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Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the thirty-second submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of Council resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of Council resolution 2191 (2014) and paragraph 5 of Council resolution 2258 (2015), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on the data available to United Nations agencies on the ground, from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, other Syrian sources and open sources. Data from United Nations agencies on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for the period from 1 to 30 September 2016.

Box 1

Key points in September 2016

(1) The 9 September agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation did not hold. More than 300 people in eastern Aleppo were killed in the last week of September, mainly as a result of air strikes. At the same time, more than 80 people were killed in western Aleppo.

(2) On 19 September, a United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoy delivering humanitarian assistance for 78,000 in Urum al-Kubra (in western rural Aleppo governorate) came under attack, resulting in the deaths of 18 people, including Red Crescent volunteers and staff and drivers.

(3) The number of people besieged in the Syrian Arab Republic has grown from 586,200 to 861,200 owing to the addition to the siege of eastern Aleppo, where an estimated 275,000 people reside.



- (4) The United Nations and health partners received credible reports of 30 attacks against medical facilities in September. Of those, 12 attacks have been confirmed.
- (5) Owing to the lack of food, nearly 80 per cent of households surveyed by the World Food Programme have reported resorting to rationing food, such as having one meal per day.

II. Major developments

3. Intensified fighting and numerous ground and air strikes resulted in the death of civilians, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation during the reporting period. That included the damaging of structures enjoying special protection under international humanitarian law, such as medical units. The people of the Syrian Arab Republic continue to suffer the most egregious abuse: they are assaulted; deprived of food, water and medicines in horrific conditions of uncertain survival; and all too frequently killed. Insecurity and ongoing violence remained a major factor limiting the ability of United Nations agencies and their partners to deliver much-needed humanitarian assistance, and in one instance resulted in the deaths of humanitarian workers and related staff. Heavy fighting continued across the country, including in Aleppo, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Idlib, Rif Dimashq and other governorates.

4. In eastern Aleppo, where some 275,000 people have been trapped since July, efforts to ease the suffering of the population were ultimately unsuccessful. On 9 September, following months of negotiations, the United States of America and the Russian Federation reached an agreement that would restore the cessation of hostilities, facilitate humanitarian access and establish closer military cooperation between the two countries. The renewed cessation of hostilities came into effect on 12 September and for several days significantly reduced violence. On 19 September, however, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic declared an end to the cessation of hostilities, citing violations by non-State armed opposition groups, and on 22 September announced a major offensive against eastern Aleppo. The offensive killed more than 300 people, including 100 children, in the first week. During that same time, more than 80 people, including 32 children, were reportedly killed in western Aleppo.

5. On 19 September, a United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoy delivering humanitarian assistance for 78,000 in Urum al-Kubra (west of Aleppo) came under sustained attack. Over the course of two hours, 18 people (12 volunteers, 5 drivers and the head of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Urum al-Kubra) lost their lives. Another 15 drivers were wounded, and civilians were killed and injured. The warehouse, where supplies were unloaded, as well as a nearby clinic run by the Red Crescent, were also severely damaged. No party has taken responsibility for the attack. On 30 September, the Secretary-General announced the establishment of an internal United Nations board of inquiry, whose task will be to ascertain the facts of the incident.

6. Following the local agreement reached in Darayya on 24 August and the evacuation of its population on 26 and 27 August, on 2 September an additional

350 civilians from Darayya, but living in neighbouring Mu'addamiyah, were evacuated to Hirjillah under the auspices of the agreement. Starting on 1 September, 93 predominantly elderly internally displaced persons hosted in Hirjillah were permitted to leave the shelter, and are now living with their relatives or acquaintances. The number of residents in Hirjillah now stands at 750 people.

Box 2

Food security

(1) An estimated 6.7 million Syrians are experiencing food insecurity, meaning that they do not have reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food, according to food security partners. Another 2.2 million Syrians are at risk.

(2) Owing to the lack of food, nearly 80 per cent of households surveyed by the World Food Programme (WFP) reported resorting to strategies to ration food, such as having one meal per day. Particularly for internally displaced persons and returnee households, WFP estimates that 85 per cent resort to such alternative strategies to meet their food needs.

