EUROPEAN COMMISSION

STATEMENT

Brussels, 15 July 2014

UN Security Council Resolution on humanitarian access inside Syria "a step forward"

The European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, made the following statement:

"I welcome Resolution 2165 on humanitarian access in Syria, which was unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council yesterday. It marks a step forward in our ability to relieve the suffering of Syrians caught between fighting lines in a war seemingly without end.

I sincerely believe that the Resolution will expand the delivery of life-saving assistance by the most direct routes to those in greatest need and in particular across four international border crossings. It will speed assistance to nearly three million people, among them children, women and the elderly, who have not received regular relief aid for many months.

From now on UN agencies will be able to travel across borders without receiving the prior authorisation of the Government of Syria. I pray that hard-to-reach and besieged populations, including the estimated 200,000 people trapped inside Eastern Aleppo City today, will benefit rapidly from this development.

Civilians, aid workers and aid convoys continue to be deliberately targeted in this long and merciless conflict. This is totally unacceptable. I call again on all parties to the conflict to uphold International Humanitarian Law, to protect the lives of civilians and also those seeking to provide them with humanitarian aid."

Background

- Resolution 2165 was adopted by unanimous vote at the United Nations Security Council to enable UN aid delivery across four Syria border crossing points, without needing the consent of the Government of Syria, which will enable access to 3 million people in hard-to-reach areas.

- More than 1.5 million people have been displaced towards camps along the border and rural areas of Aleppo and Idlib governorates since April. Military action by the Government of Syria has led to the blockade of the main access route to and from the Opposition-controlled Eastern Aleppo City, putting at grave risk nearly 200 000 people and preventing them from accessing humanitarian assistance. Rocket fire and aerial bombing have caused extensive damage to infrastructure, cutting off access to clean water, electricity and health supplies.

- The worsening security situation has made delivery of aid extremely difficult and the logistical capacities of humanitarian partners to handle distributions inside Aleppo city are increasingly strained, with the result that access to food is at risk.
- The European Commission has specifically allocated €3 million to the Aleppo emergency out of its total humanitarian funding of €615 million to the Syria crisis.

For more information

The European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

Commissioner Georgieva's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/index_en.htm

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