



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos**

**Remarks to Third Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations  
Donors to the Syrian People**

**Kuwait City, 30 March 2015**

*As Delivered*

Thank you all for being here today to stand in solidarity with the people of Syria. I thank the International Islamic Charitable Organization of Kuwait for hosting today's event, and for your tireless efforts to support Syrian refugees, particularly at your refugee villages in Turkey and Jordan.

I thank all the organizations represented here for your commitment and support to Syrians in need. Charitable organizations are playing a crucial part in every area of the response to this crisis. You are on the front lines risking your lives to deliver aid. You are raising resources, and you are raising public awareness through creative advocacy campaigns like Turn the Lights Back On in Syria.

The organizations represented here are valued partners and we will continue to work in partnership with you to benefit the people of Syria.

My thanks to Dr. Abdullah Al-Matouq for his tireless efforts to raise resources and raise awareness to help the people of Syria and for his role in today's event.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

As the war enters its fifth year, we continue to see breathtaking levels of savagery in Syria. Despite the passing of Security Council resolutions aimed at preventing attacks on civilians, protecting the most vulnerable people in Syria, including children and women, and helping humanitarian organizations to get to all people who need aid. We see no reduction in the violence and it is becoming harder and harder to reach people.

Those involved in the fighting, including the government of Syria, are failing to meet their basic minimum legal obligations. Indiscriminate aerial bombings, including the use of barrel bombs, car bombs, mortar attacks, unguided rockets and the use of other explosive devices in populated areas, continue. Increased violence in Idlib city in the past week has displaced hundreds of thousands more people. People are so desperate that millions of them have fled to neighboring countries.

We urgently need to find a political solution. The humanitarian situation is getting worse every day.

Children are particularly badly affected. 5.6 million children are in need of assistance and well over two million children are out of school. A quarter of Syria's schools have been damaged, destroyed or taken over for shelter.

The health system has been destroyed, with just half of primary health centers still working. 233 attacks on 183 medical facilities have been documented over the last four years. More than 600 health workers have been killed.

Basic services continue to be deliberately attacked and cut. Some 450,000 people in Dar'a had their water cut for two weeks in the last month. Even when services are restored, people often only get electricity or water sporadically because of the damage to essential infrastructure.

4.8 million people live in areas which are hard to reach because of insecurity, active fighting and deliberate obstruction by the parties to the conflict.

In parts of the country that are under ISIL control, some humanitarian offices have been closed, preventing food distributions.

The Government continues to put in place bureaucratic procedures that slow down our response. So far this year, the United Nations has requested access to 33 hard to reach and besieged locations for the delivery of aid. Only three – three – have been agreed.

In the past few days, an additional 228,000 people have been besieged by ISIL forces in Government-controlled areas of Deir ez-Zor. They are unable to leave the city and minimal supplies have been air lifted in by the Government. This increases the total number of people besieged areas in Syria from 212,000 to an estimated 440,000.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

You all know the pain this conflict is causing. Many of you have seen its effects first-hand, because of your work with displaced people inside Syria, or with the millions of refugees who have fled the country.

Tomorrow, Kuwait hosts the Third International Pledging Conference for Syria which will be opened by the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and chaired by UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

I thank the Amir, the government and the people of Kuwait for their continued commitment to Syrians in need. Without these pledging conferences, which helped to raise billions, many more people inside and outside Syria would be struggling to survive.

Our appeal this year, on behalf of the United Nations and civil society partners is to help Syrians inside Syria, refugees, communities in neighboring countries hosting refugees, and the governments in neighboring countries which need to expand their services in sectors like health care and education. Their economies are under considerable stress. Given that this conflict has gone on for over four years, our response needs to be comprehensive.

The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

We at OCHA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, are proud of our work with you. We could not do the work without the partnership we have with you. As I end my tenure at the United Nations, I hope that we have built a solid basis for continued cooperation in the future.

Shukran.