(3) Factors such as besiegement, access constraints, high food prices and lower crop production have increased food insecurity among Syrians. The wheat harvest has been steadily declining since the beginning of the crisis, and in 2016 it is estimated to be less than half (45 per cent) of the 2015 harvest. Similarly, livestock numbers have decreased substantially since the beginning of the crisis, with up to 40 per cent fewer cattle, sheep and goats and half the poultry available inside the country. In August 2016, the national average cost of a standard food basket (a package of essential food commodities) was \$64, an increase of nearly 16 per cent compared with January 2016.

(4) Every month, food security partners reach, on average, nearly 6.0 million people with food baskets (including 1.5 million from cross-border convoys) and more than 2 million people with wheat and flour/bread assistance through distributing food directly to households or supporting bakeries. More than 3,000 trucks delivering food assistance are on the country's roads every month. That has amounted to nearly 40,000 tons of wheat flour over the past eight months alone (averaging 5,000 tons a month). The major operational challenges are access constraints, insecurity on roads and resources. Despite those challenges, humanitarian organizations reach on average 90 per cent of targeted internally displaced persons, vulnerable host populations and Palestine refugees.

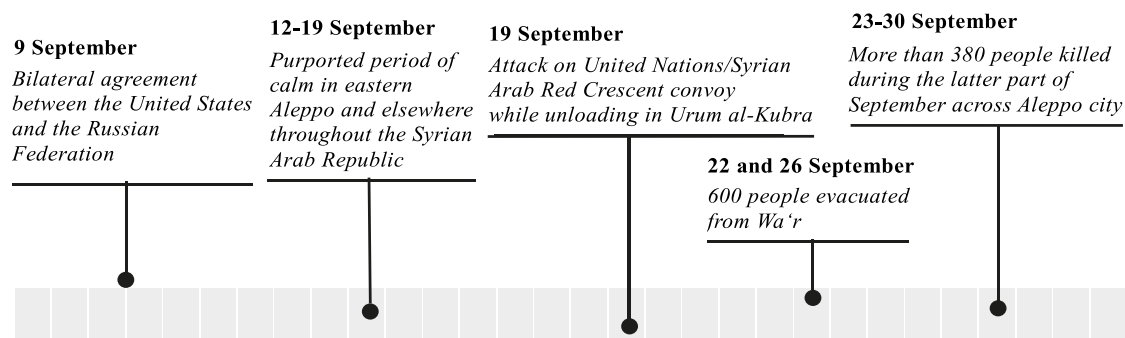
7. Following the resumption of negotiations on 29 August between Government representatives and the opposition negotiation committee of the Wa'r district, the Government partly opened two passages to the district, allowing basic goods to enter and allowing the limited movement of civilians, as well as allowing public employees in the service sector regular access into Wa'r. On 19 September, the Government released 197 detainees from Wa'r. On two occasions, on 22 and 26 September, a total of 600 people, including members of non-State armed opposition groups and their families, relocated from Wa'r to northern rural Homs. The evacuation occurred without any United Nations involvement and was based on an agreement between the Government and the negotiation team of Wa'r.

8. Following further fighting in the Hama countryside, the number of families registered as displaced with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent has risen from 11,530 to approximately 14,371 families (71,855 people) in September. An additional 4,746 families (23,730 people) were also displaced to Hama city and are registered with a local non-governmental organization, bringing the total number of displaced to approximately 19,117 families (95,585 people).

9. On 28 September a girls' school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the Khan Eshieh Palestine refugee camp took a direct hit that resulted in one student being injured, as well as two teachers, one of whom was seriously wounded. Khan Eshieh has experienced intensified armed conflict since 17 May 2016, resulting in an increasing number of casualties, including Palestine refugees and other civilians, with at least 20 Palestine refugee civilians killed and many more injured. Moreover, in late September, it was reported that the UNRWA Al-Jarmaq School in Yarmuk had been seized by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and that the premises were being used to deliver education by armed actors. UNRWA is unable to either confirm or deny those reports. UNRWA has not been in a position to operate any of its 29 schools, including the Al-Jarmaq School in Yarmuk, since December 2012.

10. The conclusion of the bilateral agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation on 9 September, and the ensuing reduction in violence for a brief period, underscored the potential and the importance of meaningful international cooperation to curb the violence, facilitate humanitarian access and support the efforts of the United Nations to bring about a resumed political process. However, intensive contacts between the Co-Chairs, two Ministerial meetings of the International Syria Support Group and a Ministerial meeting of the Security Council, all during the week of the high-level segment of the General Assembly, did not result in concrete gains on the ground. Key dates in September 2016 are set out in figure I.

