FAILING SYRIA

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS IN PROTECTING AND ASSISTING CIVILIANS IN SYRIA

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Pax Christi International
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Tulip for Syria Relief
Un Ponte Per
World Vision International

Front cover: Samah* with her baby in a camp for displaced people inside Syria, 2015
Image: Khalil Ashawi

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UN Security Council resolutions
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Six-year old Sa'ado* fled from his home in Syria two years ago with his parents and five siblings, travelling across the country looking for shelter. Four months ago they found a tent and now live in a camp for displaced people in Syria. 2015.
Image: Khalil Ashawi

INTRODUCTION

The unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2139 (UNSCR 2139) at the end of February 2014 brought with it much needed hope for people in Syria and across the Middle East. In the resolution, the UN Security Council (UNSC) – the body responsible for international peace and security – called for an urgent increase in access to humanitarian aid in Syria and demanded that all parties immediately cease attacks against civilians, end arbitrary detention, kidnapping and torture, and lift sieges of populated areas.

In July and December 2014, the UNSC adopted two additional resolutions – 2165 and 2191 – which, among other things, authorized UN aid operations into Syria from neighbouring countries without requiring the consent of the Syrian government.

With these resolutions, the UNSC proved it could finally unite to prioritize the needs of civilians in Syria and to demand an end to their suffering.[1] However, the resolutions, and the hope they provided, have rung hollow for Syrian civilians. They have been ignored or undermined by the parties to the conflict, other UN member states, and even by members of the UNSC itself.

In the 12 months since Resolution 2139 was passed, civilians in Syria have witnessed ever-increasing destruction suffering and death. Humanitarian needs have increased by nearly a third compared with 2013.[2] More than 11.6 million people are now in urgent need of clean water and nearly ten million people do not have enough to eat.[3] In December 2013 UNICEF declared that there were 4.3 million children in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria. By December 2014 this number had risen to 5.6 million.[4] More than 212,000 people are still living in besieged locations, including 163,500 in Eastern Ghouta[5] and over 4.8 million reside in areas that aid agencies operating from inside Syria can either reach only sporadically or in many locations not at all.[6]

This spiralling catastrophe is a stain on the conscience of the international community. The resolutions passed by the UNSC provide a framework to end the suffering in the short and longer term, and the parties to the conflict are under an obligation to implement them. While the UNSC has the legal authority to demand these changes, its members and their allies have the political, diplomatic and financial influence, and the ability, to ensure these changes actually happen. Without action by individual governments, the demands within these resolutions remain little more than words on a page. They can no longer be ignored.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNSC RESOLUTIONS 2139, 2165 AND 2191 ON THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SYRIA (2014)

OVERALL GRADE

F

A Complete success | B Significant improvement | C Some improvement | D No improvement | F FAIL: Deterioration

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

F FAIL: DETERIORATION

01 WHAT THE UNSC SAID IN FEB 2014 (UNSCR 2139)

- "Demands that all parties immediately cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas," (Operational Paragraph (OP 3).
- "[D]emands that all parties take all appropriate steps to protect civilians," (OP 9).
- "...demands that all parties demilitarize medical facilities, schools and other civilian facilities (...) and desist from attacks directed against civilian objects;" (OP 10).
- "Strongly condemns the arbitrary detention and torture of civilians," (OP 11).

02 WHAT HAPPENED SINCE THEN

- Reports of at least 76,000 people killed in 2014, including thousands of children, out of total of 220,000.[7] At least 160 children were killed in attacks on school s in 2014.[8]
- A 26% increase in the number of people forced to flee their homes inside Syria and across international borders in 2014.[9]
- Huge increases in the number of people in need of humanitarian aid inside Syria; 1.33 million more children[10] are in need and there has been a 31% increase among the population as a whole.[11]
- The use of explosive weapons, responsible for 53% of civilian deaths since 2011, has worsened in 2014.[12]

03 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- Parties to the conflict should abide by international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL), cease attacks on schools and hospitals, and end the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas.
- The UNSC and UN member states with influence in Syria should take immediate steps to hold accountable those responsible for breaches of IHRL and IHL.
- Transfers of arms and ammunition to parties which have used them to commit war crimes should be halted.
- UN agencies and NGOs should significantly scale-up protection activities inside Syria, particularly from neighbouring countries.

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND BESIEGED COMMUNITIES

D NO IMPROVEMENT

01 WHAT THE UNSC SAID IN FEB 2014 (UNSCR 2139)

- "Calls upon all parties to immediately lift the sieges of populated areas," (OP 5).
- "Demands that all parties (...) allow rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, including across conflict lines and across borders," (OP 6).
- "Urges all parties to take all steps to ensure the safety and security of (...) all (...)personnel engaged in humanitarian relief activities," (OP 12)

02 WHAT HAPPENED SINCE THEN

- While the Old City of Homs and Madimayet El Sham are no longer besieged, at least 212,000 people remain trapped in other locations (and the number is likely significantly higher).[13]
- Since June 2014 UN agencies have delivered 1,130 aid convoys through NGO partners, using cross-border routes from Turkey into Syria. Humanitarian goods, but almost no services are being delivered and NGOs continue to face restrictions at border crossings.
- There are 2.3 million more people living in "hard to reach areas" compared with 2013.[14] Food aid received by people in these areas fell by 97% in the four months following UNSCR 2139.[15]
- A 63% reduction in the number of people reached by inter-agency convoys from within Syria during 2014 compared to 2013.[16]

03 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- Parties to the conflict should: facilitate humanitarian access to all parts of Syria; end attacks on humanitarian workers; and remove administrative barriers to aid, including Syrian government restrictions on travel and working with Syrian organizations.
- Influential governments should press countries bordering Syria to facilitate cross-border aid delivery, including by streamlining administrative processes for aid agencies and maintaining timely access through border crossings.

INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

F — FAIL: DETERIORATION

01 WHAT THE UNSC SAID IN FEB 2014 AND DEC 2014 (UNSCR 2139 AND 2191)

- (UNSCR 2139): "Urges all Member States to contribute or increase their support to the United Nations humanitarian appeals." (OP 16).
- (UNSCR 2191): "[U]rging once again all Member States [to provide] increased, flexible and predictable funding as well as increasing resettlement efforts," (PP 16).

02 WHAT HAPPENED SINCE THEN

- Combined Syria crisis appeals were only 57% funded in 2014, compared with 71% in 2013.[17]
- A twelvefold increase in humanitarian needs over the last three years (from 1 to 12 million), with funding only increasing threefold.[18]
- The number of refugees entering neighbouring countries rose to 3.7 million by the end of 2014 and is projected to rise to 4.3 million by the end of 2015.

