European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Syria

Introduction

As the Syria crises enters its seventh year, over 13 million people, including six million children, need humanitarian assistance. Since March 2011, more than 400 000 Syrians have lost their lives and over one million have been injured. Around 6.1 million people have fled their homes inside Syria and over five million have been forced to take refuge in neighbouring countries. The EU and its Member States have mobilised more than €10.6 billion since the start of the conflict, including over €753 million in humanitarian aid alone until 2017.

What are the needs?

Around 13 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria. Of these, 6.1 million are internally displaced; 2.5 million live in hard-to-reach areas and 400 000 in besieged areas. Civilians continue to be the primary victims of the conflict with children and young people comprising more than half of the displaced population. In 2017, fighting in urban areas such as Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor caused high levels of civilian casualties and massive displacement. Meanwhile, an offensive launched by government forces at the end of 2017 in northwestern Syria has hit medical and civilian infrastructure and driven more than 325 000 Syrians from their homes into northern Idlib, which already hosts more than 1.5 million displaced people. An estimated 130 000 persons have been further displaced as a result of the offensive in Afrin. In besieged areas in Eastern Ghouta and Idlib Governorate, fighting has escalated, resulting in an estimated 1 500 civilian deaths. At the same time, aid convoys still faced constraints in delivering assistance to those who need it most.

Aid workers have been unable to deliver humanitarian assistance in many parts of Syria due to continued fighting along shifting frontlines, bureaucratic hurdles and ongoing violations of international humanitarian law. Protection of civilians and
aid workers remains a major concern in large parts of Syria. Rape and sexual violence, enforced disappearances, recruitment of child soldiers and forced conscription, executions and deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and schools remain commonplace.
How are we helping?

The EU and its Member States are lead providers of international aid to those affected by the Syria war. More than €10.6 billion has been mobilised for humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience assistance to Syrians inside the country and in neighbouring countries. This includes €3.7 billion pledged for 2017 by the EU and its Member States at the Brussels conference in April 2017. To date, millions of people have been reached by EU humanitarian assistance, which includes healthcare, protection, food, safe drinking water, non-food items, shelter and emergency medical treatment. In 2018, the EU allocated €280 million in humanitarian assistance to the Syria crisis. Including €140 million for assistance inside Syria.

Inside Syria, almost half of the EU’s humanitarian assistance goes to urgent life-saving and emergency humanitarian operations; the rest is spent providing safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, food, child protection activities, essential items, Education in Emergency (EiE), and psycho-social support.

In Lebanon, the EU provides cash assistance, secondary healthcare, non-formal education and shelter (including water, hygiene and sanitation) to improve the often abysmal living conditions of displaced families. EU partners regularly monitor the main protection concerns and provide awareness, counselling and legal assistance. Since 2012, EU humanitarian aid to Lebanon has reached around 750 000 Syrians. For 2018, EU humanitarian funding amounted to €80 million.

In Jordan, the EU supports almost 660 000 Syrian refugees, most of them women and children, through cash assistance, protection, health, winterisation response, among other things. In 2017, €55 million of EU humanitarian funding allocated to Jordan also targeted the emergency needs of more than 45 000 refugees stranded along its northeastern border with Syria and Iraq (commonly known as the ‘Berm’). Another €36 million has been allocated for 2018.

In Egypt, which hosts over 122 000 registered refugees, the EU has allocated €7.8 million to help refugees living in substandard conditions in urban areas through protection, health, education, and cash assistance. An additional €4 million is earmarked for 2018.