Figure I
Key dates in September 2016



Protection issues

11. The protection of civilians has been consistently identified as a significant area of concern in all governorates across the Syrian Arab Republic. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as schools and markets, but particularly against medical personnel and facilities, continued. Threats from

explosive ordnance and threats against women or the most vulnerable civilians, such as children, the elderly or the disabled, as well as other human rights abuses, continued throughout the reporting period.

12. According to information received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the killing of civilians and other abuses and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law remained high in September. Much of the violence occurred in Aleppo, Dayr al-Zawr, Idlib and Rif Dimashq governorates (see table 1 for a list of OHCHR-recorded attacks against civilians). OHCHR documented attacks by all parties to the conflict, including government forces, non-State armed opposition groups and designated terrorist groups. On 22 September, Syrian authorities sent a note verbale to OHCHR providing information on the reported deaths of more than 67 persons and the injury of more than 101 as a result of strikes reportedly launched by armed opposition groups between 5 and 19 September in the governorates of Aleppo, Damascus, rural Damascus, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Hasakah, Homs and Qunaytirah.

Table 1
Reported attacks against civilians in September 2016^a

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Type of attack</i>	<i>Number of people killed, including women and children</i>	<i>Number of people injured</i>	<i>Infrastructure or site type</i>
<i>Aleppo governorate</i>					
4 September	Zahra'	Ground-based strike	10, including 2 women	–	–
6 September	Sakhur (eastern Aleppo)	Bomb (allegedly toxic)	–	More than 70	Residential
18 September	Sakhur (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	1	8, including 5 children	Residential
19 September	Urum al-Kubra (western Aleppo)	To be confirmed	18	To be confirmed	Aid convoy
23 September	Various districts (eastern Aleppo)	Air strikes	More than 50	–	Residential
24 September	Tariq al-Bab (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	5	–	Residential
24 September	Mashad (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	7, including 5 children	–	Residential
24 September	Bustan al-Qasr (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	5, including a child	–	Residential
24 September	Firdaws (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	18	–	Residential
25 September	Sakhur (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	6	–	–

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Type of attack</i>	<i>Number of people killed, including women and children</i>	<i>Number of people injured</i>	<i>Infrastructure or site type</i>
25 September	Salah al-Din (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	6, including a child	–	Residential
25 September	Bustan al-Qasr (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	13	150	Residential
28 September	Sakhur (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	2	–	Hospital
25 September	Ma'adi (eastern Aleppo)	Air strike	6	–	Commercial (bakery)
<i>Damascus governorate</i>					
13 September	Masakin Barzah (Damascus)	Ground-based strike	1 child	–	Residential
17 September	Qabun (Damascus)	Ground-based strike	–	3	Residential
<i>Dar'a governorate</i>					
11 September	Harrah	Ground-based strike	2 children	1	–
18 September	Da'il	Air strike	10, including a child	At least 25	–
<i>Dayr al-Zawr governorate</i>					
1 September	Muhaymidah	Air strikes	10, including 4 women and 3 children	–	–
2 September	Tayyani	Air strike	5, including 3 women and a child	12	Residential
6 September	Qusur and Jurah (Dayr al-Zawr city)	Ground-based strike	4	3	–
10 September	Qusur and Jurah (Dayr al-Zawr city)	Ground-based strike	5 civilians, including a woman and a child	–	–
14 September	Qusur and Jurah (Dayr al-Zawr city)	Ground-based strike	3, including a woman	At least 2	Residential

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Type of attack</i>	<i>Number of people killed, including women and children</i>	<i>Number of people injured</i>	<i>Infrastructure or site type</i>
15 September	Mayadin	Air strike	At least 23, including a woman and 9 children	10	–
19 September	Mayadin	Air strike	At least 5, including a child	15	Residential
19 September	Tibni	Air strike	6, including 2 women and 2 children	–	Residential
23 September	Muhsin	Air strike	4, including 2 children	–	Residential
<i>Tartous governorate</i>					
5 September	Various	Bombs (including vehicle-borne and suicide bomber improvised explosive devices)	At least 43	Dozens	Various
<i>Idlib governorate</i>					
12 September	Ma'arratmisrin	Air strikes	At least 13	–	Residential and commercial
<i>Rif Dimashq governorate</i>					
2 September	Duma	Air strikes	A woman and a child		
12 September	Duma	Ground-based strike		At least 13	
16 September	Afrah and Dayr Muqrin	Ground-based strike	1	–	Residential
25 September	Khan al-Shih	Air strikes	At least 4	At least 5	Residential
				2	Vehicle
				–	Farm

Source: OHCHR.

