EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR’S KEY MESSAGES ON SYRIA
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Key Messages

1. At least one million people need humanitarian assistance in Syria. This is the conclusion of United Nations and Organization for Islamic Cooperation staff who took part in the recent Government-led assessment mission. This number refers to people directly affected by violence, including those who have been injured or displaced, and have lost access to essential services, the families hosting them and those whose vulnerability has increased over the last year.

2. The information obtained from the assessment means that we now have a better picture of what people urgently need. This includes food, medical assistance, household items, psychosocial counselling and educational support. A convoy was dispatched on 28 March from Damascus to Tartous carrying supplies of food, blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits and other items for 2,000 displaced families. Other distributions are planned.

3. Humanitarian organizations in Syria will need to swiftly scale up activities so that we are able to respond to these urgent needs. This requires the agreement of the Government to allow the UN and partners to do this. UN agencies and its partners will also pre-position relief items and establish supply pipelines. I urge Governments to contribute to the newly established Emergency Response Fund for Syria so that we can do this work. I am allocating US$ 13 million from CERF as a first step.

4. As fighting spreads and violence increases, and as people continue to flee across borders to safety, unhindered access for humanitarian partners to reach those in need inside Syria remains the top priority. I support the call for regular pauses in fighting to evacuate the wounded and deliver help to devastated neighbourhoods. The United Nations and its partners will continue to work in a neutral, independent and impartial way. More in-depth assessments and monitoring of specific needs will also be required.

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