

ACTION

COPY

AG

DSG

Note to the Secretary-General

FOURTH SYRIA HUMANITARIAN FORUM



1. I would like to update you on the outcome of the fourth Syria Humanitarian Forum, which took place in Geneva on 16 July and was attended by representatives of Member States, Regional Organisations, United Nations agencies and international and non-governmental organisations.

(7) 07112

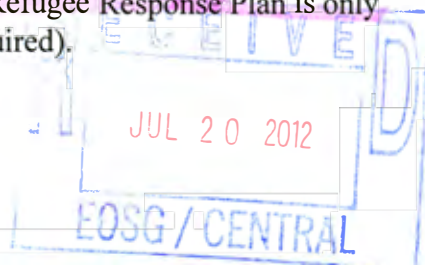
2. The Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (RHC), Mr. Radhouane Nouicer, briefed the Forum on the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation. Escalating conflict has displaced a growing number of people. As accommodation and host community resources run out, more people are staying in temporary shelters, such as schools and public buildings, which are overcrowded and unsanitary. New assessments of healthcare services (WHO-Ministry of Health) and food insecurity (WFP-FAO-Ministry of Agriculture) are expected to show a significant rise in the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance since the March assessment was conducted by the Government, United Nations and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

3. The UNHCR Regional Refugee Coordinator, Mr. Panos Moumtzis, updated the Forum on the refugee situation. Over the past 100 days, an average of 700 refugees have left Syria each day. Most come from areas affected by intense fighting, and the majority (74 per cent) are women and children. Although Syria's neighbours have generously been hosting refugees, their resources are depleted and greater burden sharing is urgently required to sustain the response. The Government of Turkey noted that it has spent more than US\$200 million to support Syrian refugees.

4. Forum participants expressed grave concern regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation and increasing violence in Syria. They called on all parties to respect international law and urged the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator and the Government of Syria to update the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan, taking into account the increasing needs.

5. Participants welcomed Government steps to enable the scale-up of humanitarian assistance, but called for greater cooperation in the issuance of visas for all humanitarian staff (regardless of nationality) and granting permission for additional international non-governmental organizations to commence operations.

6. The Forum made clear that UN agencies have significantly scaled-up their humanitarian operations. WFP provided food aid to 500,000 people in June and will reach 850,000 people in July. UNHCR, UNICEF and UNFPA distributed essential items to more than 100,000 displaced people in the past month and will double this in July. Although some donors recently increased their contributions, the donor base remains extremely limited and is vastly inadequate compared to the needs. The Syria Humanitarian Response Plan is only 21 per cent funded (\$38.4 million received out of \$180 million required) and the revised Regional Refugee Response Plan is only 26 per cent funded (\$50 million received out of \$193 million required).

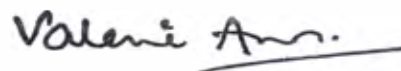


Hum/04/001

7. Participants praised the courage, creativity and dedication of humanitarians in reaching people in need, despite the dangerous and difficult operational environment. They deplored the recent killing of a Syrian Arab Red Crescent staff member in the line of duty (the fifth in recent months) and called on all parties to guarantee the safety and security of aid workers.

8. I have asked the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator to visit the Gulf States to raise funds and have also asked traditional donors (the UK and the USA in particular) to contact their counterparts in capitals to urge greater financial support. Without additional funding, humanitarian operations will be jeopardized. Some agencies, such as WHO, already have no funding with which to continue their efforts, while others, such as UNHCR and WFP, are exhausting internal emergency funds to continue their response.

9. I will reconvene the Forum ahead of the high-level segment of this year's General Assembly to take stock of progress and consider next steps.



Valerie Amos
17 July 2012

cc: Mr. Annan
Ms. Chan
Ms. Clark
Ms. Cousin
Mr. Feltman
Mr. Guterres
Mr. Ladsous
Mr. Lake
Ms. Malcorra
Ms. Pillay