

Statement by the UN in Syria on civilians impacted by increase in hostilities

Damascus, 17 January 2018

The escalating violence caused by fighting has had a devastating impact on all civilians throughout Syria. Whether in Idleb, east Ghouta in Rural Damascus, Hama, Damascus, Aleppo, Hassakeh, Deir EzZour, Raqqah or Daraa, the recent violence has resulted in the deaths and injuries of hundreds of civilians, including women and children.

Civilians in affected areas urgently need protection and humanitarian assistance, but fighting is restricting the movement of people and life-saving supplies. In the last few weeks, increasing indiscriminate bombing, shelling and fighting forced tens of thousands of people to be uprooted. Accessing camps and other makeshift sites where internally displaced people are in dire need of aid is also urgently required. All affected civilians, wherever they are, must be protected, provided with assistance and accorded safe freedom of movement.

The UN in Syria urges all parties, inside and outside of the country, to prevent further violence and enable humanitarian organizations to assist people in need. Agreement by all parties and their allies is needed to facilitate the immediate and safe delivery of UN and Syrian Arab Red Crescent humanitarian convoys to people in need across Syria including those in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. The UN calls on all parties to facilitate medical evacuation of critically ill people notably in east Ghouta, Foah and Kafraya and other locations.

Almost all life-saving and economic sectors have been grossly affected by the violence. Healthcare facilities throughout Syria now operate at a fraction of the pre-crisis level. Internally displaced people and affected communities require sustainable livelihood support as they have exhausted what little resources they had.

The UN in Syria reminds all parties of their obligation under international humanitarian and human rights law to protect civilians. The UN appeals to allow humanitarians to do their job of assessing needs; reaching people in need with care, food and medical support and providing them with hope.

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