



## *Self-Administration of North and East Syria*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Statement on the Humanitarian Crisis in Deir al-Zor Countryside**

**North and East Syria, 2 February 2019** – In conjunction with the military campaign to clear and secure the last stronghold under the control of the IS terrorist group south of Deir al-Zor, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) released a statement on the IDP crisis taking place in the countryside surrounding Deir al-Zor. This statement holds the Self-Administration of North and East Syria responsible for the aggravation and deterioration of the humanitarian crisis. However, the report fails to take into consideration a number of facts regarding the on-the-ground situation, and many of the accusations contained within are baffling and far from substantive.

The dramatic collapse of the humanitarian situation in Syria during the last eight years has caused a devastating crisis that has resulted in death, destruction, and displacement throughout the geography of Syria. In recent years, the regions of North and East Syria have been among the main areas that attracted a large number of IDPs from all Syrian cities due to the provision and availability of safety and security, compared with other Syrian regions. Our door has remained consistently open to receive and host our Syrian brethren who seek safety and shelter. The Self-Administration and its people have been generously sharing local resources in order to support IDP arrivals (e.g. food, clothing, blankets, tents, etc.).

Since 2014, the Self-Administration has been receiving and welcoming waves of IDPs and refugees, and attempting by all means and available resources to provide them with shelter and necessary aid, both in the cities and in the camps. For this reason, the Self-Administration has so far built 11 camps in different regions of North and East Syria, despite the resulting rapid drain of our resources and heavy burden on our shoulders. Following these years of consistent support and welcoming of IDPs and refugees, which continues today, it is unjust to blame the Self-Administration for the deteriorated health status of IDPs fleeing the areas of armed clashes in Deir al-Zor.

Since mid-April 2018, the Self-Administration has attended meetings with the Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to discuss the Deir al-Zor liberation campaign; the phases of the liberation campaign were clearly explained. The Self-Administration also proposed the al-Attela area as a location for the establishment of a camp which would host new arrivals from the densely populated areas under the control of IS, such as Hajin and Bagoz. Regrettably, the UN Office in Qamishli rejected this proposal and informed us that they are unable to operate in this area due to safety concerns.

On 14, Jan 2019, the Self-Administration requested, during a meeting with various UN organizations, the establishment of hosting points for IDPs in Deir al-Zor in order to provide life-saving aid to IDPs before



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being transferred to the camps. The Self-Administration has not received a response regarding this request from the Office of the High Commissioner.

The devastating humanitarian crisis in Syria, and the recent dramatic increase in the number of the suffering arrivals (IDPs) to our regions, is much greater than the capacity of our administration. It is with great regret that we must note this sudden aggravation of the humanitarian crisis was caused by the evasion and procrastination of international and humanitarian organisations that have not been carrying out their duties in this region.

Therefore, we have been thoroughly stunned by the choice of the UNHCR to ignore the main sources of this humanitarian crisis, and instead to deliver such statements which only serve to politicise the aid process. The submission of UNHCR to the pressure practised on it, deviates from its expressed humanitarian principles. Despite the fact that UN aid provision vehicles in Qamishli were fully loaded with aid and materials, there was a delay of 10 days in the delivery of this aid from Qamishli city to al-Hawl camp due to the UN's inability to obtain permissions from an organisation affiliated with the Syrian government. This, in particular, was a direct cause of the exacerbation of the humanitarian situation. The arrival of huge numbers of IDPs without access to any UN assistance (e.g. tents and blankets) has deteriorated the health status of the IDPs fleeing through the last pocket controlled by IS, particularly the children.

On behalf of the Self-Administration, we call on humanitarian and international actors to carry out their duties in these areas and take the urgent and necessary measures to prevent the further deterioration of the situation. The emergency situation will not be resolved through blame. The Self-Administration is ready and willing to work together to establish safe points of access and transfer in order to manage the situation, which we have been requesting for months.

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**Self-Administration of North and East Syria**

**Social Affairs and Employment Department**

**IDPs and Refugees Office**