



## **Syrian Crisis** United Nations Response



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

**No. 183/ 1 February 2017**

### **UN Secretary-General hopes the US will re-establish its refugee protection programme**

In a press conference at UN Headquarters on 1 February, Secretary-General António Guterres, responding to a question regarding indefinite suspension of Syrian refugee resettlement, noted that the United States has been always in the forefront of resettlement and the Syrian refugees are those that, at the present moment, have the most dramatic needs in the world. "I strongly hope that the US will be able to re-establish its very solid refugee protection in resettlement, and I hope that the Syrians will not be excluded in that process." Further responding to the issue of country specific travel ban policy by the US, he said "I think that those measures indeed violate our basic principles, and I think that they are not effective if the objective is to really avoid terrorists to enter the United States. We are dealing with very sophisticated global terrorist organisations. If a global terrorist organisation will try to attack any country like the United States, they will probably not come with people with passports from those countries that are hotspots of conflict today," he said. "That is why we have been so strongly pushing for the capacity to have very strong measures in relation to management of borders but, at the same time, not to base them on any discrimination linked to nationality, religion or ethnicity", he added.

On the next round of intra-Syrian talks to be held in Geneva, the Secretary-General said that "a solution will require the full commitment of all stakeholders, and Arab countries are a key component in finding a solution for the Syria crisis. In relation to the process onwards and the solutions and the need to set a moment for all foreign troops to leave, I think that should apply to everybody without exception. But this is a long process of negotiation that is starting now and I hope will be concluded positively for the Syrian people".

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2017-02-01/transcript-secretary-generals-press-encounter>

### **Managing national borders 'cannot be based on any form of discrimination' – UN chief Guterres**

Refugees fleeing conflict and persecution are entitled to protection, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said on 31 January, expressing concern at decisions around the world that have undermined the integrity of the international refugee protection regime. "Refugees fleeing conflict and persecution are finding more and more borders closed and increasingly restricted access to the protection they need and are entitled to receive, according to international refugee law," Mr. Guterres said in a [statement](#).

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2017-01-31/secretary-generals-statement>

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56077>

### **New US travel ban policy breaches United States' human rights obligations – UN experts**

In a statement on 1 February, a group of UN experts said that the Executive Order signed by US President Donald Trump on 27 January 2017 breaches the country's international human rights obligations, which protect the principles of non-refoulement and non-discrimination based on race, nationality or religion. "Such an order is clearly discriminatory based on one's nationality and leads to increased stigmatization of Muslim communities," said the UN Special Rapporteurs on migrants, François Crépeau; on racism, Mutuma Ruteere; on human rights and counter-terrorism, Ben Emmerson; on torture, Nils Melzer; and on freedom of religion, Ahmed Shaheed. The Executive Order bars all nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries -- Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen -- from entering the US for the next 90 days. It also stops the entire US refugee programme for 120 days, indefinitely bans Syrian refugees, and halts the planned entry of more than 50,000 refugees in the US fiscal year 2017, which began in October 2016 and will end in September 2017.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21136&LangID=E>

### **Children uprooted by conflict, driven from their homes by violence and terror, need help: UNICEF**

In a statement issued on 30 January, UNICEF said, "the needs of refugees have never been greater. Worldwide 28 million children have been uprooted by conflict, driven from their homes by violence and terror. They need our help. UNICEF is committed to continuing our work with governments and other partners around the world to help some of the most vulnerable children everywhere, from Syria to Yemen to South Sudan. The United States has a long and proud tradition of protecting children fleeing war and persecution. We trust that this support will continue and that the recent measures will prove to be temporary. All refugee children need our support."