03 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- Donors should fully fund the response and support international aid agencies to build the capacity of Syrian NGOs, while also increasing funding to support refugees and poor local populations in countries neighbouring Syria.
- Wealthy countries should scale up resettlement and humanitarian admissions programmes to ensure that at least 5% of refugees are able to access protection outside the region in 2015.[19]

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

F — FAIL: DETERIORATION

01 WHAT THE UNSC SAID IN FEB 2014 (UNSCR 2139)

- [D]emands that all parties work towards the comprehensive implementation of the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 leading to a genuine political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people,"(OP 15).

02 WHAT HAPPENED SINCE THEN

- Geneva II talks collapsed in February 2014 and UN/LAS Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi resigned his position as the conflict continued. In January 2015, peace talks were held in Moscow, which did not include the main armed or political opposition groups.[20]
- In February 2015, UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura announced that the Government of Syria had committed to a six-week suspension of strikes in the city of Aleppo as part of a 'freeze' plan; details and conditions of the plan remain unclear.[21]

03 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- Parties to the conflict should end the fighting and enter into meaningful, inclusive peace talks that respect the rights and aspirations of the Syrian people.
- The UNSC and governments with influence should put urgent emphasis on finding a political solution and support the efforts of the UN Special Envoy to secure a freeze in the fighting in the city of Aleppo.

Despite the adoption of Presidential Statement 2013/15, Resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014), the protection situation has worsened.

Despite passing three UN Security Council Resolutions in 2014, violence in Syria has intensified, killings have increased, humanitarian access has diminished, and the humanitarian response remains severely and chronically underfunded.

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

The year following the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2139 saw a dramatic intensification of the violence in Syria. Reports indicate that at least 76,000 people were killed in 2014 out of a total of 220,000 since the crisis began, including thousands of children.[22] The exact death toll is unknown, and possibly much higher.[23] Deliberate attacks, including the organized murder, rape, and torture of men, women and children continue to be committed by different sides in the conflict throughout Syria every day.[24]

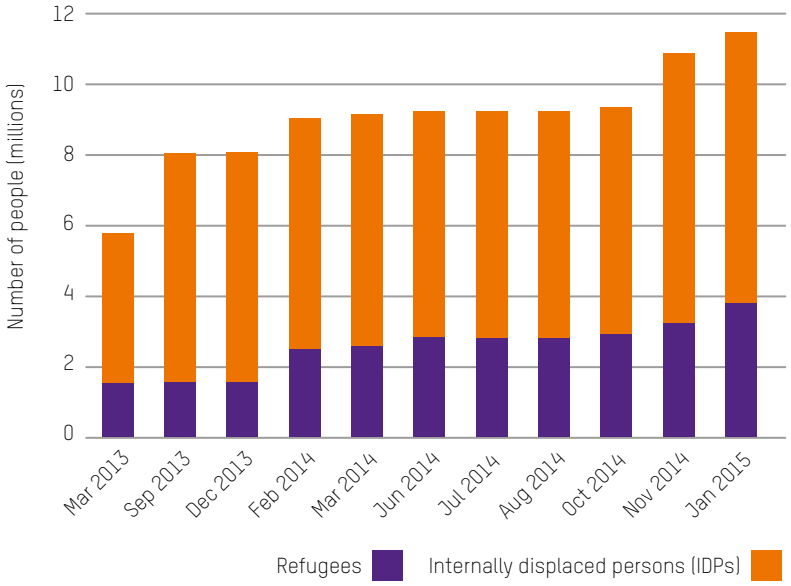
According to the UN Secretary-General:

Despite the adoption of Presidential Statement 2013/15, Resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014), the protection situation has worsened. Reportedly, over 1,000 civilian deaths have occurred in August (2014), the deadliest [month] since the start of the war. Civilians live in appalling conditions.[25]

In the past year an additional 2.5 million people, including more than a million children, were forced to leave their homes and are now displaced inside Syria or have fled across international borders. This represents a 26 percent increase compared with 2013.[26] 12.2 million people or two thirds of the population within Syria are now in need of emergency assistance. This represents a 31 percent increase over 2013 and an 80 percent increase compared with two years ago.[27]

At the same time, countries neighbouring Syria are making it increasingly difficult for people fleeing the conflict to seek asylum. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people are living in camps or with host families near or even on the borders of neighbouring countries, many unable to leave Syria.[28]

FIGURE 1 Number of people displaced



Samah's son, Mohammed*, 2015
Image: Khalil Ashawi

SAMAH, 37, MOTHER OF SIX

"We were afraid for our children's lives so we fled to the caves in the mountains. It was the safest and the only available place for us to live. Living in the caves was impossible, it was total misery. If it was up to me and if I didn't have children I would have preferred to have lived under the threat of airstrikes rather than living like that.

When we were in the caves we used to go to nearby farms to collect anything we could find, sometimes grass or bark, to feed our six children. On a few occasions we met some farmers who were too afraid to go into their fields because of the airstrikes and so they asked us to harvest their crops for a little bit of money and some food.

We got this tent four months ago so that we are now finally living on our own. Can you imagine that our dream had become just to have our own tent? I still think that living under shelling and airstrikes is more dignified than this kind of life. If a shell hits you then you will die instantly, but here we are dying every day a thousand times over. We are dying from cold, illness and hunger. I would rather be cooking rocks at my home than staying here waiting for an organization to bring me a food basket every once in a while."