^a In line with resolution 2258 (2015), the present description of developments on the ground relates to the compliance with resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The information is provided without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Ceasefire of the International Syria Support Group. The list is not exhaustive.

13. While not providing information for the full month, the United States Department of Defense confirmed that in September the United States-led coalition carried out at least 265 strikes against ISIL targets in the governorates of Aleppo, Raqqah, Hasakah, Dayr al-Zawr and Homs. On 17 September, the United States-led anti-ISIL coalition launched air strikes which killed and injured dozens of Government troops in Dayr al-Zawr. The strikes were rapidly acknowledged by the United States as an error and an investigation was launched. The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation did not provide OHCHR with any detailed information on operations carried out by its armed forces during the month.

14. Primary, secondary and tertiary health-care services continued to experience severe gaps in performance and service delivery, owing to the extensive damage caused to health facilities, the rapid turnover of health staff and the lack of qualified professionals in different medical specialties. Paediatric and maternal health services, including routine vaccinations, remained negatively affected, in particular in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Hama and Qunaytirah.

15. In blatant disregard for the protected status of medical facilities under international humanitarian law, which was further articulated by the Security Council in its resolution [2286 \(2016\)](#), such facilities continued to be damaged or destroyed as a result of fighting. The United Nations and health partners received credible reports, some of which are in the process of being verified by the United Nations and partner organizations, of 30 attacks against medical facilities in September. Nine of the confirmed attacks were on hospitals (four in Aleppo governorate, three in Idlib governorate, one in Hama and one in Qunaytirah). In addition, a primary health-care centre in Urum al-Kubra (Aleppo) and a medical clinic were hit. A local non-governmental organization clinic was hit in southern rural Aleppo, resulting in the death of at least five staff members. As a result, all of the facilities were reportedly closed and services were disrupted. Moreover, in late September, heavy bombing in Aleppo destroyed numerous other civilian infrastructures, including three of the four White Helmet centres in eastern Aleppo.

Humanitarian access

Box 3

Key points

- (1) Seven inter-agency convoys reached 249,000 people in need in six besieged locations and one hard-to-reach area. All of those operations took place between 19 and 25 September.
- (2) The number of people besieged in the Syrian Arab Republic has grown from 586,200 to 861,200, following the announcement on 29 September that eastern Aleppo had met all three criteria used to define an area as besieged: military encirclement, lack of humanitarian access and lack of free movement for civilians.
- (3) A total of 27,758 medical items were removed from convoys in September and 77,645 medical treatments were destroyed as a result of the attack on the aid convoy on 19 September (Urum al-Kubra).

(4) The October inter-agency convoy plan was submitted on 19 September. It seeks to reach 962,800 people in need across 29 besieged, hard-to-reach and priority cross-line areas throughout the month of October.

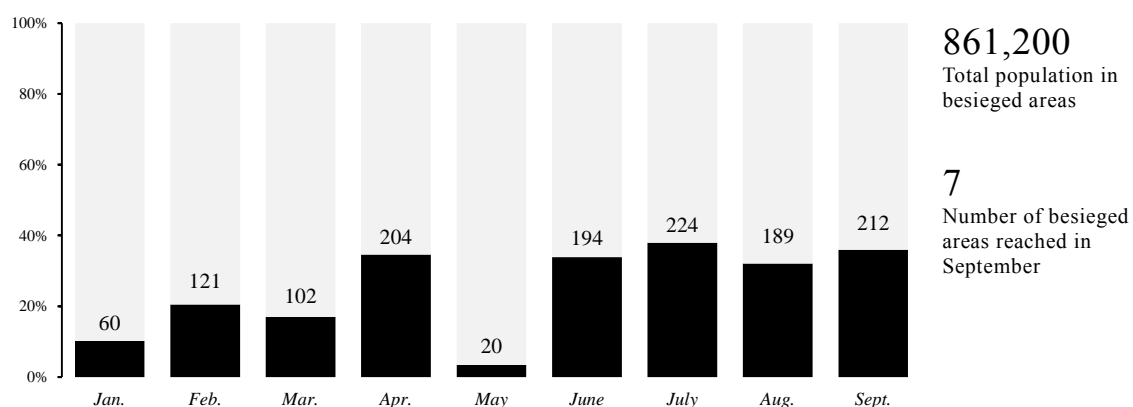
16. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need of assistance in the Syrian Arab Republic remained extremely challenging in many areas of the country as a result of active conflict, shifting conflict lines and deliberate restrictions by the parties to the conflict on the movement of people and goods.

