

Foreign Minister Steinmeier on the Syria donor conference

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31.01.2016 - Press release 

On Sunday (31 January), Foreign Minister Steinmeier spoke to the Rheinische Post newspaper about the Syria donor conference due to take place in London on 4 February:

More than one million Syrian refugees are living in Lebanon, which has a population of four million. Jordan, too, is groaning under the burden of the refugees. It is perfectly clear that Lebanon and Jordan are not in a position to look after millions of Syrian refugees single-handedly. That is why we focused our attention on the situation in the host countries during the refugee conference in Berlin in October 2014. It is good that for the London conference we have managed to bring the most important donors together with the neighbouring countries and the aid organisations around one table. We cannot allow food rations to be halved and people to freeze and starve again because the helpers have run out of money, as was the case in the refugee camps last year! In the context of our G7 Presidency last year, we mobilised an additional 1.8 billion euros by means of a hurriedly organised donor conference in New York.

This year we have to plan from the outset in a way that ensures vital needs can be met. This is not only a moral obligation we ought to impose on ourselves. It is also in our own interests if people do not have to make their way to Europe because local living conditions are untenable. We have therefore almost doubled the funding for UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and WFP (World Food Programme) humanitarian assistance programmes in Syria and the neighbouring countries over the past year. Germany is the third-largest donor in the Syria crisis, providing assistance totalling 1.3 billion euros since 2012.

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