

Aid teams respond to escalating southwest Syria conflict: 750,000 civilians are at risk

Vital humanitarian relief continues to reach Dera'a in south-west Syria, where 750,000 people are at risk and at least 45,000 people have been displaced amid a government-led offensive to regain opposition-held areas, UN aid teams said on Tuesday.

Clashes between forces loyal to the Government of Syria and armed opposition units have forced most to flee from eastern Dera'a to areas near the Jordan border, according to the [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#).

The uptick in violence comes despite a ceasefire deal covering Dera'a that was agreed by Turkey, Iran and Russia last year, OCHA spokesperson Jens Laerke told journalists in Geneva.

"Civilian infrastructure has also reportedly been attacked and damaged," he said, "including an airstrike on Sunday 24 June that took a field hospital in the town of Al-Hrak out of function".

To help those in need, "food, health, nutrition, education and other core relief items" have been transported via cross-border deliveries from Jordan, the OCHA spokesperson added.

We expect the number of displaced people could more than double as the violence escalates – *Bettina Luescher (WFP)*

Another contributor to the aid effort, the [World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#), confirmed in Geneva that the fighting had closed main supply routes inside Syria.

It too relies on cross-border access and reaches affected families via the Ar-Ramtha border crossing between Jordan and Syria, WFP spokesperson Bettina Luescher explained, in accordance with a UN Security Council resolution allowing the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

"The World Food Programme is really worried about the situation," she said. "We expect the number of displaced people could more than double as the violence escalates."

To date, WFP has delivered ready-to-eat food to more than 30,000 people sheltering in villages and makeshift camps.

These rations provide enough food for one week and include canned foods such

as tuna, chicken and beans. To help prevent malnutrition in infants, WFP has provided specialized nutritional products, Luescher said.

Those fleeing attacks have sought shelter to the west of Dera'a, in Quneitra governorate, WFP said in a statement which also highlighted that "retaliatory shelling" had targeted the governorate of Swaida, to the east.

Tarik Jasarevic, spokesperson for the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) said that more than 135,000 treatment units, including 2,100 trauma kits were ready to be sent to Dera'a from the capital Damascus "once the green light is received from the Syrian authorities".

In addition, five medical mobile teams will be deployed "in coming days" to Dera'a, Mr. Jasarevic told reporters.

In terms of cross-border deliveries, WHO has more than 50 metric tonnes of emergency health supplies that "will cross the border into Syria" soon, he added.