Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock

Statement on northwest Syria

Hatay, Turkey, 3 March 2020

Civilians across northwest Syria are experiencing a grave humanitarian crisis. Military activity in the region has displaced nearly one million people since December. Most of them are women and children.

People are struggling to survive in horrific conditions. They are traumatized, cold and many have no choice but to sleep in the open. Despite extraordinary efforts by humanitarian organizations, aid is not reaching everyone who needs it.

What civilians need is a ceasefire. What civilians need is for international humanitarian law to be respected.

The UN is pursuing every option to assist everyone in need in northwest Syria.

Our inter-agency mission into Idleb yesterday was a crucial step to support ongoing relief efforts in northwest Syria.

It gave UN humanitarian agencies a chance to gather first-hand, detailed information about humanitarian needs on the ground and about how best to protect civilians. The mission found people living in fear of bombings and fighting, and in need of adequate shelter, food, sanitation, basic health services and protection.

We are sending hundreds of trucks from Turkey into northwest Syria loaded with food, water and shelter each month. This is saving lives. It must continue, and it must be scaled up.

An estimated 2.8 million people in northwest need humanitarian assistance. With US$500 million of funding, we will be able to reach 1.1 million of the most vulnerable.

With today’s generous $108 million contribution from the United States, more than $300 million has been received or pledged by donors.

We are determined to stand by the people of Syria.

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