

Beat: Politics

UN leaders call for urgent political solution to Syrian crisis

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USPA News - The heads of five United Nations (UN) agencies on Monday called for an urgent political solution to Syria's prolonged violent crisis. The UN estimates that more than 70,000 people, many of them civilians, have been killed and more than 1.1 million others have fled to neighboring countries since the start of Syria's uprising in 2011.

Opposition groups estimate the number of deaths is far higher, but those figures cannot be independently verified. As the ongoing crisis continues, the UN called on political leaders to meet their responsibility to the people of Syria and to the future of the region, where more than five million people have been displaced by the conflict. "After so many families torn apart and communities razed, schools and hospitals wrecked and water systems ruined ["] there still seems to be an insufficient sense of urgency among the governments and parties that could put a stop to the cruelty and carnage in Syria," the UN leaders said. In the past few weeks, the agencies have separately warned that their resources are running low, and added that without additional funds they will be forced to scale back relief efforts. The leaders, which include Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, Executive Director of the World Food Program (WFP) Ertharin Cousin, UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres, Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) Anthony Lake, and the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Margaret Chan, voiced their opinions in an article published in the New York Times. The group stated their agencies are working at overcapacity to help those affected by the violence, but stressed that finding a solution to the conflict is the only way to stop the growing needs of the population. "We ask that they use their collective influence to insist on a political solution to this horrendous crisis before hundreds of thousands more people lose their homes and lives and futures - in a region already at the tipping point," they urged. "The needs are growing while our capacity to do more is diminishing, due to security and other practical limitations within Syria as well as funding constraints. We are precariously close, perhaps within weeks, to suspending some humanitarian support," the group added, as they appealed to "save the Syrian people and save the region from disaster."

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