

HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian leaders urge end to conflict as the crisis enters its fifth year
- Despite advocacy, UN agencies and partners continue to face increasing access constraints including to besieged and hard to reach areas.
- ISIL tightens restrictions on movement of people and goods in Der Ez Zor City.
- ERF is nearly depleted – additional funding required

KEY FIGURES



© Alham Dib (Homs, 2014) Students in Bab Hood, an area that witnessed violent clashes.

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As the Syria crisis enters fifth year, UN Humanitarian leaders urge end to conflict

Senior United Nations officials urged world leaders to put their differences aside and work to bring about meaningful change in Syria: to lift the sieges on 212,000 people trapped without assistance for months; ensure access of medical supplies to all parts of the country, including surgical items; press the parties to end indiscriminate attacks on civilians, including by barrel bombs; to end the collective punishment of civilians by cutting off of water and power supplies; and to avoid the complete collapse of the education system.

“We have expressed our horror, our outrage, our frustration as we have watched the tragedy unfold,” the UN’s senior humanitarian officials said in a [joint statement](#).

Inside Syria today, 12.2 million people are in need of assistance – a twelve fold increase since the conflict started in 2011 – including 5.6 million children.

Nearly half of all Syrians have been forced from their homes 3.9 million people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, while a further 7.6 million are displaced within Syria) – making this the largest displacement in the world.

Secretary-General stresses collective responsibility to resolve Syria conflict

In a statement issued on 12 March, the UN Secretary-General stressed the need to bring to an end the conflict in Syria, which has been raging for four years.

“The Syrian people feel increasingly abandoned by the world as they enter the fifth year of the war that has torn their country apart,” Mr. Ban Ki-Moon said. “They and their neighbours continue to suffer under the eyes of an international community, still divided and incapable of taking collective action to stop the killing and destruction.”

The Secretary-General reminded that humanitarian assistance can only alleviate Syria's suffering, not stop the war. He stressed the need for everyone to work together to achieve a political solution to this “senseless conflict,” and alleviate the suffering of those in need.

UN Launches #WhatDoesItTake social media campaign

To raise awareness of the dire situation facing Syrians, the UN has launched the #WhatDoesItTake social media campaign to give the public, Member States and the wider international community an opportunity to express their frustrations and urge support.

The campaign will run until the end of March. Anyone can participate by taking a picture of themselves holding up the sign #WhatDoesItTake and posting it on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag. All images will be captured on the campaign website at www.syria-whatdoestitake.org to create an online photo wall of solidarity.



#WhatDoesItTake to end the suffering of Syrians. Message from the Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria Yacoub El-Hillo

“Every month we report on the same violations. The numbers change, but the pattern remains the same. The parties to the conflict continue to act with impunity: denying access; removing vital supplies from convoys. This pattern must be broken. Specifically, the sieges that currently affect 212,000 people must be lifted. We must ensure that everyone, in all parts of Syria, has access to medical supplies, including surgical supplies,” said Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Kyung-wha Kang in her briefing to the Security Council on 26 February.

Access constraints continue

ISIL tightens restrictions on movement of people and goods to government-controlled neighbourhoods of Deir-ez-Zor City