17. In September, the overall number of people living in besieged and hard-to-reach areas stood at 5.47 million. However, the number of people besieged in the country has grown from 586,200 to 861,200, including the population of eastern Aleppo, where an estimated 275,000 people reside.

18. Access to the millions of people living in besieged and hard-to-reach locations remained of critical concern. Throughout the month of September, seven inter-agency convoys reached a total of 249,000 people in seven besieged and hard-to-reach locations (see figure II). That total constitutes 25 per cent of the roughly 980,000 beneficiaries approved under the September plan, and about 21 per cent of the 1,190,500 people to whom access had been requested under the plan (see para. 22 for an overview of the September plan). In addition to the United Nations providing assistance to those areas (see table 2), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continued to provide limited medical, education and protection services, as well as some support in other sectors, in hard-to-reach locations, under extremely challenging circumstances.

Figure II

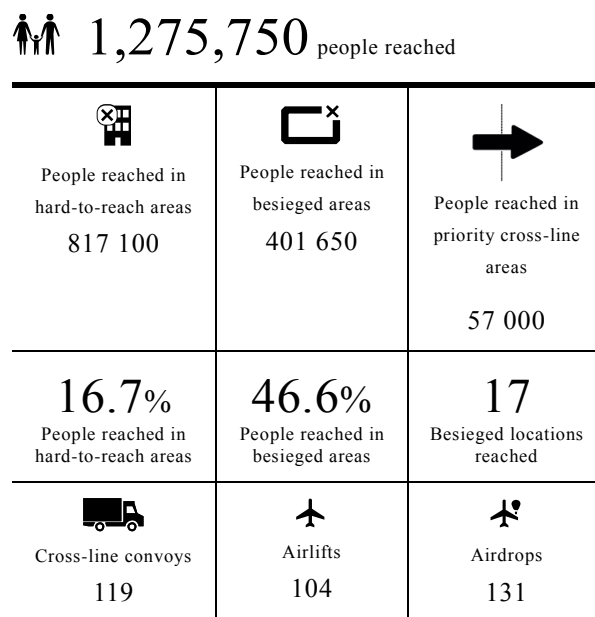
United Nations inter-agency cross-line operations: number of people reached each month in besieged areas



19. Active conflict in several governorates hindered the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as people's access to essential services. Markets, schools, medical and other civilian infrastructures were damaged as a result of fighting in September, reducing the availability of basic and essential services in critical areas. For example, access to water in Aleppo continues to be used as a

weapon of war. On 30 September, the water supply from the Sulayman al-Halabi pumping station serving both eastern and western Aleppo was cut. As a result, approximately 1.7 million people were left with no access to running water through the public networks. In addition, the Bab al-Nayrab water pumping station was damaged, cutting off water supplies for 275,000 people in eastern Aleppo. Moreover, as children returned to school across the country on 18 September, reports from eastern Aleppo indicated that many schools had yet to re-open as a result of the ongoing insecurity. In addition, UNRWA again was not able to access Yalda in September because of ongoing security concerns. The previous UNRWA mission to that area was on 25 May 2016.

Table 2
United Nations inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations (from 1 January to 30 September 2016)



20. Deliberate interference and restrictions by the parties to the conflict also continued to prevent aid delivery. For example, WFP continued to be unable to access populations in need in ISIL-controlled areas of the country, as all plans to deliver assistance to those areas have been suspended because of the inability to work independently and monitor activities. That is preventing WFP from reaching Raqqah governorate and most of Dayr al-Zawr governorate, as well as pockets of northern rural Aleppo, southern rural Hasakah and north-western rural Hama. The besieged parts of Dayr al-Zawr city, inaccessible by land since March 2014, continue to be reached by WFP through high-altitude airdrops since 10 April 2016.