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

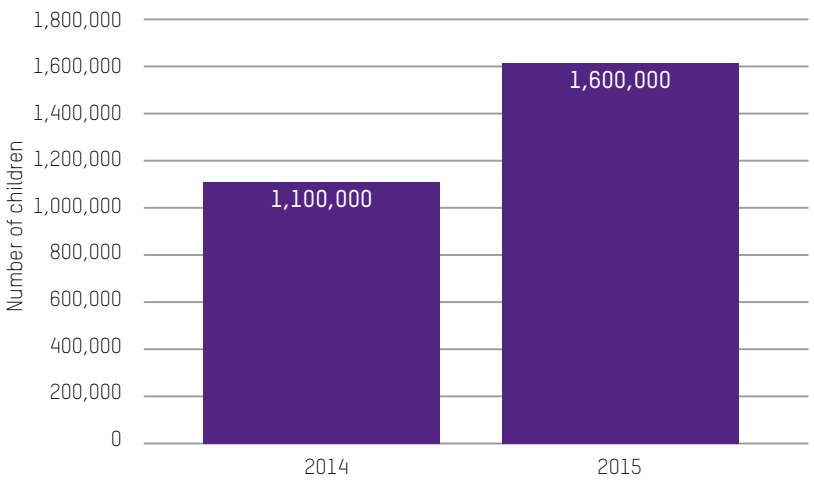
Women and children have been particularly affected by the violence. The UN Commission of Inquiry and other bodies have documented the use of rape as a systematic and widespread method of war in Syria.[29] Sexual violence against men, women, and even children has reportedly been perpetrated on a large scale in government detention facilities, alongside ever-increasing incidents of sexual harassment, intimidation and rape of women at checkpoints.[30] There are also documented cases of opposition groups specifically targeting women and children for kidnapping, for use in prisoner exchanges.[31] Under-reporting and delayed reporting of sexual violence continues to be endemic, often because medical documentation does not exist or because assistance is denied to women held in detention facilities.[32]

ATTACKS AGAINST CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

In February 2014, the UNSC strongly condemned violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed against children, including attacks on schools.[33] However, since then the situation for children in Syria has continued to deteriorate. The first six months of 2014 alone witnessed at least 1,200 grave violations committed against children.[34] This includes recruitment of children by armed actors, abduction of children, as well as their unlawful detention.

Children's education is also suffering, with millions unable to attend school due to the ongoing fighting, including the deliberate targeting of school buildings and their use by armed groups. Roughly a quarter of Syria's schools (over 4,000) have been damaged, destroyed or used for other purposes.[35] According to the United Nations Children's Fund, 160 children were killed in attacks on schools in 2014.[36] In January 2015, NGOs reported attacks on schools that resulted in at least 37 deaths, including nine children.[37] Since UNSCR 2139 was passed, an additional 500,000 children are estimated to be out of school compared with 2013,[38] bringing the total to 1.6 million.

FIGURE 2 Children not attending school



Basma, 2015
Image: Khalil Ashawi

BASMA, 8

"I was in class when my school was hit. We ran out of the school right away and I went back home, but my uncle went to the school and found out that many children had been injured. I have never seen my school or my friends again; I miss them a lot."

INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

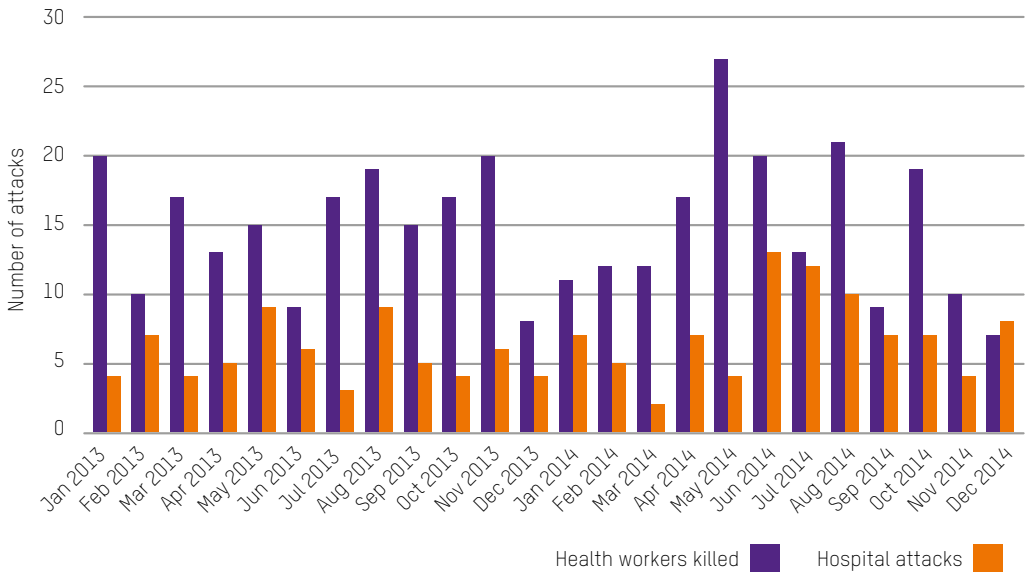
In February 2014, the UNSC demanded that all parties to the conflict respect international law and desist from attacks directed against civilians or 'civilian objects'. Yet in his reports to the UNSC throughout 2014, the UN Secretary-General noted the increased use of barrel bombs by the Government of Syria in densely populated civilian areas.[39] For example, since the start of international military actions in Iraq and Syria in the autumn of 2014, the Government of Syria reportedly doubled its use of barrel bombs in civilian areas including attacks on medical facilities, schools, markets and displaced-persons' camps.[40]

Armed opposition groups have also been responsible for indiscriminate attacks, subjecting some government-held areas to indiscriminate shelling.[41] Furthermore, according to the February 2015 report by the Commission of Inquiry on Syria, "terrorist groups have used suicide and car bombs" which "mostly target civilians".[42]

Attacks on health facilities and personnel by different parties to the conflict have become commonplace. Between February 2014 and February 2015, at least 83 separate attacks on health facilities were reported (a 20 percent increase on 2013) and more than 172 medical personnel were killed.[43]

Well over a million homes have been partially or totally destroyed in the past 12 months and more than one-third of all water-infrastructure has been damaged. Water supplies have been reduced by at least 50 percent, compared with pre-war levels.[44] The impact has been devastating, resulting in massive population displacement, destruction of livelihoods, hunger, disease and death.[45]

FIGURE 3 Numbers of attacks on health facilities and health workers killed



ARMS TRANSFERS FUEL THE VIOLENCE AND SUFFERING

The violence in Syria continues to be fuelled by transfers of arms, ammunition and other forms of military support from regional and international powers. Over 90 percent of the arms in Syria were manufactured in countries that are permanent members of the UNSC, particularly Russia.[46] The USA has transferred arms and ammunition to armed opposition groups and France has expressed its willingness to do so.[47] In addition, there is a continuing flow of ammunition and heavier munitions from Iran to the Government of Syria, and from Gulf States to various armed opposition groups.[48]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parties to the conflict should:

- Abide by international humanitarian law (IHL) and immediately cease attacks on schools, hospitals, and other critical civilian infrastructure.
- Immediately end grave abuses of human rights, and investigate and take appropriate action where there are credible allegations of violations.
- Take steps to safeguard children's rights, including an end to the use of child soldiers, abduction and unlawful detention.
- Immediately end the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, including but not limited to barrel bombs, mortars and other heavy weaponry.
- Immediately end arbitrary detentions, torture, kidnappings, abductions and forced disappearances, and release all arbitrarily detained people.

