

Inaction will have devastating consequences for Syrian people, warn aid agencies

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Note to the Editor

Issued on behalf of the Syria INGO Regional Forum (SIRF), Northeast Syria NGO Forum (NES Forum), Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA), Northwest Syria NGO Forum collectively representing over 100 NGOs working across all parts of Syria

The Ministerial Segment of the Brussels 8 Conference must pave the way towards a political solution, de-escalation of violence, improved humanitarian access and adequate flexible funding to support conflict-affected Syrians across Syria and in refugee hosting countries, say over 100 national and international NGOs.

The cost of inaction is too high, while the number of people needing humanitarian assistance has reached an unprecedented 16.7 million.

To date this year, only 6.3% of required humanitarian funding for Syria has been received and NGOs warn that underfunding and short-term programs risk undermining life-saving response and longer-term, sustainable programming needed to address the worsening crisis. Stopgap measures can no longer meet the scale and complexity, as crisis-affected Syrians continue to bear the consequences.

NGOs are deeply alarmed by the escalating crisis in Syria, marked by a surge in airstrikes and a staggering number of conflict-related incidents, reaching unprecedented levels not seen since 2020. The gravity of the situation demands urgent attention and concerted efforts from the international community to address the increasing levels of critical needs among the Syrian people. Increased hostilities further exacerbate Syria's explosive ordnance crisis, with over 60% of Syrians at grave risk of injury, disability, or death.

Families face dire choices between schooling, food, and medicine. The situation is deteriorating, with loss of livelihoods, barely functioning basic services, and recurring disease outbreaks. Underfunded health facilities risk closure, depriving people of crucial care. Cuts to the World Food Programme activities have severe impacts on women and children's health and protection, as women often forgo meals to prioritize family needs, straining family dynamics and increasing domestic violence risks.

In neighboring countries, nine in 10 Syrian refugees struggle to meet basic needs. While host countries have been generous, rising anti-refugee rhetoric, restricted access to work and services, and regional socioeconomic challenges negatively impact refugees. With protection risks increasing, continued humanitarian and development support for both host communities and refugees remains critical.

The devastating impact of funding shortfalls is deeply concerning. Humanitarians are now compelled to raise the bar on vulnerability criteria just to deliver life-saving assistance. This is also directly undermining crucial early recovery and resilience programming - solutions that are more critical than ever to address the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis. While emergency aid remains absolutely vital, a thoughtful transition towards sustainable, long-term approaches is required.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Syria ranks among the top ten countries globally with the highest number of people facing hunger.
 - The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that over half of the population, 12.9 million Syrians, are struggling with inadequate food supplies, while another 2.6 million are on the brink of food insecurity.
 - The rates of acute and chronic malnutrition in children are alarmingly high as are rates of anemia among pregnant women and teenage girls. Nearly 5.9 million people, 64% of whom are children, urgently require nutritional support
 - The Brussels VIII Conference took place in April and May 2024 and was hosted and organized by the European Union. The annual pledging event, The Ministerial Day, is slated for May 27th, 2024.
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