

 **Syrian Crisis**

 United Nations Response

**A Weekly Update from the**

**UN Department of Public Information No. 198/17 May 2017**

**UN-mediated talks resume in Geneva**

The sixth round of intra-Syrian negotiations was reconvened in Geneva on 16 May under the auspices of Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. The Envoy held separate meetings with the delegations of the Government of Syria and of the opposition High Negotiations Committee. Speaking to the press on 15 May, Mr. de Mistura said that this round would be more business-like and would go more deeply into the issues on the agenda.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\_media.nsf/(httpPages)/2BE2C8A60636A7B5C1258121005A1159?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpPages%29/2BE2C8A60636A7B5C1258121005A1159?OpenDocument)

**Hundreds of people displaced due to flooding in Raqqa**

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](http://www.unocha.org/)) is concerned by reports of flooding in Raqqa city, following the collapse of a sand barrier. The flooding has resulted in more than 120 families fleeing their homes towards the western countryside of Raqqa. While the UN does not have access to the city, the flooding compounds an already extremely difficult humanitarian situation for civilians in the city controlled by Da’esh. An estimated 400,000 people in Raqqa are in need of humanitarian aid and protection as military operations there continue. The UN, with local partners, continues to deliver assistance to those in need in areas of Raqqa that are accessible and where security conditions permit.

[http://www.un.org/press/en/content/noon-briefings](http://www.un.org/press/en/content/noon-briefings%20)

**Chemical weapons investigative team confirms use of mustard gas in attack near Aleppo**

In a report released on 16 May, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said that two women had died after being exposed to sulfur mustard in an attack in Um Housh, Aleppo. While the incident occurred on 16 September 2016,

the team of investigators was not able to visit the sites of the reported attack or interview any witnesses until 16 November 2016. However, based on the interviews carried out, the documents reviewed, and the results of blood sample analyses, the Fact Finding Mission was able to confirm that the two victims were exposed to sulfur

mustard.

<http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2017/400>

**Life slowly restarts for civilians in Aleppo amid considerable challenges**

Six months after the evacuation of civilians from eastern Aleppo, life for some is slowly restarting despite extensive damage to infrastructure, destroyed homes and shops and questions over how those returning can earn a living. The UNHCR Middle East and North Africa Director of UNHCR, Amin Awad, visited Aleppo earlier this month to see at first-hand the scale of the challenges ahead, and how people are trying to resume a normal life. “Some people are restarting life against all odds and amidst immense challenges. A demonstration of their admirable resilience,” he said.

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2017/5/591480404/aleppo-slowly-progresses-along-road-recovery.html>

**On World Family Day, education is a lifeline for displaced families in Syria- UNRWA**

On International Family Day on 16 May, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) stressed the key role of families and family-oriented policies in supporting education and the well-being of family members. In Syria, through its “education in emergencies programme”, the agency has been mitigating the impact of the conflict on Palestine refugee children by enabling them to continuing their education. Through 82 Parent-Teacher Associations set up by UNRWA in Damascus and central Syria, parents take part in monthly meetings with teachers and help in the planning of school activities.

<https://www.unrwa.org/galleries/photos/world-family-day-syria-education-lifeline-displaced-families>

**Growing trend continues in the relocation of refugees from Greece to other EU countries**

The UN Migration Agency (IOM) reported that almost 12,500 asylum seekers have been relocated from Greece to various European Union countries at the end of April. The data was presented on 11 May at a joint press conference in Athens of IOM, the Ministry of Migration Policy and the Greek Asylum Service. According to IOM, there is an upward trend since the launch of the EU Relocations Scheme and the number of people relocated is about six times as many as in the first months of 2016. Among the beneficiaries were Syrians (10,296), followed by Iraqis (1,718) and Eritreans (134). Daniel Esdras, Chief of IOM’s Mission in Greece, expressed satisfaction with the level of relocations achieved. “Coordination between all partners and Member States has been very good. I believe that by the end of the programme in October 2017, we will manage to reach approximately 25,000 relocations from Greece,” he said.

<http://www.iom.int/news/upward-trend-continues-latest-eu-relocation-figures-greece-france-leads-intake>

**UN Envoy discusses Syria peace talks in Damascus**

In preparation for the resumption of the Geneva talks, Deputy Special Envoy Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy met in Damascus with Deputy Foreign Minister Fayssal Miqdad on 13 May. At an ensuing press encounter, Mr. Ramzy noted the importance for the UN of the issue of de-escalation of fighting. “We have great hope that the Astana agreement will lead to de-escalation thereby establishing a suitable atmosphere for the Geneva talks”. The Envoy stressed that the Geneva and Astana meetings were mutually reinforcing. “Strengthening the ceasefire is essential for creating a suitable atmosphere for serious talks, and at the same time, the ceasefire cannot be sustained without a political horizon”.