The UNSC and its members should:

- Take immediate steps to hold accountable all parties to the conflict for breaches of international law, in particular ensuring there is full accountability for war crimes and other serious human rights violations to counter impunity and help deter future violations.
- Establish a protection monitoring and reporting mechanism to ensure the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2139, including in detention centres, and investigate and report on violations by all parties in Syria.
- Impose measures to halt the transfer of arms and ammunition where there is evidence that parties have used them to commit serious or systematic violations of IHL and international human rights law (IHRL).
- Fully back and support with adequate resources local attempts to bring about and maintain ceasefires and 'freezes' – with the core aim of ending the fighting and protecting the civilian population.
- Press and support countries neighbouring Syria to ensure those fleeing the conflict can seek asylum on their territory and refrain from the *refoulement* of refugees.

Other governments with influence in Syria should:

- Avoid fuelling the conflict and serious violations of IHL and IHRL by halting the supply of arms, ammunition and military personnel to parties which have been responsible for violations.
- End calls for militarily-protected corridors or buffer zones, which can provide a false sense of security to civilians, can compromise the operating environment for humanitarian agencies, and could be used to justify *refoulement* of refugees.

UN implementing agencies and NGOs should:

- Step up monitoring and reporting of protection concerns inside Syria. Significantly scale up protection programming inside the country, including across borders from neighbouring countries. Priority should be given to building the capacity of local Syrian aid actors to undertake effective protection programming.

These five siblings from one family fled from their home in Syria two years ago with their parents, and now live in a camp for displaced people. Eight-year-old Fatima*, holding her seven-month-old sister, has a skin disorder on her legs, which the family cannot get treatment for due to lack of access to healthcare. 2015.
Image: Khalil Ashawi

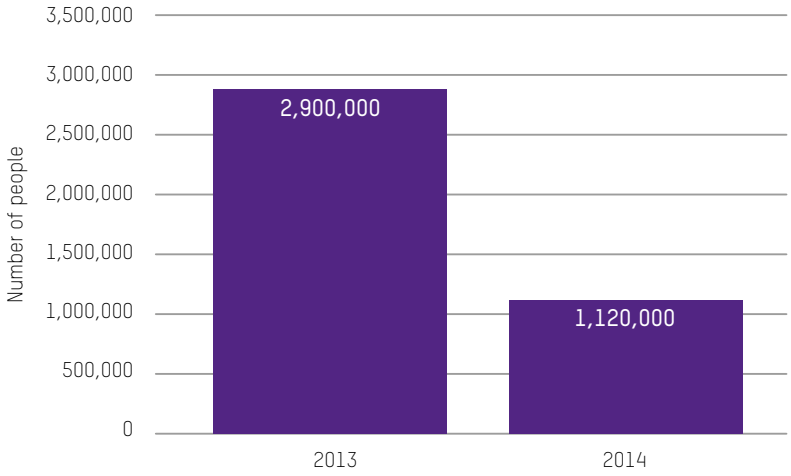
HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND BESIEGED COMMUNITIES

Despite being central to the 2014 UNSC Resolutions, humanitarian access to large parts of Syria has actually diminished over the past year. The number of people living in areas that are difficult or impossible for aid agencies to reach has almost doubled from 2.5 million in 2013 to 4.8 million at the start of 2015. UN inter-agency convoys reached only 1.1 million beneficiaries in the worst affected areas, almost 1.8 million fewer people than the year before.[49] Similarly, between February and June 2014, in areas defined by UN aid agencies as difficult or impossible to reach, there was a 96 percent reduction in the amount of food and agriculture aid being received.[50]

The Government of Syria continues to hamper the work of aid agencies. It regularly prevents international humanitarian workers from travelling within Syria to conduct independent assessments of needs, provide impartial assistance, open adequate numbers of field offices outside of the capital or work with local NGOs. Many agencies face ongoing problems with registration and with obtaining visas for their staff, severely limiting aid operations that can be implemented from Damascus.

Over the past four years, "the sieges imposed by the Government [of Syria] have become longer and, consequently, more harsh."[51] An estimated 212,000 people are still struggling to survive in besieged locations and the UN has reported that there was no meaningful month-on-month increase in the number of people receiving humanitarian assistance in these areas since UNSCR 2139 was adopted.[52] In 2014, agreements were reached to halt the fighting and evacuate civilians from two besieged areas, the Old City neighbourhood in Homs and in Madimayet El Sham. However, the nature of the evacuation agreements were deeply problematic;[53] for example, some civilian men aged between 15 and 55 in Homs' Old City were excluded from the evacuation. Several new locations have become effectively besieged during the past 12 months, including large parts of Syria's largest city, Aleppo.

FIGURE 4 Beneficiaries reached by Damascus-based inter-agency convoys



The challenges in delivering assistance from inside Syria over the past four years have meant that many international NGOs and the Red Cross/Crescent have been providing emergency assistance to millions of civilians from bases in neighbouring countries. For example, between mid-September 2014 and the end of January 2015, according to the Turkish Red Crescent, 2,751 truckloads of assistance were sent from Turkey to northern Syria by NGOs.[54] In July 2014, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2165, which authorized the UN to undertake cross-border aid operations.[55] Since the adoption of UNSCR 2165, UN agencies have delivered 1,130 truckloads across Turkish and Jordanian borders through partners.[56] Many problems remain, however.

Bureaucratic hurdles in countries neighbouring Syria continue to hamper the delivery of sufficient cross-border assistance.[57] As of February 2015, out of 34 border crossings, only five are currently open, nine are restricted and the remainder are closed.[58] Many humanitarian convoys continue to experience long delays at borders and limits are often placed on the numbers of aid workers who can cross between Syria and southern Turkey.[59] In April 2014, several large NGOs reported that less than 10 percent of their Syrian staff were able to travel between Syria and neighbouring countries and aid must often wait between 4 and 10 days to pass border crossings. Registering international aid agencies and obtaining residency permits for their staff in southern Turkey can also be challenging, with processes sometimes taking six months or more. In the summer of 2014, the offices of two international humanitarian organizations were closed due to a lack of registration in Turkey. In Jordan, international NGOs continue to experience limitations on the range of Syrian aid actors they can work with, impacting on their ability to help more people inside Syria.

