



Urgent Calls for International Humanitarian Action in Response to Escalation in Northwest Syria – Syrian NGO Alliance

The recent military escalation in Northwest Syria is creating an acute and growing Humanitarian crisis as the Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA), a coalition representing the leading NGOs in Syria and our civil society partners. We call on the international community to act now to protect displaced civilians in NWS and support the humanitarian response to the current escalation.

We are saddened by the aerial attacks and the use of prohibited weapons, which, according to INSO, were conducted by GoS/GoR warplanes. Civilian lives were lost in Idlib and Aleppo, where we saw the targeting of the City of Idlib with Cluster Bombs and the attack on several fuel stations.

We also saw attacks on Aleppo University Hospital and many hospitals in Idlib, and several neighbourhoods in both Aleppo and Idlib, including IDP Camps.

The SNA urgently call upon the international community to urgently implement effective measures to cease the targeting of innocent civilians and humanitarian workers and to ensure the protection of humanitarian facilities in Aleppo and Idlib provinces.

As the needs grow across Syria in general and the Northwest in particular, the SNA calls on the UNOCHA to take Immediate measures to ensure unrestricted access to life-saving assistance for those in need, including respect for the humanitarian notification system that ensures the humanitarian and civilian infrastructure are deconflicted.

Our member organisations are on the ground, fully prepared and responding swiftly and effectively in areas we can operate and reach. This is changing as the military escalation intensifies and spreads. For us humanitarian actors to respond to the growing humanitarian needs, the SNA must stress to the international community the critical importance of the following points:

1. Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Workers: All parties to the conflict must adhere to international humanitarian law, ensuring the safety and dignity of civilians and aid. This includes ceasing to target civilian infrastructure and ensuring safe passages for aid delivery.
2. UN agencies must assume their responsibilities by promptly activating emergency response mechanisms to address the urgent needs of affected populations.
3. We remain committed to coordinating with different UN agencies through the HLG or SSG and fully respect the Whole of Syria mechanism.
4. Revising Access Maps and Continuity of Services: We urge the UN to adapt its operational plans, handover process and update access maps to ensure the seamless delivery of ongoing projects in the shifted controlled areas. This step is vital to prevent service disruption and protect the interests of beneficiaries, especially for life-saving programs.
5. Lessons should be learned from the 2016 displacement, the lack of coordination, and the absence of handover; as our field colleagues have observed, we are witnessing a deterioration of services and a sense of panic amongst civilians.

6. The Donors should scale their response efforts and provide additional funding to meet the escalating emergency needs. This support is critical to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable groups by ensuring the timely provision of basic lifesaving services.
7. Syria remain unsafe to return as escalation and aggression could flare at any time, including attacks on civilian infrastructure.
8. The escalation does hinder our Early Recovery activities as we continue our focus on the emergency response.

Civilians in Northwest Syria are badly impacted by the current escalation and the past 13-plus years of a humanitarian crisis; they don't have a place to flee. The lives of civilians in NWS now are at stake, and decisive action is needed now.

The SNA and its members stand prepared to work with all stakeholders to address the humanitarian consequences of this escalating conflict and meet the needs of affected populations.

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