

Syria: UN chief welcomes first aid convoy to Rukban camp since January, joint agency operation assists 50,000

The United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) kicked off a joint aid operation on Saturday, delivering vital humanitarian assistance to 50,000 people in south-east Syria's Rukban camp, near the Jordanian border.

In a statement welcoming the aid convoy, [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) recognized that while “the long-needed delivery is an important achievement, the overall humanitarian access to this informal desert camp remains [wholly inadequate](#).”

As such, he called on all relevant actors “to ensure continued, full, safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to the tens of thousands of displaced Syrians in this remote area, and to all people in need throughout the country.”

“The population at Rukban has not received assistance since January this year, and they are increasingly desperate,” Mark Lowcock, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, recently told a Security Council meeting on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

The long-needed delivery is an important achievement –
UN Secretary-General

“We are delivering food, sanitation and hygiene supplies, nutrition and health assistance in addition to other [core relief items](#) in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent,” said Ali Al-Za'tari, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria.

The inter-agency aid operation is expected to take three to four days as it also conducts an emergency vaccination campaign “to protect some 10,000 children against Measles, Polio and other deadly disease” and undertake rapid needs assessments.

The convoy was meant to deliver assistance to Rukban camp on 27 October, but was postponed for [security reasons](#).

Between basic commodity shortages, protection concerns, increasing violence and the death of several children unable to access medical treatment, the overall situation in the camp remains critical.

According to news reports, Rukban camp, which is a cluster of about 10,800 makeshift tents and mud huts, has been labeled as “one of the most desperate places in Syria.”

SARC's president called the operation "a huge positive step for the people there."

The UN urges all parties to allow safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to all in need in line with their obligations under International Humanitarian Law.

"While this much-needed delivery is an important achievement, a longer-term solution must be found for the many civilians living in Rukban," underscored Mr. Al-Za'tari.

"We must do everything we can to continue helping civilians living in the harshest conditions in there," he concluded.