

P R E S S E M I T T E I L U N G

Joint NGO Statement Syria Cross-Border

Aid agencies warn of a humanitarian catastrophe should the UN Security Council fail to renew a resolution allowing lifesaving aid delivered cross-border to reach Syria by July 10.

30 June, 2022 – A group of 29 Non-government organisations (NGOs) are warning of a humanitarian catastrophe should a UNSC resolution allowing lifesaving aid and services to be delivered cross-border to reach Syria not be renewed by July 10th. What's at stake is access to food assistance, COVID-19 vaccinations, critical medical supplies and essential services including healthcare, access to clean water and education for millions of Syrians who currently rely on this assistance provided cross-border.

The NGOs urge the Security Council to maintain this critical lifeline for Syrians in the northwest of the country where a record 4.1 million people, the majority of whom are women and children, are now in need of humanitarian assistance. As needs continue to rise, driven by ongoing conflict, economic downturn, drought and COVID-19, aid agencies warn that shutting this lifeline would cause inexcusable suffering.

In 2021, the UN Security Council authorization of cross-border assistance allowed humanitarian organizations to reach over 2.4 million people a month in the northwest, providing food for 1.8 million people, nutrition assistance to 85,000 people, education for 78,000 children, access to life-saving dignity kits for 250,000 women and girls, and critical medical items and supplies to help people survive the cold winter months. The NGOs are clear that removing this channel of assistance will have devastating humanitarian impacts on civilians and that there is no viable alternative.

NGOs are calling on the Security Council to act based on the principle of humanity alone and reauthorize the cross-border resolution for another 12 months. NGOs say anything less than a 12-month renewal would jeopardize the response just ahead of the harsh winter months when populations living in camps or in damaged homes, often in flimsy tents or makeshift shelters, are more vulnerable to the elements and need an urgent scale up of support to survive. A failure to reauthorize cross-border assistance would see civilians who are in need of life saving assistance cut off from aid.

David Miliband, President & CEO, International Rescue Committee said:

"The people of Syria have been short-changed for too long, and now it is the time for the UN Security to correct course and show it can put people's lives above politics. Humanitarian realities on the ground should be the only driver of Security Council action on Syria. The humanitarian case for cross-border assistance is more obvious today than ever before, with over 14 million Syrians in need – a 50% increase since 2014. Syrian people need more aid and more humanitarian access - not less.

"The reauthorization of Bab al-Hawa, for 12 months is the bare minimum. It will ensure aid, including essential medicines and supplies, COVID vaccines and immunizations for children are able to reach Syrians experiencing the most acute needs via the most direct routes. A failure to renew would risk

hospitals, healthcare centres and mobile clinics serving more than 4 million people in the northwest collapsing at this time of increased need."

Sofia Sprechmann Sineiro, Secretary-General, CARE International said:

"What should a Syrian mother do if she wakes up on the eleventh of July to find out that food aid for her and her children will be cut off? How would you tell the 97,000 pregnant women that they will have to live without emergency obstetric or postnatal care? How will a family of six survive the coming winter without heat or building materials to fix their flooded tents? The UN Security Council must uphold its responsibility to ensure this lifeline of cross-border aid for Syrians in the northwest of the country remains in place for another 12 months."

Husni Al-Barazi, Founder of Big Heart Foundation, Chairman of ARCS said:

"Let us be clear: Syrians are enduring the greatest hunger crisis since the start of the conflict over a decade ago. The price of basic food supplies has risen up to 86% in the last 18 months and is increasing, while families' purchasing power is at an all-time low. The worst drought the country has faced in 70 years, will only further worsen food insecurity throughout 2022 and beyond. For many families in northwest Syria, aid delivered cross-border through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing, is their only source of food. The World Food Programme provides 1.4 million Syrians with food through this crossing each month. If the Security Council fails to support a renewal, I am distraught as I warn that over 1 million people will be at risk of losing this food assistance.

"We are front-line humanitarian actors serving millions of Syrians in need every day. We call on the Security Council to view us from this prism – Humanity – Neutrality – Impartiality – Independence in the best benefit of humanity. We must ensure their support on this renewal. It is unfathomable to think of the catastrophic conditions a non-renewal would bring us."

Andrew J. Morley, World Vision International President and CEO said:

"More than one million children in Northwest Syria depend on this cross-border assistance for their very survival. Their lives have been plunged into further chaos and misery this past year, as so many crises converge all at once - adding to the pain of conflict which has been dragging on for so many years. Cutting off this vital lifeline at a time when it is so desperately needed would have catastrophic, heart-breaking consequences for the most vulnerable."

Signed by:

International Rescue Committee

CARE International

World Vision International

Save the Children

Norwegian Refugee Council

Oxfam

Mercy Corps

Concern Worldwide

Humanity & Inclusion - Handicap International

InterAction
Syrian American Medical Society – SAMS
Big Heart Foundation
Islamic Relief
Christian Aid
GOAL
American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS)
Syrian Forum
Syria Relief & Development (SRD)
Syria Relief
SEMA
People in Need
Relief International
Global Communities
MedGlobal
Rahma Worldwide Aid and Development
Hand in Hand for Aid and Development (HIHFAD)
Al-Sham Humanitarian Foundation – AHF
Swasia Charity Foundation
NuDay

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Über Save the Children

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in rund 120 Ländern tätig. Save the Children setzt sich ein für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen. Für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben sowie frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen und lernen können – seit über 100 Jahren.