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UNITED NATIONS IN SYRIA

INVESTING IN HOPE FOR THE PEOPLE OF ALEPPO TO MOVE FORWARD



Aleppo © WFP

ALEPPO, 1 January 2017- Numbers and stories cannot convey the depth of suffering endured in each individual case of a Syrian in need in Aleppo. Exactly how many people have left east Aleppo is not known, but the United Nations (UN) and partners estimate our number to be at least 35,000 during last week's evacuation.

The UN continues to be concerned with the 116,000 people that have been registered as displaced from formerly non-Government controlled neighborhoods of eastern Aleppo, including 80,158 displaced to areas in and around Aleppo city, and 36,086 people to Idlib and rural western Aleppo.

The scale of destruction in Aleppo is massive and needs enormous help, requiring a comprehensive approach and modality for reconstruction in supporting basic services and critical infrastructure in areas such as health care, water and sanitation, education systems, housing/shelter, electricity and livelihoods. In the meantime UN and partners, working closely with the Government technical departments and institutions is responding to most immediate and urgent needs.

Syrians in need deserve nothing less than food, water, health, shelter, education, livelihoods and safety from the continuing crisis and our collective concern has turned into collective action led by the local authorities and supported by the UN, ICRC, SARC, international/national organization (INGOs) and local partners. The heart of this ancient city of Aleppo is its people, and UN and partners now reach about 400,000 IDPs in Aleppo under our emergency and regular programming through direct aid and services.

With a strong tradition, some displaced families have settled with friends and family, however thousands have been resorted to live in shelters in unfinished buildings and informal settlements.

IDPs have had to adapt their livelihoods, and shelter structures and conditions continue to be a main challenge. Thousands of IDPs have been accommodated in collective shelters that need approval by the Government to be rehabilitated by UN and partners.

The change in lifestyle has been traumatic to Syrian families in need since the start of the crisis, and immediate assistance provided by the UN and partners to IDPs in Aleppo has been in areas of shelter, food, non-food items (NFIs), nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health assistance, protection services and early recovery. We are grateful for our networks as approximately 80-90 percent of humanitarian aid distributed by SARC and other partners has originated from UN stocks. UN and partners continued to deliver services to people in need, including legal counseling and assistance, civil documentation assistance and psychosocial support.

Imagine a harsh winter in Aleppo with temperatures dropping even more at night. Over 261,000, including 80,158 newly displaced people have received aid under the UN's winterization activities with the distribution of core relief items such as 159,000 blankets, 1,300 mattresses, 33,000 winter clothes kit, 300 family tents, 16,000 floor carpets 15,000 sleeping bags and 5,000 jerry cans. Though efforts are underway to prepare for winter, much more is needed.

Water and fuel is not taken for granted and due to the understated work of the UN, a staggering 1.1 million people have access to a water supply through fuel stocks and installation/rehabilitation of water storage tanks in IDP shelters and the quick repair of the water network in the apartments in the 1070 district.

One of our goals is to enable a health system that provides a faster, effective and predictable response to all kinds of health emergencies, and in the past month, the UN has delivered more than seven mobile clinics and 12 mobile teams which are providing crucial health services and pre-positioned 70 tons of medical supplies which can provide up to 300,000 treatment courses in underserved areas in Aleppo. In addition, 10,398 children have been vaccinated against the contagious and devastating polio disease. 1,381 cases of critical ill and wounded from east Aleppo were referred to 5 public hospitals. Sanitary materials have a direct impact on dignity and over 24,000 families in need in Aleppo have benefited with hygiene kits and the remaining 16,000 hygiene kits are still being distributed.

Food rations rushed by the UN covered the needs of 119,500 people for one month and with humanitarian partners, communal kitchens were created that continue to provide meals for 20,700 IDPs in collective shelters in Aleppo. That is two hot meals a day for each hungry person through these communal kitchens. Bread is a staple item and through our partners, UN continues to distribute freshly baked bread bundles for 40,000 people in need every day throughout Aleppo.

All children deserve a fair chance to make their dreams real. Through this ordeal, 64 cases of unaccompanied and separate children have thus far been identified by the UN and are receiving follow-up care with case managers. We want to give that chance to children to hope, and restoring the education facilities across Aleppo will help by the UN who has installed prefabricated classrooms in response to the education needs of displaced children, established self-learning programmes and distributed hundreds of thousands of education materials and supplies.

Solid waste and debris have been piling up on the streets of several neighborhood's roads and pumping stations which can lead to health hazards amongst other concerns. The UN has successfully started working with the municipalities for its removal from several neighbourhoods and two pumping stations. 115 IDPs workers joined UN productive workshops and ongoing basic infrastructure rehabilitation projects. This model will be used for other neighborhoods.

Further efforts are needed to improve the impact of humanitarian and early recovery action in Aleppo. In spite of important initiatives taken among humanitarian actors in recent weeks, notably in regard to the evacuation operation, the lack of humanitarian access to some locations is due to the presence of unexploded **ordnances** (UXOs) or enormous piles of debris which is an obstacle.

There is the colossal, future task by workers to remove the twisted piles of concrete, steel and other debris that have clogged some parts of Aleppo and for this heavy machinery is needed that is not presently available.

The UN has direct or indirect access through partners in all Aleppo neighborhoods. The UN has been carrying out assessments in these locations in Aleppo and will soon present to donors its findings along with funding requirements per sector. Support from entities who can safely remove the UXOs from neighbourhoods is required.

We hope the Government will enable the United Nations and partners to expand its response in the area, beginning by authorizing access to all areas of Aleppo. The delivery of further lifesaving assistance also requires approval for additional staff to surge to Aleppo to continue humanitarian operations. We stand ready to assist the Government in conducting technical assessments, including about the status of housing and social infrastructure in Aleppo, to support the multi-sectoral response.

Owing to insufficient funding, millions of people come to depend on these humanitarian services to survive and we want them to further restore their lives and livelihoods inside Syria. The UN urges Donors to provide immediate and long-term support to the over 100,000 highly vulnerable people in Aleppo, displaced, so they can continue to receive life-saving assistance and help. Tens of thousands of people in Aleppo still do not have sufficient water and electricity supply. Schools and health systems need to be rebuilt. Conditions need to be in place and houses and neighborhoods rebuilt for the displaced to voluntarily return home. We need your help to bring about tangible improvements in the lives of the many millions of people in need in Syria who fall victim to the crisis in yet another year.