

Largest joint UN humanitarian convoy of the war, reaches remote Syrian settlement

The largest UN humanitarian convoy of the Syrian civil war reached the remote settlement of Rukban, on the border with Jordan on Wednesday, where it is delivering life-saving assistance to more than 40,000 displaced people, some of whom have been trapped there for years as the eight-year conflict grinds on.

The vulnerable inhabitants, the vast majority of whom are women and children, are living in desperate conditions that have worsened due to the harsh winter: at least eight young children have reportedly died in Rukban in recent weeks.

The convoy of 188 trucks –a joint operation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent – is delivering food, health and nutritional supplies, as well as hygiene materials, education items and children’s recreational kits. In addition, vaccines for 10,000 children under the age of five have been sent with the convoy.

This large-scale delivery of essential humanitarian supplies to the extremely vulnerable in Rukban could not have happened a moment too soon – *UN Syria Coordinator, Sajjad Malik*

“This large-scale delivery of essential humanitarian supplies to the extremely vulnerable in Rukban could not have happened a moment too soon”, said UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Mr. [Sajjad Malik](#) in a statement released by the UN on Wednesday. “While this delivery of assistance will provide much-needed support, it is only a temporary measure. A long-term, safe, voluntary and dignified solution for tens of thousands of people, many of whom have been staying at the Rukban settlement for more than two years in desperate conditions, is urgently needed.”

The humanitarian supplies provided during this convoy were chosen based on the findings of a needs assessment carried out during the previous convoy to reach the outpost, in November 2018. Monitoring will also take place during the current convoy by the UN and Red Crescent teams to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches civilians in need.

In order to bring about a situation where the displaced people at the settlement can return home, or to a place of their choosing, the UN and Red Crescent will carry out a survey to consult with them on their wishes and priorities. In the Wednesday statement, the UN underlined the fact that it urges all parties to allow safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need in Syria in line with their obligations under

International Humanitarian Law.

In the last three years, tens of thousands have fled to Rukban from ISIL or Da'esh extremist- held parts of Syria being targeted by Russian and U.S.-led coalition air strikes, according to news reports.

The camp lies inside a "deconfliction zone" set up by US-backed coalition, Russian and Syrian Government forces, which has reportedly encouraged many of Rukban's inhabitants to stay rather than go back to their homes in areas under Government control where they fear retribution by the Syrian army.