



The UN has appealed for the biggest amount so far in a single humanitarian emergency as the situation in Syria continues to deteriorate. Faced with the fact that almost three-quarters of Syrians will need aid in 2014, UN agencies today appealed to donors for a record US\$6.5 billion in funds. The response plans for 2014 were presented to donors today in Geneva on behalf of UN agencies, including UNHCR, and non-governmental organizations by the Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos and UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres. The two organizations they represent lead the multi-agency international humanitarian responses under way inside Syria and in the surrounding region.

"As we look towards the fourth year of this appalling crisis, we see that nearly three-quarters of Syrians will need humanitarian aid in 2014. With the help of the international community, the United Nations, Red Crescent and partner NGOs will continue to deliver vital aid and seek protection for the ordinary men women and children caught up in the conflict," said Valerie Amos.

Monday's appeal is based on projections of continuing humanitarian needs and large-scale

displacement both inside Syria and into neighbouring countries during the coming year. Some US\$2.3 billion of the US\$6.5 billion total is for the OCHA-led Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan for people inside Syria. The remaining US\$4.2 billion is for the UNHCR-led Regional Response Plan 6, which helps refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries. The 2014 appeals represent the support plans of more than 100 partner organizations – UN agencies, national and international NGOs – who are working together to address the needs of Syrians.

"We're facing a terrifying situation here where, by the end of 2014, substantially more of the population of Syria could be displaced or in need of humanitarian help than not," said High Commissioner Guterres. "This goes beyond anything we have seen in many, many years, and makes the need for a political solution all the greater."

He added, "For now it remains of live-saving importance that the international humanitarian response is supported. Massive international solidarity is crucial, not only to support suffering Syrians, but also for the countries that have so generously taken in refugees. The Syria crisis is having a dramatic impact on their economies, societies and even on their security."

More than 2.3 million people have fled Syria since the beginning of the conflict in March 2011, in one of the largest refugee exoduses in recent history. Support for the surrounding countries includes help for refugee-hosting communities in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, which provide Syrians with basic shelter, protection and other essential support. The planning projections contained in the updated regional response plan allow for up to 4.1 million refugees by end 2014.

Amos emphasized the fact that to end the suffering altogether Syrians need a political solution. "As humanitarians, our focus must be on continuing to do everything we can to reach people with life-saving and life-sustaining aid. This includes mobilizing funding and urging the commitment of all who have influence over the parties who perpetuate this conflict, to ensuring the flow of aid and to protecting civilians," she said.

*Photo: Members of a Syrian refugee family huddle around a stove inside their shelter days ago in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. UNHCR/A.McConnell*