

Syrians 'exposed to brutality every day' as thousands continue fleeing ISIL's last stand

In eastern Syria, 13,000 people have arrived at a protection camp in just the last week, after fleeing fighting in the last ISIL extremist stronghold in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate, the UN's emergency coordination office, [OCHA](#), said on Friday.

Nine in 10 of the arrivals at Al Hol camp in Al Hassakeh governorate were women and children, spokesperson Jens Laerke told journalists in Geneva.

"Many of them have arrived exhausted, hungry and sick," he said "Approximately 45,000 people have fled the Hajin and Al-Baghouz area of Deir- ez-Zor and arrived in the camp, since December. Those who are fleeing have told us of a desperate situation for civilians in the area they are fleeing from. It's affected by hostilities – civilians are being killed and injured on a daily basis – there's large-scale destruction of civilian infrastructure and shortages of food, medicine and other basic necessities."

Mr. Laerke also reported that 84 people, mainly children under-five, died either on their way to the settlement or shortly after arriving at the Al-Hol camp.

And according to aid teams there, 175 children have been hospitalized owing to complications from severe acute malnutrition.

The UN and partners are responding to growing needs at Al-Hol camp and surrounding areas by providing life-saving assistance to all new arrivals, along with food, water, shelter, and warm clothes and blankets.

'Staggering' levels of need prevail: new UN humanitarian assessment

Elsewhere in Syria, a desperate humanitarian situation prevails, despite a reduction in violence in many parts of the country over the past year.

"With the crisis in its eighth year, staggering levels of need persist for people throughout Syria," according to OCHA's [Humanitarian Needs Overview](#) 2019 for Syria.

Published ahead of a conference co-chaired by the European Union (EU) and the UN in Brussels from 12 to 14 March, the OCHA document states that 11.7 million people need help inside the country. including 6.2 million who are internally displaced. A further 5.6 million are refugees.

"The population continues to look for safety in parts of the country still

affected by ongoing hostilities with significant protection needs, new and protracted displacement, increased self-organized returns and the sustained erosion of communities resilience," it warns.

For millions of Syrians "the crisis is far from over", it insists, with needs including food and livelihood assistance, health care, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene support.

Education for children is also urgently required, with more than two million boys and girls out of school across the war-torn country.

"People continue to be exposed to brutality every day," the Needs Overview cautions. "Women, children, adolescent girls, older people, widows and female-headed households, and people with disabilities, face distinct protection risks and have specific needs."

In addition, it warns, more than 10 million people are estimated to live in areas contaminated by explosive hazards "of all kinds".