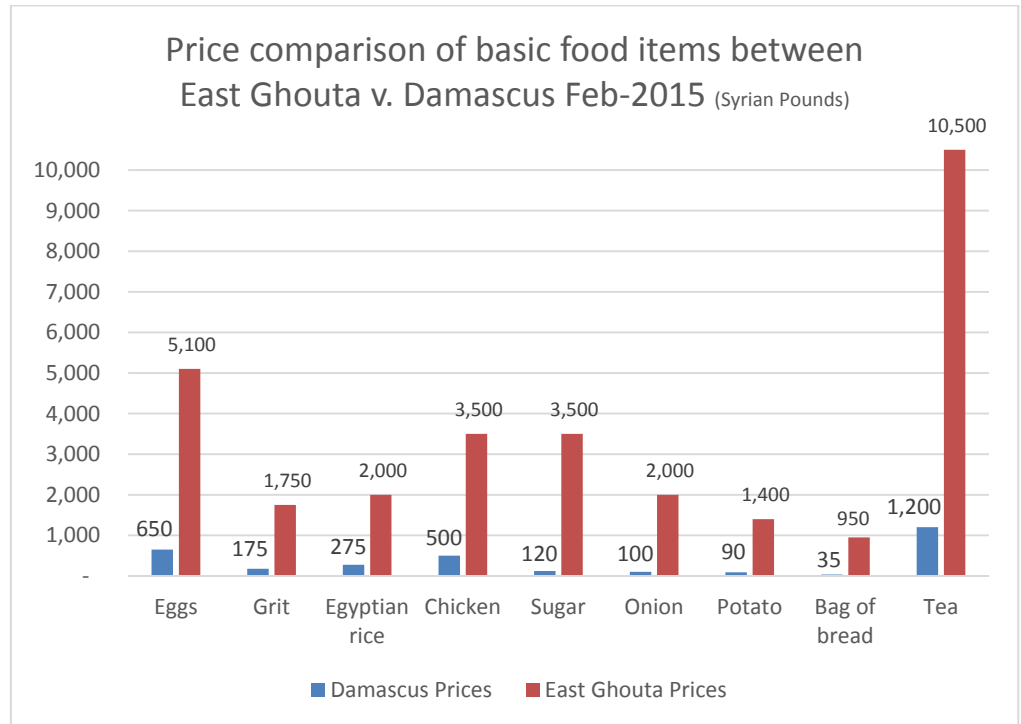
Since January, ISIL has increasingly restricted commercial and humanitarian access to government-controlled neighborhoods of Deir-ez-Zor city. Local sources report that civilians are only permitted to leave the areas but not allowed to enter and that communication remains challenging as ISIL continues to prevent repair of the main fiber optic cable serving these neighborhoods. The restriction on commercial traffic and humanitarian assistance has caused a shortage of food supplies and a subsequent rise in prices of basic goods in the city. On 16 February, ISIL reportedly seized five trucks carrying food items to al-Joura neighborhood, killing the drivers and re-directing the items to Al Mayadeen, where each food parcel was sold for about SYP 4,000¹. Attempts by humanitarian actors to respond to the growing needs of the population have not been successful.

Despite continued advocacy with parties to the conflict, UN agencies and partners continue to face increasing access constraints to besieged areas.

Over the past month, UN agencies were faced with various access constraints affecting access to 212,000 people who live under siege in Syria, including lack of approvals, increased insecurity, fighting, or conditions imposed by the parties.

In the meantime, an escalation of violence and attacks have been reported in several besieged locations of eastern Ghouta, particularly Douma, East Harasta, Saqba, Hamouria and Erbin. Dire humanitarian needs, including increasing malnutrition, compounded by shortages of food and health supplies, as well as spiking prices of basic commodities, are reported from besieged locations in Rural Damascus as indicated in the table below.

¹ Approximately US\$18.2 as per UN rate for the month of March



Dire humanitarian needs, including increasing malnutrition, compounded by shortages of food and health supplies, as well as spiking prices of basic commodities, are reported from besieged locations in Rural Damascus

During the month of February, requests for two inter-agency convoys, namely to Douma and East Harasta targeting 10,000 people with multi-sectoral assistance remained unanswered.

UNRWA, in February, was also unable to reach the 18,000 civilians living under siege in Yarmouk, due to insecurity in the area. Distribution resumed on 6 March after three months of no deliveries.

On the other hand; UNICEF, through implementing partners, vaccinated a total number of 5,824 children under five against polio in the besieged locations of Yarmouk (in January) and Zahara and Nubul (in February).



Credit: OCHA/Josephine Guerrero

January 2015 - Families evacuated from East Ghouta congregate in the courtyard of the Dahit Qudsayya collective shelter, as they receive basic aid while waiting for more permanent shelter solutions.

Access to hard-to-reach enclaves remains challenging and limited progress has been achieved

In February, a request to conduct an inter-agency convoy with SARC to Madaya, a hard to reach enclave in Rural Damascus, was not answered.

In addition, inter-agency cross-line convoy plans for February targeting populations in dire need of assistance including in besieged and hard to reach and other areas located across the conflict lines in Aleppo and Idlib governorates have not yet received approval.

The United Nations continues to actively engage with the Syrian Government to obtain access to these locations.

Food, WASH, NFI and nutrition supplies for 60,000 people in Talbiseh in addition to health items, including basic medicines for 50,000 people, 100 wheelchairs and diabetes diagnostics and crutches while food supplies for 10,000 people in Mashrafa.

In Rural Homs, the second and third phases of an inter-agency convoy to Talbiseh and Mashrafa areas took place on 26 February and 3 March 2015 respectively, which allowed the completion of the cross-line target which started on 16 December.