21. The removal of life-saving medicines and medical supplies from humanitarian aid convoys continued during the month of September. Serum drugs, renewable items (razors, scalpel blades, gauzes) and surgical equipment (forceps, scissors, needles) were consistently removed from reproductive health and midwifery kits,

inter-agency emergency health kits, paediatric kits and diarrhoeal disease sets. The treatments and supplies removed from convoys during September are shown in table 3.

Table 3
Medical supplies removed from convoys in September 2016

<i>Location</i>	<i>Number of treatments</i>	<i>Type of supplies</i>
Talbisah	2 550	Burn kits, major and minor surgical sets, steam sterilizer, antiseptics, atropine and diazepam
Mu‘addamiyah al-Sham	20 276	Burn kits, pneumonia kits A and B, inter-agency emergency health kit basic/supplementary units, intravenous fluids, antihistamines, cough suppressants, antihypertension medication, oxygen concentrators, monitoring devices, sterilizers, X-ray machines and spectrophotometers
Zabadani	998	Atropine, antihistamines, antibiotics, medical consumables, psychotropic medicines, diuretics and anaesthetic medications
Madaya	2 096	Atropine, antihistamines, antibiotics, medical consumables, psychotropic medicines, diuretics and anaesthetic medications
Fu‘ah and Kafraya	1 035	Atropine, antihistamines, antibiotics, medical consumables, psychotropic medicines, diuretics and anaesthetic medications
Wa‘r	803	Minor and major surgical sets, medical consumables and lifesaving medicines removed from inter-agency emergency health kit basic/supplementary units, pneumonia kits B, anaesthetic medications
Urum al-Kubra	77 645	A total of 77,645 medical treatments were destroyed as a result of the attack on the Urum al-Kubra convoy on 19 September

22. The United Nations inter-agency convoy plan for September requested access to 33 locations, including all besieged locations, aiming to reach 1,190,500 people. In its response, due on 30 August in accordance with the agreement to respond within seven working days, but received on 6 September, the Syrian authorities approved access to 979,450 of those 1,190,500 people (82.3 per cent). A total of 211,100 beneficiaries (17.7 per cent) requested under the plan were denied or not included in the approved number of beneficiaries. The Syrian authorities also requested that nine other locations be reached in September outside the plan.

23. On 19 September, the United Nations submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the October inter-agency convoy plan, which comprised 22 requests to reach 962,800 people in need across 29 besieged, hard-to-reach and priority cross-line areas. A response from the Ministry was expected around 29 or 30 September, in accordance with the agreed review process, but was not received until 7 October.

24. The Nusaybin/Qamishli crossing in Hasakah governorate has been temporarily closed by the Turkish authorities because of security concerns since 27 December

2015. Hasakah governorate also remains largely inaccessible by road for United Nations agencies from within the Syrian Arab Republic. On 9 July, the United Nations commenced airlifts from Damascus to Qamishli airport, benefiting more than 175,000 people with multisectoral assistance.

Humanitarian response

25. In September, United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need through all modalities from within the Syrian Arab Republic and across borders (see table 4). NGOs also continued to deliver assistance to people in need in line with previous months. The Government continued to provide basic services to areas under its control as well as in many areas beyond its control.

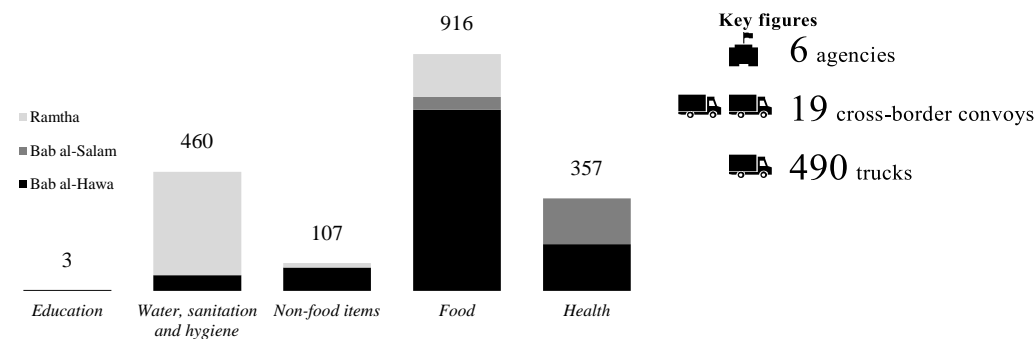
Table 4
Number of people reached by United Nations organizations, September 2016

