

Address by Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the launch of the Syria Strategic Response Plan 2015 and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016

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Welcome

Breadcrumbs

1. [Federal Foreign Office](#) ›
2. [News](#) ›
3. [Newsroom](#) ›
4. **Address by Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the launch of the Syria Strategic Response Plan 2015 and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016**

18.12.2014 - Speech 

Distinguished Undersecretary General Valerie Amos,
Distinguished Undersecretary General Gina Casar,
Distinguished High Commissioner Antonio Guterres,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The conflict in Syria will soon enter into its fifth year.

More than 200,000 people have lost their lives. Over 12 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

More than 3 million people have fled to neighboring countries.

These staggering numbers cannot even start to capture the human suffering that this terrible conflict is causing.

And they can only indicate the extent to which Syria's neighbor countries have reached their limits.

Less than two months ago, we hosted the Berlin Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation here in the Foreign Office and the participants passed the Declaration of Solidarity – solidarity with refugees and their hosts.

With today's launch of the United Nations appeals, we continue and substantiate our support.

It is a pleasure and honor to welcome you all in Berlin!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While the host countries are bearing the brunt of the challenges, the institutions of the United Nations are providing strong support under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

I would like to express my respect for you, Secretary General Amos, High Commissioner Guterres and Secretary General Casar and all the United Nations representatives here with us.

The agencies you are representing developed the Strategic Response Plan for Syria and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan – 3 RP – jointly with host countries' governments and based on their respective national development plans. Your Plans show that over 7 billion US dollars are needed to address this humanitarian catastrophe. This is a call to the solidarity of all nations, and my country is willing to do its part.

The strategy behind these plans is important and unique in two ways: It is inclusive and sustainable!

It is inclusive because it covers the situation of refugees both in and outside of Syria.

It assesses needs both in the Regime-controlled and in the areas controlled by oppositional forces and it covers cross-border deliveries entering Syria.

And not least, the strategy includes the needs and perspectives of the neighboring countries.

I am grateful that representatives of the five most affected countries will speak here today.

Second, this strategy is sustainable because it aims to align humanitarian and development assistance. It addresses the immediate as well as the longer-term structural needs of the host communities. The fact that my colleague, Federal Minister Müller, is here today underlines how important this alignment is for us.

There is somebody else I would like to welcome:

Jan Egeland, who will share the perspective of non-governmental organizations. Jan, Civil society is a vital part of our efforts to reach as many people as possible by making use of the full potential of all humanitarian options.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The humanitarian crisis in Syria and the neighboring countries poses a threat to the stability of the whole region.

That is only one more reason why we have to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict itself! We support the efforts of the United Nations Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, to establish local “freezes”. At the same time, we encourage the regional and international

actors to find a political compromise for deescalation and the end of violence in Syria.

I would now like to hand over to Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development. Minister Müller, the floor is yours.

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