf058>

<https://gallery.mailchimp.com/5eb1a46c176e09c237df0913f/files/de13c87d-61eb-4206-8df6-aeb908e47a7b/SYRIA6_12March17.pdf>

**Nationwide polio vaccination campaign starts in Syria**

A week-long national polio vaccination campaign started in Syria on 12 March in 12 out of 14 Governorates. The campaign, which is the first to be launched since November 2016, is planned and organised by the Syrian health authorities with support from the World Health Organization and UNICEF. It aims to vaccinate more than 2,700,000 children under the age of five. More than 7,000 health workers have been mobilised for this campaign.

<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/palais-briefing-notes-14-march-2017>

**Secretary-General speaks out against terrorist attacks in Damascus**

Secretary-General António Guterres condemned the terrorist bombings in the Syrian capital of Damascus on 11 March. In a statement, he said he was appalled by the utter disregard for human life displayed by the perpetrators, and extended his deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, many of whom were pilgrims. “Those responsible for the bombings, and anyone carrying out attacks against civilians, must be held accountable”, Mr. Guterres pointed out.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sgsm18461.doc.htm>

**UNRWA deplores escalating violence in southern Syria**

UNRWA is alarmed by the escalation of violence in Dera’a Governorate, south of Damascus. Fighting among parties to the conflict in the area is causing the displacement of Palestine refugees, impeding humanitarian access to critical aid and has resulted in the deaths of Palestine refugees in recent weeks. Since 5 March, UNRWA has been providing assistance to more than 200 families who have escaped violence in the village of Jilin, west of Dera’a city. UNRWA estimates that about 90 percent of the Palestine refugees from Jilin have fled as a result of the escalation of violence in recent weeks.

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-deplores-escalating-violence-southern-syria-which-has-led-large>

**ECHO contributes EUR 5 Million for life-saving assistance to Palestine Refugees in Syria**  
The European Union Humanitarian Aid and Civil protection (ECHO) has contributed a total of EUR 5 million (US$ 5.4 million) to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to support the emergency response in Syria. Entering its seventh year, the conflict has displaced over 60 percent of the Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in the country and forced 95 percent of them to become dependent on humanitarian aid. The donation will go towards emergency cash assistance provided by UNRWA to 430,000 Palestine refugees in Syria. ECHO support will also enable the agency to enhance its preparedness and ability to respond to local emergencies.

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/echo-contributes-eur-5-million-life-saving-assistance-palestine-refugees>

**WFP provides school meals to Syrian children across Aleppo city**

In a statement issued on 9 March, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) said that in March it had begun distributing school meals for the first time to Syrian children attending public primary schools in areas in Aleppo city previously inaccessible to WFP and other humanitarian organizations. The meals included a carton of milk fortified with vitamins and minerals and a locally-baked date bar, which provides schoolchildren with the nutrition they need to concentrate and learn in class. Through its local partner, WFP had so far distributed school meals to about 15,000 children in 30 schools in Aleppo since the programme began on 5 March.

<http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-provides-school-meals-syrian-children-across-aleppo-city>

**UN Radio in Arabic**

UNICEF says that 2016 was the worst year for Syrian children  
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/236138/#.WMlFv28rJaQ>   
بينيرو: أطراف الصراع السوري جميعها تستمر في انتهاك حقوق الإنسان  
14/03/2017

United Nations calls on the international community to step up assistance to meet the needs of millions of Syrians  
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/236090/#.WMlF5G8rJaQ>   
الأمم المتحدة تدعو المجتمع الدولي إلى المزيد من المساعدة لتلبية احتياجات ملايين السوريين داخل سوريا  
14/03/2017

WHO begins a large-scale polio vaccination campaign in Syria  
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/236084/#.WMlGA28rJaQ>

High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi stresses the need for continued support for Syrians   
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/235975/#.WMlFUm8rJaQ>   
مفوض شؤون اللاجئين يشدد على ضرورة مواصلة دعم السوريين والتخطيط للمستقبل  
13/03/2017

Secretary-General condemns terrorist attack in Damascus  
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/235814/#.WMlFIW8rJaQ>   
الأمين العام يدين وقوع تفجيرات إرهابية في دمشق  
12/03/2017

WFP provides school meals for children in Aleppo  
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/235515/#.WMlEe28rJaQ>   
برنامج الأغذية العالمي يقدم وجبات مدرسية للأطفال السوريين عبر مدينة حلب  
09/03/2017

As the Syria war enters its seventh year, UN refugee agency calls for increased support for millions of civilians  
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/235499/#.WMlEmm8rJaQ>   
مع دخول الحرب في سوريا عامها السابع، مفوضية شؤون اللاجئين تدعو إلى مضاعفة الدعم لملايين المدنيين  
09/03/2017

**Twitter**

United Nations‏@UN -15 March

UN staff in NYC gathered to stand in solidarity with the people of Syria.

