NEW ZEALAND RED CROSS LAUNCHES EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR SYRIA

New Zealand Red Cross has today launched an emergency appeal to assist the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, with an initial contribution of $130,000.

The launch of the appeal in New Zealand reflects the worsening situation in Syria and the growing needs of millions of people affected by the on-going conflict.

According to the United Nations, an estimated 93,000 people have been killed and hundreds of thousands injured since the conflict began in Syria more than two years ago.

Approximately 7 million people are now in urgent need of assistance and 4.3 million civilians are internally displaced. At least 4 million people in Syria are in urgent need of food, with the figure rising.

“Every month the Syrian Arab Red Crescent provides assistance to 2 million people. From its 14 branches across the country SARC staff and volunteers are on the front line 24 hours a day, providing emergency ambulance services, first aid and mobile health clinics,” New Zealand Red Cross national president Dr Jenny McMahon says.

“We are appealing to New Zealanders to give generously to help support this vital emergency activity.”

Twenty Syrian Arab Red Crescent staff and volunteers have been killed in the conflict so far, and the situation is worsening. Many ambulances have been stolen or severely damaged in cross fire and first aid teams cannot always access those who need help.
“Every day Syrian Arab Red Crescent teams are out there trying to help those caught up in the violence. Its volunteers are seeing death, terrible injuries and destruction of entire neighbourhoods on a daily basis. They go out every day wondering if they will be able to reach people safely or if they will come home to their families,” Dr McMahon says.

The situation in Syria is now at its most difficult and dangerous. New Zealanders have the opportunity to help by donating to the emergency appeal at www.redcross.org.nz

Image available on request

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Note for editors:

New Zealand Red Cross ‘Healthcare in Danger’ competition

Tertiary and high school students can also help raise awareness of the dangers faced by Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel by entering the latest New Zealand Red Cross International Humanitarian Law competition.

They must make their case on “why the international community should act on the issue of healthcare in danger and what can be done to prevent attacks on healthcare workers and facilities during conflict”.

Last year the ICRC recorded more than 900 incidents in 22 countries of attacks against healthcare workers, patients and facilities. The winner will receive $500. Entry details at:


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