An even greater concern has been the worsening security situation in Syria. For example, between mid-October and mid-November 2014, ongoing fighting and the presence of armed groups along the main access routes prevented the World Food Programme (WFP) and other aid organizations from delivering food to 600,000 people in Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates in northern Syria.[60] Opposition and government forces often prevent humanitarian agencies from crossing checkpoints and continue to put aid personnel at risk of violence, kidnapping, arrest or arbitrary detention.[61] At least 70 international and Syrian national aid workers have been killed and over 200 abducted during this conflict; of those, over 30 are still being held captive.[62] At least two aid workers have been executed.

ADBUL, SYRIAN DOCTOR

"Two things keep me going; being a Syrian and seeing that my people need help and that we are not responding enough, this motivates me to respond. The slow response basically makes me work harder to reach those that haven't been reached yet. The other thing is that I am a doctor; a doctor responds to an emergency call anywhere it comes from. If that call comes from my country, my people, this motivates me even more."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parties to the conflict should:

- Facilitate the safe, unfettered and effective access of impartial aid agencies to all parts of Syria, in order to respond to the humanitarian needs of all civilians affected by the conflict. End all diversion of aid, attacks on aid workers and humanitarian convoys, and investigate and take appropriate action where these attacks have taken place.
- The Government of Syria should remove administrative barriers that hamper the work of aid agencies, including:
  - Setting up a low-cost, fast-tracked system for granting registration to international aid agencies, and residency and work permits for humanitarian staff in Syria;
  - Encouraging the delivery of assistance from neighbouring countries, where this is the most direct route, to reach people in need of assistance;
  - Allowing international aid agencies to work directly with principled Syrian aid actors, including those operating in areas under the control of armed opposition groups;
  - Remove restrictions on the establishment of humanitarian sub-offices and travel to all parts of Syria.

The UNSC should:

- Ensure that the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance is exempt from the UNSC's decisions related to combating terrorism in Syria.

Other governments with influence in Syria should:

- Strongly and consistently press the parties to the conflict to allow unimpeded cross-border aid and to allow aid to pass into or through conflict zones.

Countries neighbouring Syria should:

- Streamline the registration processes for reputable aid agencies operating in Syria. Existing border crossings into Syria must remain open, passage through crossings should be fast-tracked for humanitarian goods and staff, and restrictions on working directly with national NGOs and with Syrian aid organizations should be removed.

UN implementing agencies and NGOs should:

- Systematically monitor and register major obstacles to humanitarian access, for example by reporting on arbitrary denials of access, including administrative hurdles and delays to visa and travel requests.
- Scale up assistance from neighbouring countries, including the provision of humanitarian services (such as those related to education, health and protection activities).
- Step up efforts to build the capacity of local Syrian organizations to deliver assistance.

RAMI, 20

"There is hardly any water and it is very expensive; food prices have doubled and there has been no electricity for the last five months. [...] There is no aid – no aid has arrived since the crisis started."

INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The humanitarian response to the Syria crisis remains severely and chronically underfunded. The 2015 humanitarian funding appeal for Syria, launched as part of the *Syria Response Plan* (SRP) in December 2014, called for $2.9bn to assist 12.2 million people in need. Combined with the separate *Refugee Response and Resilience Plan* (3RP), the aid community will need $8.4bn to respond to the crisis – one of the largest ever UN-led appeals.

To put the size of the UN appeal into perspective, this is less than the UK government spent on the London Olympics, a fifth of the price of the Beijing Olympics and a sixth of the cost of the Sochi Winter Olympics.

Furthermore, the funding received has not kept pace with the rise in needs. Over the last three years, humanitarian needs have increased twelvefold inside Syria (from 1 to 12 million people in need of humanitarian assistance), while the funding received has increased less than threefold, from $639m in 2012 to $1.8bn in 2014.[63]

In addition, UN member states are failing to offer anywhere near a sufficient number of places for resettlement or other forms of humanitarian admission to the most vulnerable refugees whose needs cannot be met in the countries neighbouring Syria. Approximately two percent of the registered refugee population is currently being offered the option of resettlement or other forms of admission, and far fewer have actually been resettled. For the nearly four million refugees from Syria living in neighbouring countries, the total number of resettlement places and other admissions pledged since late 2013 stands at approximately 80,759.[64]

RECOMMENDATIONS

All UN member states should:

- Urgently increase contributions to the emergency response in Syria to ensure the 2015 Syria Response Plan is fully funded.
- Increase humanitarian and development (including bilateral) funding to support refugees and vulnerable host communities in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Iraq. This should prioritize improving public infrastructure, alternative shelter solutions, health, water and education services, and income-earning opportunities that will benefit both host communities and refugee populations.
- Significantly scale up resettlement and alternative humanitarian admissions programmes or other immigration options. Wealthy countries should move swiftly to ensure at least five percent of refugees are able to access protection outside the region in 2015. Existing quotas for resettlement and alternative programmes should be expanded to accommodate many more refugees from Syria, prioritizing those who are most vulnerable.

POLITICAL SOLUTION

There are plans of war [...] there are no peace plans [...]
I don't see anybody saying "let's stop fighting and let's talk".

Former United Nations/League of Arab States Peace Envoy
Lakhdar Brahimi[65]

The UNSC's demand that all parties work towards a genuine political solution has been met with piecemeal efforts and little progress. Despite three different UN envoys and two rounds of UN-led peace talks, there has been no movement towards a political settlement of the conflict. Talks in Moscow in January 2015 were not attended by the major political and military opposition groups. While UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura has announced a plan to "freeze" fighting around Aleppo, supported by the UNSC in Resolution 2191 of December 2014, as of the start of March 2015 it remains it remains unclear if and when a suspension in the fighting will take place and what any deal would entail.

Given the polarized nature of the conflict, the lack of trust between parties, and the limited role for civilians and civil society groups, truces have been fragile at best. At worst, they have resulted in populations subjected to massive violations of IHRL and IHL.[66] At the same time, the lack of a credible political process means that there are limited prospects for ensuring that localized agreements can be effectively replicated and built on at the national level, in line with the 2012 Geneva Communiqué.

The role of the UN is to facilitate a peace process, but without political will from the parties to the conflict, and without adequate backing by UNSC members and – crucially – regional powers to create that will, the efforts of any peace envoy will be doomed to failure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parties to the conflict should:

- Immediately put an end to the fighting and enter into meaningful, inclusive peace talks, without preconditions, that respect the rights and aspirations of the Syrian people, in line with the 2012 Geneva Communiqué.

