

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the situation in the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Syria

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The EU is seriously concerned at the continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Syria. The conditions in the Palestinian refugee camp in Yarmouk have become critical and need to be addressed with outmost urgency. After 3 years of besiegement by the Syrian regime, the recent wave of violence in Yarmouk by different fighting sides is putting the population living in the camp at serious risk.

The ongoing denial of humanitarian access to the refugees living in the Yarmouk camp by the Syrian regime and other belligerents is unacceptable.

All sides should cease their hostilities to ensure immediate and unconditional humanitarian access to those in need, and provide safe passage for all civilians who wish to leave the camp, in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191.

We urge all parties to use their influence over the fighting groups to enable immediate and unconditional humanitarian access and provide safe passage for all civilians who wish to leave Yarmouk.

As the EU, we commend UNRWA for the important work it is doing and will continue to work together with UNRWA Commissioner General Pierre Krähenbühl, and all other partners to help alleviate the suffering of the people in the greatest need. To that end the European Commission released immediate emergency funding of EUR 2.5 million to UNRWA's operations to deliver life-saving assistance to Palestinian refugees in Syria through cash and emergency relief items. In addition, and as part of the EU's 2015 humanitarian funding for Syria, support will facilitate a rapid humanitarian response to meet the needs of vulnerable families. This funding extends to all parts of Syria affected by the conflict, with specific focus on the recent violence in Yarmouk, Idlib, Dara'a and Aleppo.

As the EU, we call on the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to work with all parties towards the comprehensive implementation of the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 leading to a genuine political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and enables them independently and democratically to determine their own future. We will continue to fully support the victims of the Syria crisis.