



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY- GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND
DEPUTY EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR,
KYUNG-WHA KANG**

**SECURITY COUNCIL BRIEFING ON SYRIA
26 February 2015**

As Delivered

On behalf of USG and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos, I would like to deliver the following statement.

As Syria enters its fifth year of conflict, violence and brutality continue unabated and with total impunity. The indiscriminate use of explosive weapons in populated areas, by all parties, claimed more lives this month and displaced thousands. Government aerial bombardments, including the use of barrel bombs, and attacks by armed opposition groups have intensified in many areas - including Aleppo, Dar'a and Rural Damascus.

The parties to the conflict continue to kill civilians and target civilians and civilian infrastructure, including vital public services such as water and electricity, in blatant disregard of resolution 2139, and international humanitarian law, condemning people to further unnecessary suffering. Over 2 million people in Aleppo and Dar'a Governorates have been affected by willful denial of water and electricity by parties to the conflict this month.

Of the 212,000 people who are besieged, in conditions that deteriorate every day, only 304 were reached with food in January. Those 304 were in Yarmouk, where 18,000 people are in desperate need.

In the other besieged locations, the parties continued to restrict access severely. The requests mentioned in our previous statement to the council, to deliver assistance to people in East Ghouta, were denied by the government. Nor could we deliver to the towns of Nubul or Zahra, besieged by opposition forces since May last year.

In Raqqa and Deir ez Zor, ISIL has closed down the offices of several organisations, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, a key implementing partner. Some 600,000 people have not received food assistance in these governorates since last December.

The sick or wounded often have nowhere safe to get treatment. According to Physicians for Human Rights, there were four attacks on medical facilities in January and five medical staff were killed. On 23 February, a car bomb reportedly killed at least four civilians in the parking area of a hospital in Al-Qardaha, Latakia governorate.

There are continued challenges to the provision of medical supplies, in particular surgical items. However, in one development, WHO succeeded in sending life-saving medicine and medical supplies this week from Damascus to hospitals and public health centers in the eastern part of Aleppo city and rural Aleppo, for approximately 60,500 medical treatments.

At the same time, WHO surgical items, UNICEF midwifery and diarrhea kits, and UNFPA reproductive health kits were removed by government security personnel from an inter-agency convoy travelling to al-Wa'er in Homs governorate. This follows a previous refusal to allow medical supplies into Al Wa'er in November.

Mr. President,

Every month we report on the same violations. The numbers change, but the pattern remains the same. The parties to the conflict continue to act with impunity: killing and abducting civilians; denying access; removing vital supplies from convoys. This pattern must be broken.

Specifically, the sieges that currently affect 212,000 people must be lifted. We must ensure that everyone, in all parts of Syria, has access to medical supplies, including surgical supplies. The use of blockades of humanitarian aid, and of basic services including water and electricity, must stop. As must the indiscriminate attacks on civilians, including through barrel bombs, which have come to characterize this conflict.

Mr. President,

This Council must do everything in its power to hold the parties accountable and achieve these vital changes. Resolution 2139 is extensive in its scope and the Council's concerns and recommendations, as set out in that resolution, must be respected.

Humanitarian organisations operating from within Syria and from neighbouring countries continue to reach millions of people in need month after month. Last month, some 3.4 million people were reached with food assistance while hundreds of thousands were also reached with medicines, household items and other supplies. Cross border shipments by the United Nations and partners have increased since resolution 2165. They have now reached some 950,000 people with food, 880,000 with critical household items, 340,000 with water and sanitation, and nearly 470,000 with medical supplies.

This complements and is in addition to the existing programmes of Non-Governmental Organisations that again reached over one million people last month.

But it is not enough. More effort must be made to deescalate the violence, protect people and enable humanitarian organisations to give more support.

We are encouraged by the efforts made by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Staffan De Mistura to secure a freeze in fighting in some parts of Aleppo.

In hopes that the freeze will materialize, humanitarian agencies have developed plans to scale up aid deliveries throughout eastern Aleppo City.

Our plans include the provision of emergency food and other supplies, and the rehabilitation of basic services including electricity and waste management, removal of debris, getting children back into school, and repairing and renovating damaged homes.

Humanitarian agencies are already delivering assistance in Aleppo but much more needs to be done. The UN will make use of any additional opportunities, including through the freeze, to expand humanitarian access.

However, we are extremely concerned that two OCHA staff, doing essential work with opposition parties on the ground to secure access for the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian supplies, have been asked to leave the country without any reason given. This will hinder our work tremendously. We call upon the Government of Syria to reverse its decision so that we are able to continue our life saving work for all Syrians in need.

Mr. President,

In addition to the many operational constraints we face, including insecurity and interference by the parties to the conflict, our response cannot keep up with the needs of Syria's people because we don't have enough funding.

By the end of last year, the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan for 2014 was just 48 per cent funded. We cannot afford the dire consequences of failing to meet those needs.

We can do more, if we have more money to do so.

Lack of funding has already forced WFP to reduce food rations by 30 per cent. In the longer term, if we don't receive what we need, we will only be able to provide food to the extremely vulnerable.

For every \$1 million WHO cannot raise in Syria, some 227,000 people lose vital health services. And unless urgent funding is received before May 2015, a million children who are out-of-school will not be able to access alternative education options. Malnutrition programs for up to 1 million children will have to be halted or reduced.

The humanitarian community has come together to bring all operations in Syria – cross line and cross border – under one single response plan for 2015. This will enable better

identification of needs to enable a more effective response. But in order for it to work, we need the resources.

Kuwait has generously agreed to host a third pledging conference for Syrians in need on 31st March. We need high-level representation at that conference, and meaningful pledges that will make a difference on the ground.

We look to the members of this Council to show leadership to end the barbaric and brutal warfare in Syria. We are running out of words to describe the terrible human and humanitarian consequences.

Thank you for your attention.