European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Syria

Introduction

Now in its 9th year, the Syria crisis has caused immense human suffering. Since March 2011, more than 400,000 Syrians have lost their lives. Over half of Syria’s pre-war population has been displaced, either within the country or across borders. More than 11 million people need humanitarian assistance. The north-west continues to see hostilities and a recent offensive in the north-east has shifted frontlines, triggering more displacement.

What are the needs?

Civilians are the primary victims of the conflict in Syria and over 80% of all Syrians now live below the poverty line. The majority of internally displaced people are women and children, including 2.2 million school-aged children. Some 6.6 million Syrians do not have enough to eat and 5.5 million need shelter. Close to 3 million people need help to prepare for winter. They need support to repair and weather-proof their shelters. They need thermal blankets, plastic sheets and winter clothes, among other things.

Almost half of all hospitals and health centres are out of service. Syria’s explosive hazard contamination is among the worst in the world. Meanwhile, in north-western Syria, 3 million civilians in Idlib region are exposed to devastating bombing, and more than 440,000 people have been displaced between May and November 2019. In north-eastern Syria, recent fighting has left an additional 68,000 people displaced (October 2019). Recent hostilities have caused damage to health facilities, water stations and schools. Humanitarian needs persist elsewhere in the country, including in Rukban, which is off-limits to humanitarian organisations. Aid workers operate in a challenging environment mired by ongoing fighting, various hurdles and violations of international humanitarian law. Across Syria, the protection of the most vulnerable civilians is a major concern. Sexual violence, disappearances, forced conscription, recruitment of child soldiers, executions and the deliberate targeting of civilians are widespread.
How are we helping?

The EU and its Member States are leading donors of international aid to the victims of the Syria war. Since the start of the crisis, over €17 billion have been mobilised to support the most vulnerable people inside Syria and in neighbouring countries.

This includes close to €5 billion for 2019 and €1.8 million for 2020 and beyond, pledged by the EU and its Member States at the Brussels conference in March 2019. The EU has been the driving force behind the Syria pledging conferences that took place in Brussels in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Millions of people have been reached with EU humanitarian assistance, including emergency medical treatment, healthcare, psycho-social support, shelter, food, safe drinking water and essential items. Additionally, the protection of children is at the heart of the EU’s humanitarian assistance.

Inside Syria, EU humanitarian assistance has helped:

- 6.5 million people through protection activities;
- 144,000 children with education;
- 6.6 million people with water and sanitation actions;
- More than 4 million people with food security and livelihood support.

In Lebanon, which hosts over 915,000 registered Syrian refugees, the EU provides cash assistance, secondary healthcare, non-formal education, shelter, and clean water to improve the difficult living conditions of refugee families. EU humanitarian partners closely monitor the various protection concerns and provide counselling and legal assistance to refugees. Since 2011, EU humanitarian funding has amounted to close to €580 million and has reached more than 750,000 Syrians in Lebanon.

Jordan hosts 654,000 registered Syrian refugees, most of them women and children. The EU contributes to the international aid effort by providing cash assistance to vulnerable refugees as well as shelter, protection, education and healthcare. Since the beginning of the crisis, €360 million in humanitarian assistance has gone to Syrian refugees and host communities.

Egypt hosts over 129,000 registered Syrian refugees, many of whom are stranded in overcrowded urban centres where local communities already struggle with high unemployment and poor access to basic services.