The UNSC and international and regional actors with influence should:

- Put urgent emphasis on finding a political solution to the crisis, including by putting real pressure on all parties to the conflict to enter into talks on implementation of the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, without precondition.
- Support the efforts of UN Special Envoy de Mistura to secure a freeze in the fighting in Aleppo city and ensure that any agreement unconditionally respects the rights of the civilian population and does not lead to an escalation in fighting elsewhere in the country.
- Ensure civil society, in particular groups representing women and youth, are included in any political process or attempts to reach ceasefires or freezes, in order to ensure agreements are just, sustainable and reflective of wider society.

CONCLUSION

It is over a year since UNSC Resolution 2139 was adopted, and four years since the start of the crisis. While subsequent resolutions have been passed by the UNSC, humanitarian access in Syria has decreased, and millions more people have been displaced and are in need of assistance. The number of people killed has risen by thousands.

The primary responsibility for the implementation of the resolutions, and the failure to do so, lies with the parties to the conflict. The conflict itself, however, is increasingly international and regional in character and the members of the UNSC and member states of the United Nations must change tack.

The UNSC has the legal authority to require action, and now its members must use their influence with the warring parties and their financial resources to put an end to the suffering of Syrian civilians. They must listen to the silent majority of Syrians who wish to see an end to the violence, and a sustainable and just peace in their country.

Practical steps must be taken as a matter of urgency. Deliberate obstruction of aid must halt immediately, as must the use of indiscriminate weapons in built-up areas, the targeting of civilians, and their arbitrary detention, kidnapping and torture. The impunity which characterizes the conflict must be brought to an end. Real backing for the UN Peace Envoy's plans must be matched by a push to reconvene talks in line with the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, and redoubled efforts to end the violence engulfing the country and region.

ANNEX 1: SCORING SYSTEM

In determining the success or failure to implement UNSC Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 (2014), the following criteria have been used to assess developments between February 2014 and February 2015:

Grade	Description	Definition
A	Fully implemented	Significant evidence of a complete and positive change to the situation on the ground, in accordance with UNSC demands (such as an end to violence or removal of all obstacles to aid delivery).
B	Significant improvement	A large or important positive change, readily noted by external observers.
C	Some improvement	Minor, positive changes of the sort that may only be noticed through detailed statistical analysis or by experts in a specific thematic or geographical area.
D	No improvement	No evidence of change (positively or negatively) in the situation, or statistical stagnation.
Fail	Deteriorated	Significant evidence of a worsening in the situation on the ground, (such as an increase in attacks on civilians or new obstacles to aid delivery).

NOTES

1. The UN Security Council has long been divided over Syria. Four resolutions on the crisis have been vetoed by Russia and China (in October 2011, February 2012, July 2012 and May 2014).
2. OCHA (2015), *Humanitarian Bulletin Syria*, January 2015(52): 1. There were 9.3 million people in need at the end of 2013, and 12.2 million people in need by the end of 2014: a 31 percent increase.
3. OCHA (2015), *2015 Syria Response Plan* (17 December 2014), Geneva, UN, p.3. The *SRP* states, "9.8 million people are considered food insecure, including 6.8 million in high priority districts. Meanwhile, 11.6 million people are in urgent need of access to clean water and sanitation."
4. According to UNICEF, Syria Crisis Dashboard, 12 December 2014, p1 there are 12.2 million people in need inside Syria, including 5.6 million children, plus 3.3 million refugees, including 1.67 million children.
5. UN Secretary-General (2015), *Report to UN Security Council* (22 January 2015), UN, p.6.
6. OCHA (2014), *Humanitarian Needs Overview* (November 2014), UN, p.15.
7. Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, '2014 deadliest year so far in Syria Civil war http://syriahr.com/en/2015/01/2014-deadliest-year-so-far-in-syrian-civil-war/ Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, 15 January 2015 http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/db150115 (links last accessed 4 March 2015).
8. Human Rights Council (2015), 'Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', UN, Twenty-seventh session, Agenda item 4, A/HRC/28/69, 5 February 2015, p.6.
9. UN, *SHARP* (15 December 2013), p.3, "The UN estimates that 6.5 million people are internally displaced"; and OCHA, *2015 Syria Response Plan* (17 December 2014), Geneva, UN, p.2, "7.6 million internally displaced". That is a 1.1 million increase, combined with the increase in refugees from 2.4 million to 3.8 million (USAID, 'Syria – Complex Emergency, Fact Sheet #6, Fiscal Year (FY) 2014' (15 January 2014), Washington DC: USAID, p. 1; and USAID, 'Syria – Complex Emergency, Fact Sheet #4, Fiscal Year (FY) 2015' (22 January 2015), Washington DC: USAID, p. 1).
10. OCHA, *2015 Syria Response Plan* (17 December 2014), p. 3, "5.6 million children in need of assistance"; and UN, SHARP (15 December 2013), p.17, "4.27 million children in need of humanitarian assistance". That is a 31% increase from 2013 to 2014.
11. OCHA (2015), *Humanitarian Bulletin Syria*, January 2015(52): 1.
12. HRW (December 2014) 'Deadly Cargo: Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas', http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/essays/deadly-cargo (last accessed 27 February 2015).
13. OCHA (2014), *Humanitarian Needs Overview* (November 2014), UN, p.5.
14. OCHA (2015), *Syrian Arabic Republic: Overview of humanitarian access with hard-to-reach and besieged locations*, 22 January 2015, Amman: UN. OCHA estimates that there are now 4.8 million people living in hard to reach areas. See also: PRST Monitoring Framework, 4 November 2013: 'At least 2.5 million people are estimated to be living in "hard to reach" areas in dire need of [..] assistance'
15. OCHA (2014), 'Humanitarian Needs Overview for the Whole of Syria', at Regional Whole of Syria Meeting Presentation, Beirut, Lebanon, 3 November 2014, slide 23. Food and agriculture assistance reached 768,000 beneficiaries in February-March 2014, compared to 27,000 people in May-June 2014.
16. OCHA (2015), *Humanitarian Bulletin Syria*, January 2015(52): p.3, "Despite submitting almost twice as many requests for inter-agency convoys in 2014 as compared to 2013, only 7 more convoys were conducted (50 compared to 43) while 63 per cent fewer beneficiaries were reached than in 2013."