[https://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_94541.html](https://www.unicef.org/media/media_94541.html)

### **UN Special Envoy announces the postponement of intra-Syrian talks until 20 February**

Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura briefed the Security Council on 31 January on latest efforts to facilitate a political settlement of the Syria crisis. Speaking to the media afterwards, Mr. de Mistura said he had asked the Council to postpone the UN mediated talks scheduled for 8 February in Geneva until 20 February. He explained that the delay would give time for the ceasefire to solidify, give the Syrian Government a chance to consider concessions, and give a chance for the armed groups to come as "one unified opposition." Referring to the talks held in Astana, Kazakhstan on 23-24 January, the Envoy said that the Syrian Government, the opposition and the three guarantors of the ceasefire – Russia, Iran and Turkey- agreed on a mechanism to monitor the truce. He added that a follow-up meeting on the creation of the mechanism was scheduled to take place on 6 February in the Kazhak capital with the participation of the UN.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56079>

<http://webtv.un.org/watch/un-special-envoy-proposed-postponement-of-intra-syrian-talks-till-20-february/5305466082001>

### **UN Refugee Head visits displaced people in Homs**

High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visited the city of Homs on 31 January to witness at first-hand the scale of urgent humanitarian needs of the population. "It is urgent that peace comes so that reconstruction can start," said Mr. Grandi upon arrival. "People are cold, jobless, homeless. The needs are immense," he said while meeting

with displaced persons. The High Commissioner visited two UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)-funded projects for returnees in the city's El-Hamedia district. As the visit came amid discussion over establishing "safe zones" in Syria, Mr. Grandi opined that "rather than planning so called safe zones in Syria, governments must focus on viable peace and then reconstruction. Then refugees will return."

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2017/1/5890b64b4/un-refugee-head-meets-homs-displaced-syria-visit.html>

### **High Commissioner for Refugees urges equal treatment for protection and assistance for refugees**

High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said on 30 January that he is deeply worried by the uncertainty facing thousands of refugees around the world who are in the process of being resettled to the United States. The UN refugee agency estimates that 20,000 refugees in precarious circumstances might have been resettled to the US during the 120 days covered by the executive order announced by President Donald Trump on 27 January. "The vast majority of the world's refugees are hosted in developing countries, and less than 1 per cent will ever be resettled globally. Those accepted for resettlement by the United States, after a rigorous US security screening process, are coming to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. UNHCR hopes that they will be able to do so as soon as possible", Mr. Grandi stated. The High Commissioner reaffirmed that refugees should receive equal treatment for protection and assistance, and opportunities for resettlement, regardless of their religion, nationality or race.

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2017/1/588f78ee4/unhcr-alarmed-impact-refugee-program-suspension.html>

### **UN agencies dealing with refugees and migrants voice hope that the US will continue its leadership role in protecting those fleeing conflict**

In a joint statement on 28 January following the issuance of an Executive Order by the US President Donald Trump, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) expressed the hope that the United States will continue its strong leadership role and long tradition of protecting those who are fleeing conflict and persecution. "The needs of refugees and migrants worldwide have never been greater, and the US resettlement programme is one of the most important in the world," they noted. The agencies stressed that the longstanding US policy of welcoming refugees has created a 'win-win' situation: it has saved the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in the world who have in turn enriched and strengthened their new societies. "The contribution of refugees and migrants to their new homes worldwide has been overwhelmingly positive," they added.

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2017/1/588bc4e34/joint-iom-unhcr-statement-president-trumps-refugee-order.html>

### **UN food agency resumed airdrops on besieged city of Deir ez-Zor**

The World Food Programme (WFP) announced on 31 January the resumption of air drops in the north-eastern city of Deir ez-Zor. A WFP spokesperson said that following an interruption due to heavy fighting, a safer location for the drop zone had been identified. As of 29 January, a total of 179 airdrops had been carried out. The UN food agency has also stepped up support to tens of thousands of displaced Syrians returning to eastern Aleppo where much of the infrastructure has been severely damaged. Some 20 metric tons of food to prepare hot meals for 40,000 people had been distributed. WFP is also providing ready-to-eat food for 45,000 returnees and displaced people in the eastern part of the city. Additionally, over 10,000 people sheltering in western Aleppo city have received food rations.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\\_media.nsf/\(httpBriefingsLatest\\_en\)/BA1F2EA5B429302DC12580B9003F1BC3?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpBriefingsLatest_en)/BA1F2EA5B429302DC12580B9003F1BC3?OpenDocument)

<http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-providing-life-saving-food-people-returning-eastern-aleppo-city>

