

UN Security Council urged to act against 'worst-case scenario' Syria's war-battered Idlib

A further escalation of violence in Syria's Idlib governorate could create a humanitarian emergency "at a scale not yet seen through this crisis," a senior United Nations aid official warned the Security Council on Tuesday.

John Ging, Director of Operations with the UN humanitarian affairs office, [OCHA](#), said recent intense aerial bombardment and shelling in Idlib and three other governorates in north-west Syria have resulted in death, damage and destruction, placing an even greater strain on aid workers and communities hosting displaced people.

"Humanitarian organizations are doing what they can with the resources available to them to sustain the current response and prepare for a possible further deterioration, thanks in large part to cross-border assistance and the generosity of our financial donors," Mr. Ging told the ambassadors.

"But a [worst-case scenario](#) in Idlib will overwhelm capacities and has the potential to create a humanitarian emergency at a scale not yet seen through this crisis."

Mr. Ging was speaking during the Council's monthly meeting on the Syrian conflict, now in its seventh year.

He said aid partners are finalizing a humanitarian plan to respond to the potential crisis in the north-west, which borders Turkey, in addition to carrying out their ongoing operations.

These organizations are providing a "critical lifeline" for scores of civilians, 680,000 of whom received food delivered from Turkey in July alone.

Mr. Ging reported that the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, was in Damascus that day to engage with the Government on how best to scale up humanitarian response across Syria.

Security Council engagement is also critical to preventing an escalation in Idlib and an ensuing humanitarian emergency, he added.

Quoting former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and former UN-Arab League envoy on the Syria crisis, who died earlier this month, he appealed for action.

"We call on the members of the Council to do all they can to ensure that we avoid this. In the words of Kofi Annan, 'We have the means and the capacity to deal with our problems, if only we can find the political will.'"