The UN undertakes aid delivery at the Berm based on approval by the Government of Jordan for exceptional delivery of assistance to Syrians

Amman, Jordan 10 January 2018 – The UN has resumed aid delivery to an estimated 50,000 Syrians (10,000 families) who remain stranded at Rukban, near Jordan’s north-eastern border with Syria.

In September, the UN in Damascus submitted a request to the Syrian Government to obtain access to people in need at the Berm. While this request is still being reviewed by the Syrian authorities, the UN sought the agreement from the Jordanian Government to urgently access the population at Rukban. Approval of an exceptional delivery of humanitarian aid was granted to provide food and winterization relief items as they face increasingly dire circumstances.

The approval by the Jordanian Government is received with sincere appreciation by the UN agencies who are now proceeding with the exceptional delivery of food, essential non-food items and winterisation kits designed to help the affected population cope with the harsh winter conditions. The distribution began on Monday 8 January, and 59 trucks have thus far delivered assistance for 5,720 families.

The majority of the population at Rukban, consisting mainly of women and children, are living in an unbearably challenging and insecure environment for over two years, having fled insecurity in other parts of Syria. They have been without regular access to adequate food, healthcare, education and living conditions. Due to hostilities to the north of Rukban, the community has been occasionally cut off from the scant commercial traffic bringing in essential commodities. Prices have also fluctuated dramatically resulting in the population resorting to negative coping mechanisms to survive.
For immediate release

The last distribution of humanitarian assistance to Rukban occurred over six months ago and the number of cases of severely malnourished children recorded at the UN health clinic in Rukban has risen since then.

Jordan’s approval of this exceptional humanitarian operation will allow the UN to ameliorate the most immediate suffering of the population, particularly for the most vulnerable such as children, pregnant women and new mothers.

In addition to this exceptional operation, Jordan permitted UN partners to undertake the second round of a polio and Vitamin A vaccination campaign within the community from 9-22 December. Routine vaccinations of measles and tetanus will be carried out at the health clinic. Through onward collaboration with the Jordanian Armed Forces, the intent is to increase the numbers of patients accessing the clinic. The UN continues to provide water to the population via pipeline from the Jordanian side of the Berm.

The majority of the population fear returning to their places of origin and when attempting to reach their homes they have faced serious difficulties along the way. The UN remains extremely concerned about the protection of the population at Rukban whose future remains uncertain. In the short term Jordan’s positive decision will allow the UN to save lives and alleviate the immediate suffering that this population has endured for far too long.

In 2018 the UN looks to commence regular delivery of humanitarian assistance from Damascus and reiterates the urgent need for a long term durable solution for this stranded population, particularly given the volatile security situation and living conditions that people continue to face.