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Number of people reached</i>
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	59 814
International Organization for Migration	38 700
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	518 000
United Nations Children's Fund	2 200 000
United Nations Development Programme	1 381 010
United Nations Population Fund	207 101
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	450 000
World Food Programme	4 100 000
World Health Organization	525 748

26. During the reporting period, cross-border deliveries continued from Turkey and Jordan into the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#) and [2258 \(2015\)](#) (see figure III for details). In line with the Security Council resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including content, destination and number of beneficiaries. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations, monitoring 490 trucks used in 19 convoys in September, confirming the humanitarian nature of each, and notifying the Syrian authorities after each shipment. The Mechanism continued to benefit from excellent cooperation with the Governments of Jordan and Turkey.

Figure III
Number of beneficiaries assisted by the United Nations and its partners per cluster through cross-border deliveries, September 2016

(Thousands)



27. The inter-agency convoys to the besieged and hard-to-reach locations listed in table 5 were completed in September. Moreover, since 10 April, the United Nations has completed 131 airdrops of food commodities and humanitarian assistance over Dayr al-Zawr city. In addition, the WFP Logistics Cluster continued airlifts to Qamishli from Damascus. Over a hundred airlift rotations have been completed since 9 July. During the reporting period, United Nations agencies also undertook single-agency deliveries to cross-line and hard-to-reach locations or reached those locations through their regular programmes.

Table 5
Inter-agency convoys, September 2016

Date	Location	Requested target (number of beneficiaries)	Targeted people reached	Type of assistance
19 September	Talbisah	84 000	84 000	Multisectoral
22 September	Mu'addamiyah	45 000	35 000	Multisectoral
24 September	Wa'r	75 000	70 000	Multisectoral
25 September	Madaya and Zabadani	43 700	40 000	Multisectoral
25 September	Fu'ah and Kafraya	20 000	20 000	Multisectoral

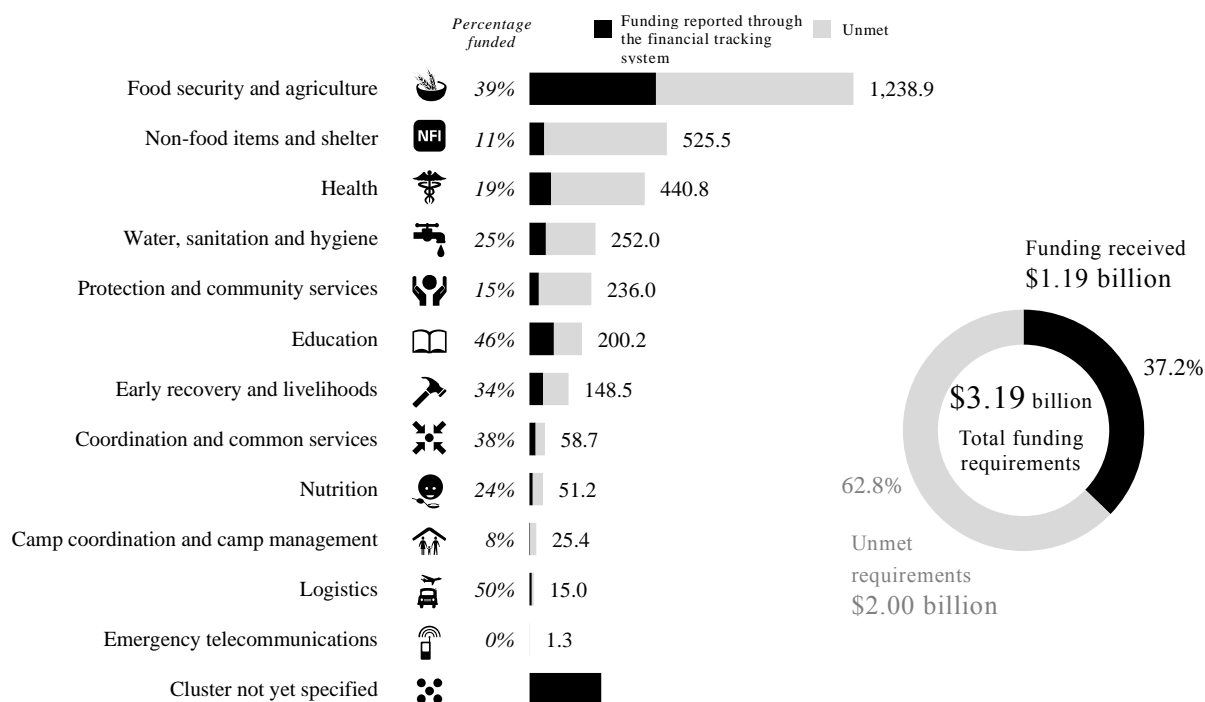
28. The World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued with the implementation of the nationwide vaccination campaign. The second round of the multi-antigen campaign was launched on 24 July 2016, targeting 713,543 children under 5 years old in hard-to-reach and besieged areas in 12 governorates. The campaign was then extended to reach additional areas, with a total of 157,568 children reached during that second round. Moreover, through cross-border assistance, between 19 and 29 September, over 30,000 children under the age of 5 (83 per cent of the target) were reached with immunization services, including oral polio vaccine, inactivated polio vaccine and pentavalent vaccine in three areas in northern Homs (Talbisah, Rastan and Hulah in

