

**DEPUTY UN HUMANITARIAN CHIEF KYUNG-WHA KANG CALLS FOR
GREATER PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE FOR SYRIANS**

(Gaziantep/New York, 7 December 2015) United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Kyung-wha Kang today called for greater protection and assistance for Syrians caught up in the country's four-year conflict, following a five-day visit to Jordan and Turkey.

“The violence and destruction is relentless, exacting a terrible toll on women and girls, men and boys,” said Ms. Kang. “Parties to the conflict show little regard for the basic norms of warfare.”

Over four million Syrians have fled across borders in search of safety, while over 6.5 million others who are internally displaced have had to struggle to survive under extremely dire conditions.

During her visit, the Assistant Secretary-General talked with Syrian refugee families in Jordan and Turkey, who were being assisted and protected by the host governments with the support of humanitarian actors. Ms. Kang met with aid agencies who undertake relief operations inside Syria under increasingly dangerous circumstances.

The Assistant Secretary-General expressed appreciation for the generosity and hospitality of the Turkish and Jordanian authorities and their people, who refer to Syrian refugees as their brothers and sisters, while urging them to keep the borders open for families fleeing the conflict.

In Jordan, Ms. Kang witnessed the humanitarian cross-border operation at Ramtha on the border with Syria. “The commitment and cooperation of the Jordanian authorities has facilitated the entry of much-needed aid into Dara’a, Quneitra and surrounding areas in southern Syria,” she said.

Ms. Kang also visited Azraq camp which hosts 15,000 Syrian refugees. She met a woman who had travelled hundreds of kilometres from Raqqa with her six children to cross the border so that they could go to school. “These stories convey the desperation and despair that Syrians face every day,” noted Ms. Kang. “But I am deeply humbled by their resilience and strength, which motivates humanitarians to continue their work and to advocate for peace.”

ASG Kang expressed concern over the fate of refugees stranded at the border between Jordan and Syria, but conveyed the hope that a swift solution can be found as winter approaches, through the close collaboration forged between the Jordanian Government and the United Nations.

In Turkey - which hosts over two million refugees - ASG Kang met with the Turkish relief agency AFAD and the Kilis Governorate authorities. She met with local officials and spoke with

families sheltered in the border refugee camp. She thanked the Turkish Government for its generosity toward refugee families and their support to aid operations.

Ms. Kang visited Bab al Salama town to see first-hand cross-border relief operations. There she received reports on the recent spike in airstrikes and ground fighting near the northern border, which has impacted communities across northern Syria, forcing them to flee, many for the third or fourth time. ASG Kang spoke with aid organizations that had temporarily suspended operations due to airstrikes along routes where relief operations are ongoing.

Airstrikes are taking place where civilian infrastructure has already been severely damaged. In particular, health facilities have been routinely hit by aerial bombing. “There have been repeated devastating attacks on health facilities, and countless health workers have been killed or injured along with their patients. Alleviating human suffering - the core of humanity - is at stake,” said Ms. Kang.

In Gaziantep, ASG Kang visited a rehabilitation centre providing prosthetic limbs and psychosocial support to survivors of bombings and ground fighting. “I met with young girls and boys who had lost arms and legs. A young Syrian aid worker I spoke to was left with only one arm after a barrel bomb attack. There is hope in these courageous young people, and the doctors and nurses who are committed to doing all they can to help them heal and rebuild their lives.”

“The recent Vienna talks and the follow-up represent an opportunity for a new chapter in Syria. I urge all parties to the conflict to stop the war and secure peace for families who yearn to return home and rebuild their lives.”

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