17. According to OCHA, 'Total Funding to the Syrian Crisis 2013', *Financial Tracking Service*, http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=special-syriancrisis&year=2013 (last accessed 27 February 2015), the total funding received for the Syria crisis in 2013 was $3,120,247,282 for $4,391,452,578 in requirements. According to OCHA, 'Total Funding to the Syrian Crisis 2014', *Financial Tracking Service*, http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=special-syriancrisis&year=2014 (last accessed 27 February 2015), the total funding received for the Syria crisis in 2014 was $3,468,935,301 for $5,996,853,714 in requirements.

18. OCHA (2015), *Humanitarian Bulletin Syria*, January 2015(52): 1.

19. A share of this 5 per cent should be based on a share of collective Gross National Income (GNI), rather than on population, as it indicates a country's capacity to support refugees who are relocated. Joint agency briefing paper *"Resettlement of refugees from Syria: Increased commitments needed from international community in Geneva"* November 2014 http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp-syria-refugee-resettlement-geneva-en.pdf

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22. Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, '2014 deadliest year so far in Syria Civil war http://syriahr.com/en/2015/01/2014-deadliest-year-so-far-in-syrian-civil-war/ Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, 15 January 2015 http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/db150115 (links last accessed 4 March 2015).

23. Adam Taylor, Washington Post, 3 December 2014 ' 200,000 dead? Why Syria's rising death toll is so divisive http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/12/03/200000-dead-why-syrias-rising-death-toll-is-so-divisive/ (as accessed 4 March 2015)

24. Human Rights Council (2014) 'Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', Agenda item 4, Twenty-fifth session, A/HCR/25/65, 12 February 2014, p.1.

25. Secretary-General, *Report to UN Security Council*, United Nations, 21 August 2014, p. 10.

26. UN, *SHARP*, (15 December 2013), p.3, "The UN estimates that 6.5 million people are internally displaced"; and the OCHA, *2015 Syria Response Plan*, published 17 December 2014, UN: Geneva, p. 2, "7.6 million internally displaced". That is a 1.1 million increase, combined with the increase in refugees from 2.4 million to 3.8 million (USAID, *Syria – Complex Emergency, Fact Sheet #6, Fiscal Year (FY) 2014*, 15 January 2014, Washington DC, p. 1 and USAID, *Syria – Complex Emergency, Fact Sheet #4, Fiscal Year (FY) 2015*, 22 January 2015, Washington DC, p. 1).

27. OCHA (2015), *Humanitarian Bulletin Syria*, January 2015(52): 1.

28. For example see: Syria Needs Analysis Project (SNAP), *Regional Analysis Syria, Q3 2014*, 13 October 2014, http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/regional-analysis-syria-q3-2014-13-october-2014 (last accessed 27 February 2015); REACH Initiative, 'Syria Crisis: Camps and Informal Settlements in Northern Syria' Humanitarian Baseline Review, 30 June 2014,, http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-crisis-camps-and-informal-settlements-northern-syria-humanitarian (last accessed 27 November 2014); and OCHA, 'Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Dashboard – Eight Governorates' 30 July 2014, http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/syr_northern_humanitarian_dashboard_June2014_v3_EN.pdf (last accessed 27 February 2015).

29. Various incidents have been documented by Human Rights Council (2014) Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, United Nations, Agenda item 4, Twenty-seventh session, A/HCR/27/60, 13 August 2014, p. 12; and Human Rights Council (2014) Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, Agenda item 4, Twenty-fifth session, A/HCR/25/65, 12 February 2015, p. 3; and SNAP, *Regional Analysis Syria: Q4 2014*, (January 2015), Lebanon: ACAPS, p.24.

30. UN General Assembly (2014), 'Promotion and protection of the rights of children, children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary General', A/68/878-S/2014/339, 15 May 2014, Geneva: UN, pp.30–31. NB: The Syrian Arab Republic has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

31. *Ibid.*, p.13.

32. Human Rights Council (2015), 'Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', UN General Assembly, Twenty-seventh session, Agenda item 4, A/HRC/28/69, 5 February 2015, p.10.

33. Three months after the resolution was passed, Secretary-General (2014) 'Report to UN Security Council, United Nations', 22 May, pp.3–4, reports, "In May 2014, 14 children were killed whilst at school in Damascus when mortars landed on the building where they were studying. At the same time, an airstrike killed 30 children at a school in eastern Aleppo during an art exhibition."

34. OCHA (2014), Humanitarian Needs Overview, UN, November 2014, p. 1.

35. Information provided by UNICEF, quoting the 'Government of Syria's Education Information Management System': "The Government of Syria says that of the 18,129 Government schools, 15,432 are functioning, and 2,697 are affected or damaged." Conversely, Secretary-General, *Report to UN Security Council*, UN, 23 April 2014, p.13, said that by April 2014, over 4,000 schools were closed, damaged, or used for shelter by people displaced by the conflict.

36. Human Rights Council (2015), 'Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', UN, Twenty-seventh session, Agenda item 4, A/HRC/28/69, 5 February 2015, p.6.

37. Anonymous (2015), 'NGO Access Report', 14 January 2015, Amman, p. 5, reported that during December 2014 there were, "9 attacks on or near hospitals, 3 attacks on schools, and 1 attack on civilian infrastructure, resulting in the deaths of at least 37 people, including at least 9 children."

38. In 2014 1,100,000 children were not attending school, and in 2015 1,600,000 children were not attending school (a 500,000 increase). This information was compiled from a variety of sources including UN, *SHARP* (15 December 2013); and OCHA (2014), *Humanitarian Needs Overview* (November 2014), UN; and, OCHA, *2015 Syria Response Plan*, published 17 December 2014, UN: Geneva.

39. A barrel bomb is an improvised explosive device that is typically made from a barrel that has been filled with high explosives and then dropped from a helicopter or airplanes. The large quantity of explosives and their poor accuracy mean the use of these weapons is essentially indiscriminate in nature. See for example, Secretary-General (2014), 'Report to UN Security Council', UN, 24 September 2014, p.2, noted 55 civilian deaths caused by barrel bombs including seven women, and nearly 20 children. Secretary-General, 'Report to UN Security Council', UN, 21 November 2014, pp.1–2, "Since 20 October, at least 239 civilians have reportedly been killed by government airstrikes, including barrel bomb attacks".

40. Human Rights Council, 'Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', UN, Agenda item 4, Twenty-seventh session, A/HCR/27/60, 13 August 2014, p. 22. Human Rights Watch has identified at least 450 distinct major damage sites consistent with the detonation of large, air-dropped munitions, including improvised barrel and conventional bombs dropped by helicopters in 10 towns and villages in Daraa and over 1,000 in Aleppo city between February 22, 2014 and January 25, 2015: http://m.hrw.org/news/2014/07/30/syria-barrage-barrel-bombs

41. Human Rights Council (2015), 'Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', UN, Twenty-seventh session, Agenda item 4, A/HRC/28/69, 5 February 2015, p.7.