One way to help is to support @UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/take-action>

United Nations retweeted UNOCHA‏ @UNOCHA- 15 March

"We join Syrians in hoping that 2017 will be the year the carnage finally ends" - @UNReliefChief [http://ow.ly/2bnR309VKHV](http://ow.ly/2bnR309VKHV%20%20)  #Syria

[**United Nations** ~~@~~UN](https://twitter.com/UN) -15 March

See the impact of 6 years of war on children – @[UNICEF](https://twitter.com/UNICEF) is working to help [~~#~~ChildrenUnderAttack](https://twitter.com/hashtag/ChildrenUnderAttack?src=hash) in Syria

United Nations‏ @UN - 14 March

Stand #WithRefugees by knowing & sharing the facts about Syrian refugees [http://trib.al/OLhDXyV](http://trib.al/OLhDXyV%20%20)  #SyriaCrisis

[**United Nations‏** @UN - 14 March](https://twitter.com/UN)

Unless drastic measures are taken, the situation will worsen - [~~@~~RefugeesChief](https://twitter.com/RefugeesChief) on Syria: [http://trib.al/l9gqbw6](https://t.co/KIwPKZH3lL)

United Nations‏ @UN – 14 March

A polio vaccination campaign in Syria aims to vaccinate 2.7+ million children under 5 - @WHO #HealthForSyria video

WFP Middle East‏ @WFP\_MENA- 14 March

#Syria today, in numbers:

6 years of conflict

7 million food insecure

6.3 million internally displaced

4.9 million refugees.

#SyriaCrisis

United Nations ‏@UN – 14 March

As Syria conflict enters 7th year, @UNHumanRights chief calls it "a place of savage horror & absolute injustice" [http://ow.ly/UwjA309SXa0](http://ow.ly/UwjA309SXa0%20)

United Nations retweeted UN Refugee Agency‏ @Refugees- 14 March

We condemn recent Damascus attacks & will keep providing vital aid in #Syria [http://trib.al/fhGcAlH](http://trib.al/fhGcAlH%20) #SyriaCrisis

United Nations‏ @UN - 14 March

United Nations Retweeted OCHA Syria

Civilians continue 2 bear brunt of conflict marked by unparalleled suffering, destruction & disregard for human life <http://www.unocha.org/syria>

United Nations‏@UN – 14 March

2 @Refugees staff members took Qs live from a registration centre in Amman. Their #SyriaCrisis answers are here: <http://bit.ly/2mEq5Yc>

United Nations retweeted UNICEF‏ @UNICEF – 13 March

1 in 3 children in #Syria are out of school. Learn more on the impact of SIX years of war on #ChildrenUnderAttack: <http://uni.cf/2mnvZuT>

United Nations retweeted UN Refugee Agency @Refugees - 13 March

Our @RefugeesChief's statement on the 6th anniversary of the Syrian war: http://trib.al/l9gqbw6 #SyriaCrisis

UNRWA@UNRWA - 12 March

We thank [@eu\_echo](https://twitter.com/eu_echo) for its contribution in support of life-saving emergency cash assistance to 430,000 [#Palestine](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Palestine?src=hash) refugees in [#Syria](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Syria?src=hash).  
<https://twitter.com/UNRWA/status/840838046123724800>   
<https://twitter.com/UNRWA/status/840853866270842880>

**Facebook**

UNHCR- 15 March

This is where Syrian refugees are hosted. Surprise you?

As Syria’s crisis enters a seventh year, please share to help others be informed.

Read more: <http://trib.al/sloWVjR>

UNHCR- 15 March

Join us this Wednesday for a first Facebook Live with our Special Envoy Angelina Jolie.

Our Special Envoy will deliver the Sergio Vieira de Mello Foundation lecture from the UN Geneva Assembly Hall, followed by a discussion with UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and BBC News Chief International Correspondent Lyse Doucet.