[http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news\_media.nsf/(httpPages)/7B60632A8755BDD1C1258121005956AA?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/%28httpPages%29/7B60632A8755BDD1C1258121005956AA?OpenDocument)

**UN Radio in Arabic**

Special Envoy de Mistura: Guarantor states discuss who will monitor the safe areas in Syria with the support of the United Nations

دي مستورا: الدول الضامنة تناقش من سيراقب المناطق الآمنة في سوريا بدعم من الأمم المتحدة

[http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/241700/index.html#.WRxSt1UrKUk](http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/241700/index.html%23.WRxSt1UrKUk)

2017/05/11

Special Envoy underscores the importance of the new round of Syrian talks

دي مستورا يؤكد الأهمية الملحة للجولة الجديدة من المحادثات السورية [http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/241985/index.html#.WRxSuFUrKUk](http://www.unmultimedia.org/arabic/radio/archives/241985/index.html%23.WRxSuFUrKUk)

2017/05/15

**Twitter**

OCHA Syria‏ @OCHA\_Syria- 17 May

Only 1% of people displaced from southern #Syria returned in April—more on displacement in #Daraa and #Quneitra here <http://ow.ly/Y1mJ30bNmCf>

UNODA‏ @UN\_Disarmament- 16 May

Report of the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the incident of 16 September 2016 <http://bit.ly/2qOlOER>

United Nations✔@UN- 15 May

4 main issues: political transition, free & fair elections, new constitution & counter-terror measures – #SyriaTalks <http://bit.ly/2qjZfGA>

UN Geneva‏ @UNGeneva- 15 May

.@UN Envoy on #SyriaTalks: Geneva & Astana processes need to be in sync, de-escalation cannot be sustained unless there is political horizon

UNFPA✔@UNFPA-12 May

This #MothersDay, we're remembering the joys, and dangers, of #motherhood. Meet Fatima and baby Jad 👶🏻 in #Syria 🇸🇾[: http://www.unfpa.org/news/mothers-day-remembering-joys-and-dangers-motherhood](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CV.Mainil-Varlet%5CDesktop%5C%3A%20http%3A%5Cwww.unfpa.org%5Cnews%5Cmothers-day-remembering-joys-and-dangers-motherhood) …

**Facebook**

##### [UN Geneva](https://www.facebook.com/UN.Geneva/?hc_ref=PAGES_TIMELINE&fref=nf)-15 May

##### The sixth round of the intra-Syrian talks begins tomorrow in Geneva. UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, told the press today that “the intention, this time is to go a little deeper and actually be more business-like, both in our meetings and in the way we hope we can get some progress”. Watch Mr. de Mistura explain why, as it has been the case in the past, the talks will follow the modality of proximity talks.

**Social media campaigns**

**#My Voice-My School** is an UNRWA project launched in 2015 and implemented by Digital Explorer to connect schools in Gaza, Syria, Lebanon with schools in Europe and USA through Skype exchanges. Through live video conversations and customized teaching materials, students and teachers explore how education can help them meet their future aspirations. [www.unrwa.org/myvoicemyschool](http://www.unrwa.org/myvoicemyschool)

**@ShareTheMeal:** In April 2016,the World Food Programme launched itsphone application to support fundraising efforts for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. ShareTheMeal’s fundraising aims to support 1,400 refugee children. Through the app, smartphone users can join thousands of other people in making donations and support a selected community and monitor progress. Since the launch of the campaign, nearly 7.5 million meals have been shared.

[www.sharethemeal.org](http://www.sharethemeal.org)

**#Unite4Heritage** is a global movement run by UNESCO that aims to celebrate and safeguard cultural heritage and diversity around the world. Launched in response to the unprecedented attacks on world heritage sites, the campaign calls on everyone to stand up against extremism and radicalization by celebrating the places, objects and cultural traditions that make the world such a rich and vibrant place.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1254/>

**#NoLostGeneration:** The initiative was launched by UNICEF and partners in 2013 to focus attention on the plight of children affected by the Syrian crisis. By articulating real concerns about the possible ‘loss’ of a generation of children to the effects of violence and displacement, the initiative put education and child protection at the centre of the response inside Syria and across the refugee hosting countries (Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt).

<http://nolostgeneration.org/about>

**Relevant links to UN Secretariat, Agencies, Funds and Programmes on Syria**

**DPI Focus Page on Syria*:***

[*http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusRel.asp?infocusID=146&Body=Syria&Body1=*](http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusrel.asp?infocusid=146&body=syria&body1=)

**UN System agencies :**

UNICEF: <http://www.unicef.org/media/index.html>

WFP: <http://www.wfp.org/countries/syria>

OCHA: [http:/unocha.org/syria](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CMargaret.Novicki%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5Cnotes38CED8%5Cunocha.org%5Csyria), [twitter.com/ocha\_syria](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CMargaret.Novicki%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5Cnotes38CED8%5Ctwitter.com%5Cocha_syria), [facebook.com/UNOCHA.Syria](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CMargaret.Novicki%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5Cnotes38CED8%5Cfacebook.com%5CUNOCHA.Syria)

WHO: <http://www.who.int/countries/syr/en/>

UNHCR: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4f86c2426.html>

UNFPA:<https://www.unfpa.org/emergencies/crisis-syria>

OHCHR: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/NewsSearch.aspx?CID=SY>

UNRWA: <http://www.unrwa.org/>

UNESCO:http://www.unesco.org/new/en/syria-crisis-response/

UNESCO Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage Project: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/beirut/areas-of-action/culture/syria/emergency-safeguarding-of-the-syrian-heritage/>

UNESCO Observatory of Syrian Cultural Heritage <https://en.unesco.org/syrian-observatory/>

UNESCO Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/syria-crisis-response/bridging-learning-gaps/>