### **UN ready to assist with repair to main water supply in Wadi Barada**

A local agreement was reached in Wadi Barada near Damascus, which allowed several fighters and their family members to leave the area to Idlib, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said on 29 January. Following the agreement, Syrian authorities and Syrian Arab Red Crescent teams went to the area to start emergency repairs to the Ain Al Fijeh spring which supplies most of Damascus' water. UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters that the UN stands ready to support the Syrian authorities and the Red Crescent to ensure the swift repair of the water system. During the shortage, the UN provided water through trucking to Damascus and surrounding areas as well as to 101 schools benefiting more than 90,000 children.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2017/db170130.doc.htm>

### **UN humanitarian chief calls for aid access to Syrians in need**

Briefing the Security Council on 26 January, UN Humanitarian Chief Stephen O'Brien urged Member States with influence over the Syrian authorities to do more to ensure humanitarian access. "We continue to be blocked at every turn, by lack of approvals and central and local levels, disagreements on access routes and by the violation of agreed procedures at checkpoints by parties to the conflict," he told Council members. "We have the capacity to deliver to hundreds of thousands of people in besieged and hard to reach areas every month. We need to be allowed to pass", he added, "not as a favour but as a right and safely". Also briefing were Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Amir Mahmoud Abdulla, and Executive Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Emergencies Programme, Peter Salama. Both UN officials described the dire humanitarian situation amid continued fighting resulting in about 7 million Syrians facing food insecurity and the devastating impact of the six-year-long conflict on the health system and health workers.

[https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/ERC\\_USG%20Stephen%20OBrien%20Statement%20on%20Syria%20to%20SecCo%2026JAN%202017%20CAD.pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/ERC_USG%20Stephen%20OBrien%20Statement%20on%20Syria%20to%20SecCo%2026JAN%202017%20CAD.pdf)

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12694.doc.htm>

### **Republic of Korea contributes US\$ 500,000 to support Palestine refugees in Syria**

The Republic of Korea (South Korea) contributed US\$ 500,000 to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to promote safe spaces and healthy lifestyles for Palestine refugee children in Syria, benefiting approximately 45,000 boys and girls in UNRWA schools. The contribution will go towards UNRWA efforts to develop safe, child-friendly and gender-sensitive health centres and schools and facilitate health education for Palestine refugee children.

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/press-releases/republic-korea-contributes-us-500000-promote-better-and-safer-life-palestine>

### **UN Radio in Arabic**

Syrian peace talks postponed to 20 February 2017

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/231569/#.WJD-gVMrJaQ>

تأجيل محادثات السلام السورية إلى 20 من شباط/فبراير  
31/01/2017

UNICEF supports education in conflict-affected areas in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/231493/#.WJD-qlMrJaQ>

اليونيسف تدعم التعليم في المناطق المتأثرة بالنزاع في سوريا  
31/01/2017

WFP resumes airdrop operations to the Syrian city of Deir ez-Zor

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/231465/#.WJD-y1MrJaQ>

برنامج الأغذية العالمي يستأنف عمليات إنزال المساعدات جوا لمدينة دير الزور السورية  
31/01/2017

In Turkey, sewing training helps Syrian refugees morally and materially

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/231154/#.WJD9zVMrJaQ>

في تركيا، تدريب اللاجئات السوريات على الخياطة يساعدهن معنويا وماديا  
27/01/2017

United Nations: significant outcome of the Astana talks to advance the peace process in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/231121/#.WJD-BVMrJaQ>

الأمم المتحدة: نتائج مهمة صادرة عن مفاوضات أستانة لدفع عملية السلام في سوريا  
27/01/2017

WFP calls for secure and unhindered access for food deliveries in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/231012/#.WJD9TIMrJaQ>

برنامج الأغذية العالمي يدعو إلى وصول آمن ومستمر للمساعدات الغذائية في سوريا  
26/01/2017

South Korea donates half a million dollars to enhance the chances of a better and safer life for children of Palestine refugees in Syria

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/230676/#.WJD8o1MrJaQ>

كوريا الجنوبية تبرع بنصف مليون دولار لتعزيز فرص حياة أفضل وأكثر أمانا لأطفال لاجئي فلسطين في سوريا  
25/01/2017

## **Twitter**

United Nations Retweeted UN Human Rights @UNHumanRights 1 February  
US travel ban: "New policy breaches Washington's human rights obligations" – UN experts <http://ow.ly/BVOQ308yQ6p>