Mark your calendars to watch this event, starting at 5:10pm GMT on 15 March, and click here to learn more about our Special Envoy's work with refugees:

<http://www.unhcr.org/special-envoy-angelina-jolie.html>

UNDP Syria - 14 March

Ayman is a 32 year-old man from Idleb and the sole breadwinner of a family of four. Before displacing to Hama, he used to work as a porter. Recently, he started to work in the rehabilitation of sewerage systems with UNDP's support. He says " Nowadays, price inflation made living situations very harsh. Through this job I was able to secure a stable income to support my family".

UNHCR - 13 March

What is life like for Syrian people who have fled home but are still in the country? Join us live from the Syrian capital, Damascus on Thursday at 2pm GMT for a conversation between our colleagues Sajjad Malik and Firas Al-khateeb who spend every day working with families who long for lasting peace so they can begin their lives again.

UNDP Syria- 12 March

Decorating the hilt of the Damascene sword is an old traditional Damascene craft that requires a lot of effort and consumes a long time. Hanan is one of the few Syrian women who mastered this profession, but due to poor economic situation, she hasn't been able to work in this field. Hanan has recently joined a UNDP-supported workshop that is specialized in Damascene swords and now passes her knowledge to other women to help them master this profession.

UNDP Syria- 12 March

"This project has changed me positively. It helped me to re-build my self-confidence and achieve my ambition to learn and work in the field of handicrafts production", said Ethraa, a young girl from Al-Qamishli who is generating income by making and selling candles and accessories, thanks to UNDP's vocational training initiative for people with disabilities in Al-Hassakeh.

UNHCR-Syria 12 March 2017

Huda 52, barely survives on US$10 per month from her simple work in clothing repair. After being displaced six years ago, Huda found herself alone as her husband went missing and her children fled abroad. “It is hard to live alone,” said Huda, “I have started this work just to make ends meet.” As simple as it is, Huda’s work help her live a dignified life.

In situations like Huda’s, women may be forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms to survive.

In this International Women’s Day, UNHCR takes the opportunity to promote the right to safe, dignified and empowering work for refugees, internally displaced and stateless women.

“All displaced and stateless women should be able to access a safe and sustainable living that meets their basic needs and contributes to their dignity”, said UNHCR Chief Filippo Grandi, “Supporting women to achieve self-reliance contributes to better protection, and helps them to attain solutions.” #WomensDay

UNRWA – 12 March

Around 95 per cent of the displaced Palestine refugees in Syria are dependent on humanitarian aid to meet their most basic food and shelter needs. Thanks to the European Commission - Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid Operations - ECHO for its contribution in support of life-saving emergency cash assistance provided by UNRWA to 430,000 Palestine refugees in Syria.

<http://bit.ly/2mVZtmp>  
<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.118302834882959.10295.105171192862790/1360357760677454/?type=3&theater>

UNRWA – 11 March

Shrouq inspires us! Shrouq uses a small corner of the cramped room that she shares with five other families, to do her homework. Shrouq and her family have been living in the UNRWA Damascus Training Centre collective shelter since 2013. She is studying medicine and hopes to become a surgeon one day.  
Full story: <http://bit.ly/2npMt58>  
[#WomenWhoInspire](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/womenwhoinspire?source=feed_text&story_id=1357352047644692)

UNHCR- 9 March

#WomensDay

Batoul, a displaced Syrian attends a UNHCR-funded project teaching displaced people useful skills that make it easier to find a job.

The theme for International Women’s Day 2017 is “Women in a Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030”. UNHCR have adapted the theme to advocate for supporting women’s right to decent work. UNHCR calls to support to refugees and displaced women to ensure their access to safe, dignified and empowering work

**Social media campaigns**

**#Shareyourwarmth**- UNRWA launched its winter fundraising campaign #shareyourwarmth in December 2016 to support the needs of this vulnerable population affected by the Syrian crisis and bring respite during the cold months.

<http://www.unrwa.org/galleries/photos/families-face-hardship-during-winter-khan-dunoun-shelter>

**#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](http://www.unrwa.org/myvoicemyschool)

**@ShareTheMeal:** In April 2016,the World Food Programme launched itsphone 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, nearly 7.5 million meals have been shared.

[www.sharethemeal.org](http://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=*](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](file:///C:\Users\Margaret.Novicki\AppData\Local\Temp\notes38CED8\unocha.org\syria), [twitter.com/ocha\_syria](file:///C:\Users\Margaret.Novicki\AppData\Local\Temp\notes38CED8\twitter.com\ocha_syria), [facebook.com/UNOCHA.Syria](file:///C:\Users\Margaret.Novicki\AppData\Local\Temp\notes38CED8\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/>

**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>