42. Human Rights Council (2015), Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', Agenda item 4, Twenty-fifth session, A/HCR/25/65, 12 February 2014, p.7.

43. Physicians for Human Rights (2015), 'Syria's Medical Community Under Assault', January and October 2014, http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/other/syrias-medical-community-under-assault.html (last accessed 27 February 2015); and Physicians for Human Rights, 'Anatomy of a Crisis: A map of attacks on health care in Syria', https://s3.amazonaws.com/PHR_syria_map/web/index.html (last accessed 27 February 2015). 63 medical personnel were killed from February 2013 to January 2014, compared to 83 medical personnel killed between February 2014 and January 2015. There were 69 medical facility attacks from February 2013 to January 2014, compared to 83 attacks between February 2014 and January 2015

44. SNAP (2015), *Regional Analysis Syria: Q4 2014*, Lebanon: ACAPS, (January 2015), pp.33–34; and OCHA, 'Humanitarian Needs Overview', UN, November 2014, p.7.

45. IDMC (2014), 'Global Overview 2014: People internally displaced by conflict and violence', Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2014/global-overview-2014-people-internally-displaced-by-conflict-and-violence (last accessed 27 February 2014).

46. The arms and equipment of the Syrian Government armed forces are almost entirely of Russian or Soviet origin. Syrian forces also fielded more than 5,000 anti-tank weapons of French origin and the Syrian Air Force counts 36 French Gazelle attack helicopters. Between 2007 and 2010, the Government of Syria received deliveries from China worth $300bn. Oxfam International, 'Moment of Truth', 20 October 2013, Oxford: Oxfam GB, http://www.oxfam.org/en/research/syrias-moment-truth (last accessed 27 February 2015).

47. K. De Young, (2014) '*Syrian Opposition Fighters Obtain U.S.-made TOW Antitank Missiles*", The Washington Post, 16 April, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/syrian-opposition-fighters-obtain-us-made-tow-anti-tank-missiles/2014/04/16/62d1a6f6-c4e8-11e3-b574-f8748871856a_story.html (last accessed 27 February 2015). '*Interview de François Hollande accordée au Monde*', Élysée 20 August 2014 http://www.elysee.fr/interviews/article/interview-de-francois-hollande-accordee-au-monde/ (last accessed 2 March 2015)

48. Iranian transfers to the government have continued despite an arms embargo on the country. See for example, '*Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1929 (2010)*' United Nations S/2012/395 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2012/395. On transfers from Gulf states see '*Arms Airlift to Syria Rebels Expands, With Aid From C.I.A*', New York Times http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/25/world/middleeast/arms-airlift-to-syrian-rebels-expands-with-cia-aid.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

49. OCHA (2015), *Humanitarian Bulletin Syria*, January 2015(52): 3. *Op. cit.*

50. OCHA (2014), 'Humanitarian Needs Overview for the Whole of Syria', at Regional Whole of Syria Meeting Presentation, Beirut, Lebanon, 3 November 2014, slide 23.

51. Human Rights Council (2015), 'Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', February 2015, p.4.

52. Discussions and email from OCHA, 23 February 2015, and Human Rights Council, 'Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic', February 2015.

53. Lindsey Hilsum (2015), 'Homs evacuation: barely a truce, nowhere near a ceasefire', http://blogs.channel4.com/lindsey-hilsum-on-international-affairs/homs-evacuation-barely-truce-ceasefire/3365 (last accessed 27 February 2015).

54. OCHA (2015), *Humanitarian Bulletin: Syria operations*, (July 2014 to February 2015) issues 4–12.

55. United Nations (2014), Security Council Resolution 2165,http://unscr.com/en/resolutions (last accessed 27 February 2015), Article 2.

56. OCHA (2015), *Humanitarian Bulletin: Syria operations from Turkey*, (30 January 2015), issue 12, Gaziantep, Turkey: UN. OCHA confirmed via email discussions that the United Nations and its partners have sent 73 consignments – 52 from Turkey and 21 from Jordan under the terms of resolutions 2165 and 2191. The total number of trucks used is 1,130. It must be noted that the amount of trucks and consignments does not capture the humanitarian value of assistance and one truckload cannot necessarily be compared with another.

57. Secretary-General (2014), 'Report to the Security Council', UN, 22 May 2014.

58. According to OCHA, of 19 potential border crossing points from Turkey into Syria, ten are closed, seven are restricted, and only two are open. OCHA, 'Turkey|Syria: Border Crossing Status', 13 February 2015, Gaziantep, Turkey, p.1, http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/stima/infographic/turkeysyria-border-crossing-status-25-july-2014 (last accessed 27 February 2015).

59. Anonymous (2014), 'NGO Access Report', 19 June 2014, Amman, p. 3.

60. Secretary-General, 'Report to the Security Council', United Nations, 21 November 2014, p.7.

61. ECHO (2014), 'Factsheet: Syria Crisis', 22 January, Brussels, p.2; and Anonymous, 'NGO Access Report', May 2014, p.2.

62. OCHA, *Humanitarian Bulletin: Syria operations from Turkey*, September 2014, UN, Gaziantepm, Turkey, p.1; and ICRC, 'Annual Report for Syria for 2013', (2014), p.4; and OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview*, UN, November 2014, p.15 states, "The unabated continuation of the armed conflict, without any concerted effort to prioritize the rights of civilians to effective protection threatens to undermine the neutrality of humanitarian activities, damages the integrity and credibility of humanitarian actors and renders legitimate protection interventions vulnerable to politicization and manipulation. It has been estimated that, as of August 2013, some 560 medical personnel have been killed, and 200 medical facilities attacked, and attacks on humanitarian workers and civilian infrastructure continue unabated."

63. OCHA, *Humanitarian Bulletin Syria*, January 2015(52): 1.

64. UNHCR (2014), 'Resettlement and other forms of admission for Syrian refugees', 23 February 2015, http://www.unhcr.org/52b2febafc5.pdf

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66. R. Turkmani, M. Kaldor, W. Elhamwi, *et al, Hungry for Peace: Positives and Pitfalls of Local Truces and Ceasefires in Syria*, Madani and LSE, November 2014, http://www.lse.ac.uk/newsAndMedia/news/archives/2014/11/Syriareport.aspx (last accessed 27 February 2015).

* All names have been changed

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