OCHA Syria @OCHA\_Syria- 1 February

Repair teams entered spring site in #WadiBarada. More on agreement and water provision to #Damascus in latest update <http://ow.ly/RS74308yTdP>

OCHA Syria @OCHA\_Syria – 1 February

Schools in #Syria rise from the rubble as @UNICEF supported re-opening of 23 schools in eastern #Aleppo city <http://ow.ly/IXC4308yNY4>

United Nations ✓ @UN – 31 January

Update on #SyriaTalks: Special Envoy proposes postponement to 20 Feb. Info on briefing to Security Council is here: <http://bit.ly/2ke3ZZL>

United Nations Retweeted World Food Programme @WFP - 31 January

Make this the 1 video you share today: Amidst rubble and ruin, WFP is helping men, women and children in East #Aleppo, #Syria

United Nations Retweeted UN Refugee Agency ✓ @Refugees- 31 January

"It is urgent that peace comes so that reconstruction can start"- UN @RefugeesChief Filippo Grandi in Homs, #Syria

United Nations Retweeted UN Refugee Agency ✓ @Refugees 31 January-

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi is visiting #Syria. Follow @RefugeesChief and @UNHCRinSYRIA.

United Nations Retweeted World Food Programme ✓ @WFP- 29 January

Make this the 1 video you share today: Amidst rubble and ruin, WFP is helping men, women and children in East #Aleppo, #Syria

United Nations Retweeted OCHA Syria ✓ @OCHA\_Syria

Food stocks almost depleted as humanitarian needs are increasing for 93,500 people in besieged #DeirEzZor #Syria: <http://ow.ly/VMN5308sIOa>

UNRWA@UNRWA-24 January

UNRWA provides schooling to 45K #PalestineRefugees in Syria. #SupportSyrians via the @UN resilience building conference in Helsinki today. <https://twitter.com/UNRWA/status/823860658798096384>

UNRWA@UNRWA- 24 January

280K #PalRefs are displaced. With partners from #SupportSyrians, we provide relief. Follow @PKraehenbuehl at @UN 3RP conf in #Helsinki. <https://twitter.com/UNRWA/status/823878030695288835>

## **Facebook**

"It's really cold here," Suad told us. "We need blankets and heating stoves which we can't afford to buy." Please will you share your warmth with Palestine refugees like Suad, enduring a sixth freezing winter in Syria? #shareyourwarmth <https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.118302834882959.10295.10517119286279/0/1317062208340343/?type=3&theater>

The situation in Syria has been exacerbated by soaring food prices across the country. With thanks to donors like the King Salman Centre for Humanitarian Aid and Relief UNRWA is able to lessen the impact through its emergency food assistance programme. [https://www.facebook.com/pg/unrwa/posts/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/unrwa/posts/?ref=page_internal)

During Skype call 2, students in Syria and Germany participating in the #EU-funded #MyVoiceMySchool discussed the first results of their advocacy project.

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/videos/1317622781617619/>

"My wife and I look forward to receiving the food basket. Our favorite ingredients are the lentils, the rice and the pasta", says Khamis Ali, a 65-year-old internally displaced Palestine refugee from Yarmouk refugee camp in Syria.

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.118302834882959.10295.105171192862790/1315824661797431/?type=3&theater>

The generous donation of US\$ 1 million from the King Salman Centre for Humanitarian Aid and Relief was instrumental to ensure a first round of food assistance in 2017 to one of the most vulnerable population in Syria.

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.118302834882959.10295.105171192862790/1315825368464027/?type=3&theater>

Ameenah is a mother of five who used to live in Syria before the conflict started. She was badly injured and lost her husband, father and brother."Now I struggle to keep my children warm," she told us. Please #shareyourwarmth with Ameenah and help her keep her children warm during the harsh winter months in Syria

<https://www.facebook.com/unrwa/photos/a.118302834882959.10295.105171192862790/1322200017826562/?type=3&theater>

### **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 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, 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=>

### **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](https://twitter.com/ocha_syria), [facebook.com/UNOCHA.Syria](https://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/>

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/](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](http://www.unicef.org/photography/photo_2013.php#UNI82253)