UN agencies, in collaboration with SARC, delivered food, WASH, NFIs and nutrition supplies for 60,000 people (12,000 families) in opposition-controlled Talbiseh and food supplies for 10,000 people (2,000 families) in government-controlled Mashrafa.

Some health items, including basic medicines for 50,000 people, 100 wheelchairs and diabetes diagnostics and crutches were allowed to proceed during the second phase. However, surgical items, which were part of the loading plans for the second convoy, were not delivered as they were removed by security officials during loading, despite the Governor’s approval. The UN Hub requested again to deliver the surgical items on the third phase of the convoy; however, no response was received to this request.



Credit: SARC Homs/ Ahmad Al Khatib (Alzahabiya Camp in Talbiseh/ Homs – February 2015): Disaster team in SARC Homs Talbiseh sub-branch distribute relief items to 240 families as part of regular visits to the most vulnerable families in the temporary collective shelters.

SRP Funding Update

The total funding received for the humanitarian response inside Syria in 2014 was US\$1.08 billion, (48 per cent of the total requirement of \$2.26 billion).

As of 18 March, US\$ 833 million has been received in funding for humanitarian response inside Syria.



Additional funding is required for the newly established Syria Emergency Response Fund

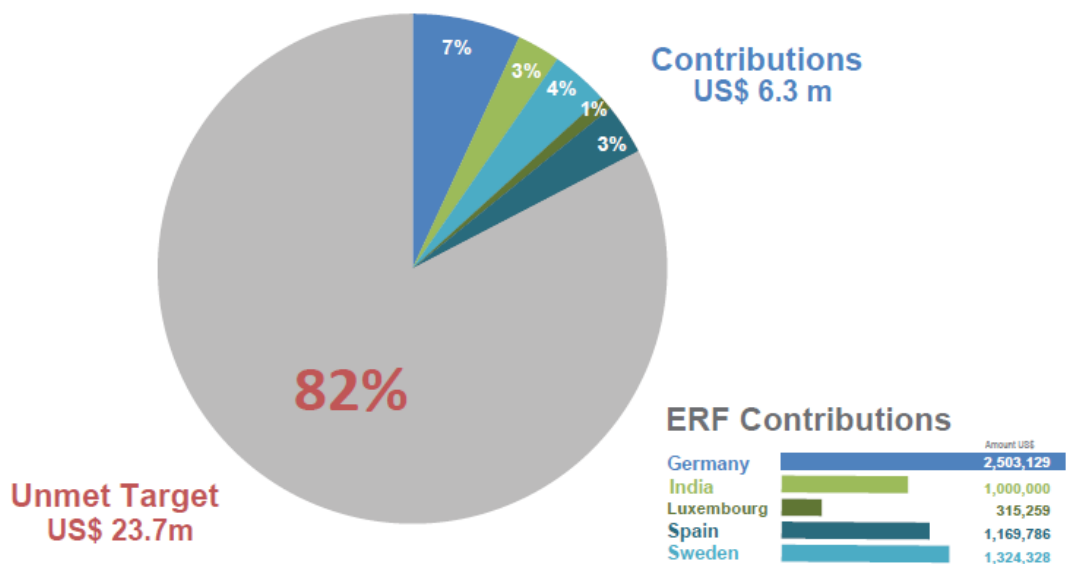
While a balance of \$750,000 is secured, additional funding is urgently required to replenish the Emergency Response Fund.

The Syria Emergency Response Fund (ERF) is a multi-donor country based pooled fund aiming to respond to the critical humanitarian needs of the Syrian people in a timely and strategic manner. In order to reach people in need in the most underserved areas, the Syria ERF aims at allocating 50 percent of the grant to projects implemented by NGOs as well as Red Cross/ Red Crescent societies. The ERF will also reach out to potential NGOs with a view to enhance their capacities and enable them to apply for the grants, particularly as most of these organizations have better access to underserved and hard to reach areas.

The target amount for the Syria ERF in 2015 is US\$30 million. Since the Syria ERF was launched in July 2014, \$6.3 million has been received by Germany, India, Luxemburg, Spain and Sweden, of which \$5.5 million has been allocated or disbursed for eight projects. With a current balance of approximately \$750,000, additional funding is urgently required to replenish the fund.

For more information about the ERF visit: www.unocha.org/syria/about-erf-syria

2015 Total Funding Target US\$ 30 million



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