

Human Rights Commissioner Bärbel Kofler on the attack on an aid convoy in Syria

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20.09.2016 - Press release 

Bärbel Kofler, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid at the Federal Foreign Office, issued the following statement in Berlin today (20 September) on the attack on an aid convoy in Syria:

Yesterday a joint aid convoy of the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent was targeted in an air strike while offloading relief supplies in the Aleppo region. According to as yet unconfirmed reports, more than 20 humanitarian aid workers were killed, including the regional director of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. The United Nations had coordinated the convoy with all parties prior to its departure.

I condemn this attack in the strongest possible terms. I call on the Syrian regime and the states supporting it to adhere to international humanitarian law. Humanitarian aid workers need unhindered, safe access to those suffering to provide the help they so urgently need.

Background information:

At around 7.30 p.m. on 19 September, a convoy of the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) was attacked in Urm al-Kubra, south-west of Aleppo. The convoy was transporting flour, medicines and medical equipment, blankets and other relief supplies. According to the United Nations, 18 of the 31 trucks, which were carrying aid for 78,000 people, went up in flames. During the attack, a SARC warehouse funded by the Federal Foreign Office via the German Red Cross was also destroyed.

The convoy was part of the United Nations' routine monthly schedule confirmed by the Syrian regime on 6 September. In response to the attack, the United Nations has stopped all aid deliveries in Syria for the time being.

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