



UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, is currently visiting European capitals, as the humanitarian situation in Syria and the Sahel continues to dominate the headlines.

Ms. Amos held meetings with Andris Pielbags, the European Commissioner for Development and Kristalina Georgieva, the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response. She also met with officials of NATO, the Belgian government and Dutch and UK ministers on visits to The Hague and London during the same trip.

The visit comes in the wake of a pledging conference for Syria, which was organised in Kuwait on 30th January.

“I am delighted that so many countries came together to show their support to the Syrian people. More than \$1.5 billion was pledged and we are now working to turn this into action on the ground”, Under-Secretary Amos told a press conference in Brussels, Thursday 14 February.

Ms. Amos said that Syria and the Sahel continued to be the two world’s most serious emergencies. She pointed out that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has quadrupled since June last year and that an estimated 4 million people require urgent humanitarian assistance. “While we on the humanitarian side cannot end the political crisis or the fighting, the humanitarian community continues to try to do more to help Syrians caught up in the conflict.”

On the Sahel, the Under-Secretary General said that the situation is better than was feared this time last year and early and rapid action has had an impact and saved lives, but the crisis was now complicated by the renewed fighting in Northern Mali, where more than 1.2 million people are caught in the middle of armed operations including the use of airstrikes and mines. 14,000 people have been displaced since the French-led counter-offensive began. 22,000 have fled the country, in addition to the 380,000 people who were forced from their homes by the crisis in 2012.

“Although the humanitarian access continues to improve in central regions, it remains severely limited in the north and hampers delivery of urgently needed assistance,” Ms. Amos told journalists in Brussels. “The crisis in the north is coming on top of a broad, chronic crisis across the Sahel in which millions of people are being affected by food insecurity. More than half the children in the south of Mali are suffering from malnutrition.”

