

PRESS RELEASE

Welthungerhilfe on UN refugee figures and the situation in Syria

Hunger crisis worsens for civil war refugees

Bonn/Berlin, 2021-06-18 The new UN refugee figures have risen to sad record high despite the coronavirus pandemic: More than 82 million people around the world had to leave their homes due to persecution, violence, and human rights violations. This is almost equivalent to the entire population of Germany. 86 percent of all displaced people find refuge in neighbouring countries or in countries in the Global South, which are also fighting hunger and poverty.

After ten years of civil war, Syria alone has 13.5 million refugees and internally displaced people – a sad record. The situation faced by internally displaced people within Syria is particularly dramatic. Around 2.7 million internally displaced people are stuck in the northwest of Syria at the Turkish border: “The conditions in the camps are often appalling. In addition to poverty, a lack of prospects, and fear of the coronavirus, increasing hunger is one of the greatest problems. Prices for bread, vegetables and fruit are rising unchecked. At the same time, we see that the regime is intentionally setting fire to fields that are ripe for harvest, as it does every year at harvest time and uses hunger as a weapon,” explains Konstantin Witschel, Programme Coordinator for Syria.

“If the last border crossing point for UN aid supplies from Turkey is closed, there is a risk that the already catastrophic humanitarian situation, could get completely out of control. More than a million people rely on cross-border United Nations food aid to survive. The vaccination campaign against COVID-19 in the northwest of the country is also at stake, says Konstantin Witschel, referring to the cross-border aid, which will have to be decided on again in the Security Council at the beginning of July.

Welthungerhilfe is providing assistance in Syria and in neighbouring Turkey and Lebanon for people who have fled the war in Syria. In 2020, Welthungerhilfe supported more than 600,000 people, mostly through food aid, e.g., food vouchers, deliveries of flour for bakeries, and seed, fertiliser and tools for agriculture.

Konstantin Witschel, Programme Coordinator for Syria, is available for interviews.

For more information and photos to download see www.welthungerhilfe.org/media

Welthungerhilfe is one of the largest private aid organisations in Germany, without political or religious affiliation. It is fighting for “Zero Hunger by 2030”. Since it was founded in 1962, more than 9,830 overseas projects in 70 countries have been supported with 3.95 billion euros. Welthungerhilfe works on the principle of help for self-help: from fast disaster relief to reconstruction and long-term development cooperation projects with national and international partner organisations.

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