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UN UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR, VALERIE AMOS

Press remarks on Syria humanitarian appeals launch
Geneva, 7 June 2013

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We have just launched our biggest ever appeal for Syria. We had hoped we would not have to do it again but today we are asking for $4.4 billion for the whole of 2013. That's more than half the combined total of all of our other appeals which cover 16 countries from Afghanistan through to Somalia.

Thanks to the generosity of donors who have already pledged between January and now, both appeals have already received about $1.24 billion in funding so far, which means that we have $3.1 billion in unmet requirements until the end of the year.

We estimate that 6.8 million people now need urgent help. That is one in three Syrians in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Between January and April, the number of people displaced within Syria more than doubled, and as you will hear from High Commissioner Guterres, the situation in the region has worsened dramatically with over 1.6 million Syrians now sheltering in the neighbouring countries and North Africa.

But I think what we, as Principals, would like to make clear today, is that these are massive figures but those figures mask a human tragedy. Ordinary women, men, and children are bearing the brunt of this crisis. More than 80,000 people have been killed and these are figures which are rising every day. Schools, hospitals, and water sanitation plants have all been targeted.

We, as the United Nations, are concerned that as these needs are rising, we are not able to meet them all. We are working with a number of constraints, including the security situation on the ground, and the need to have more partners on the ground. We have UN staff, NGO colleagues and also our colleagues from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, who have been targeted, some have been killed, some have been kidnapped. It's a difficult and desperate situation, but I think we are all proud of our staff, who are doing such critical and urgent work.

But most of all we feel that we need a political solution to this crisis. This is not a crisis that will be solved through humanitarian efforts. We will continue to do all we can, and in addition to that, we will continue to raise our voices to find that political solution. Because the Syrian people we have spoken to in Syria, in Lebanon, in Jordan, and in Turkey through all of our visits, have asked us time and time again, why has the international community abandoned us?

We feel that our job is to help as many Syrians as we can. But it is the job of the international community to find the political solution that will bring stability, security, and an end to this conflict and violence.