

Syria anniversary press release

New York, 6 March 2020: As the Syria conflict enters its tenth year, the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, has issued a call for additional funding to get lifesaving help to as many people as possible across the whole of Syria.

Nine years of conflict have left a devastating impact on the people of Syria. According to the UN's latest humanitarian assessments:

- The conflict has produced more than 5.6 million Syrian refugees and 6.1 million internally displaced people.
- More than 11 million people inside Syria require humanitarian assistance, including 4.8 million children.
- Only 64 per cent of hospitals and 52 per cent of primary healthcare centers across Syria were fully functional at the end of last year.
- Up to 70 per cent of the health workforce has left the country.
- The number of people without reliable access to food is nearly 8 million and, in just one year, has increased by more than 20 per cent. Across the country, 500,000 children are chronically malnourished.
- The number of displaced people seeking refuge in informal settlements and collective camps has increased by 42 per cent year on year, to a total of 1.2 million this year.

Humanitarian needs in Syria are huge; they are also complex.

The situation in the northwest is deeply concerning and the most brutal manifestation of the Syria crisis right now. Women and children have been forced to move countless times and sleep in the open as camps are full. They are struggling to survive in horrific conditions and spend their days trying to get out of harm's way.

In the northeast of Syria, nearly 100,000 people live in camps, without access to basic services and with no immediate prospect of returning to their homes. They get by in living conditions of last resort. Some 10-year-old children have gone their whole lives without ever sitting in a proper classroom.

Elsewhere in the country, people whose lives have been turned upside down by conflict are dependent on food assistance to feed their families because of the dire economic situation. Their prospects and sense of hope for the future are closing, and they are vulnerable to sudden economic shocks and change.

More than 5 million Syrians are refugees in neighboring countries, with uncertain prospects of returning. In many cases, their homes have been destroyed. In some cases, they face the prospect of never rejoining family members. Poverty rates for Syrian refugees vary across the region but exceed 60 per cent in some countries.

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Generous host communities themselves are affected. Of those Syrian refugees across the region, 93 per cent live within host communities, rather than in camps. Turkey hosts the highest number of refugees in the world, while Lebanon and Jordan have among the highest concentration of refugees per capita in the world. Generous communities with high numbers of refugees have had to cope with the additional demands on their public services and basic infrastructure. Last year the UN received only 58 per cent of the funding required to support refugees across the region.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock said:

“As the Syria conflict enters its tenth year, we face another shocking set of facts. More than 11 million people need immediate humanitarian assistance. More than 6 million are displaced internally, and another 5 million have been forced to leave the country.

“There is a brutal simplicity to these numbers, but the humanitarian crisis Syria faces is far from simple. In the northwest, women and children are sleeping in the open and fleeing bombs. In the northeast, children have spent their entire lives in camps. Elsewhere across the country, people’s prospects and hope for the future are being gradually eroded in the face of economic crisis.

“A political solution is the only option. The people of Syria need international humanitarian law to be respected. In the meantime, the UN will continue to help as many people as possible, wherever they are located. Lives can be saved and suffering alleviated when funding is in place. Many have been extraordinarily generous with funding over several years. We must stay the course.”

The relief operation has been generously funded, and it saves lives on a daily basis. In 2019, the UN and its partners reached over 6 million people each month throughout Syria. In January of this year, food assistance for around 1.4 million people was delivered via the cross-border mechanism alone, as were health supplies for almost half a million people, and non-food items for more than 230,000 people. That is more than in any other month since the cross-border operation was authorized in 2014.

The humanitarian relief effort is effective. It saves lives and it reduces suffering. Throughout the conflict, the humanitarian system has used all available means to get aid to those who need it – from airdrops to crossline deliveries to cross border deliveries.

The UN and its humanitarian partners are asking for a total of \$3.3 billion to respond to Syria’s humanitarian needs this year. To respond to the needs of Syrian refugees across the region and support their host communities, the UN is asking for \$5.2 billion.

This year – and every year the people of Syria need our help – the UN will get aid to as many of those that need it as possible.

The UN cares about all Syrians. Our message to the people of Syria is simple: we will stand by you.

Media resources: view and download our [photos](#) and [videos](#).

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