Taldu). That came as part of a campaign targeting children who had not been reached by the second round of the nationwide multi-antigen campaign as a result of the ongoing conflict. The cross-border part of the nationwide campaign aims to reach 1.2 million children in Idleb, rural Aleppo and eastern Aleppo city, rural Hama and northern Homs. So far a total of 438,225 children have been vaccinated through cross-border interventions in the areas where children and adults are also benefiting from psychosocial programmes, referrals and community protection services.

Humanitarian response plan funding

29. The status of the funding of the humanitarian response plan as at 30 September 2016 is shown in figure IV.

Figure IV
Humanitarian response plan funding, 30 September 2016



Visas and registrations

30. A total of 39 new visa requests were submitted in September. Thirty-four requests were approved, comprising 17 submitted in September and 17 older applications, while 41 remain pending. One visa request, which had been submitted in August, was rejected in September. A total of 52 visa renewal requests were submitted during the month. Forty-four applications were approved, while 3 visa renewal requests were rejected in September and 34 remain pending.

31. A total of 17 international NGOs are registered with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to operate in the country. Four more international NGOs are

in the process of completing registration. Those organizations continued to face a series of administrative hurdles and restrictions that affect their ability to operate, including in gaining permission to undertake independent needs assessments. Some 177 national NGOs are authorized to operate in the Syrian Arab Republic. Five additional national NGOs were added in September.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

32. In addition to the deadly attack on Urum al-Kubra, a number of attacks occurred that put the lives of humanitarian personnel at risk. An inter-agency convoy to Rastan was aborted by the United Nations at the final checkpoint of the Syrian authorities owing to air strikes in the area; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) closed a facility in the area around Qudsaya owing to insecurity; an improvised explosive device was detonated 200 metres from the UNHCR office in Qamishli; and a number of mortar attacks were reported in the vicinity of the United Nations hubs and headquarters in Damascus and Aleppo.

33. A total of 27 United Nations staff members (25 from UNRWA, 1 from the United Nations Development Programme and 1 from UNICEF) are still detained or missing. Since the start of the conflict, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed, including 18 staff members of the United Nations, 54 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and 8 staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. In addition, many staff members of international and national NGOs are reported to have been killed.

III. Observations

34. During more than half a decade of brutal conflict, the people of the Syrian Arab Republic have faced an onslaught of unspeakable violence. Tragically, in the month since the previous report, heinous attacks and atrocities against civilians have only increased around the country. Bombs and mortars have been raining down on schools, medical facilities, public markets and humanitarian aid convoys. Nowhere has the fighting been more intense in the past weeks than in besieged eastern Aleppo, where an estimated 275,000 people have nowhere to hide. They are being subjected to deprivation, disease and death in increasing numbers and with increasing ferocity. Water stations have been bombed, schools hit and all of the hospitals in eastern Aleppo struck at least twice, indicating the deliberate nature of some of those attacks. The senseless killing in recent weeks of hundreds of children and other civilians is a tragic reminder that the conflict is destroying an entire country and robbing it of its future.

35. This is a race to the bottom, and we are at a turning point. The scale of the tragedy in Aleppo is already massive and will only get worse if military activities continue at the current rate. The international community cannot fail Aleppo as it did Srebrenica and Rwanda. We cannot allow an entire section of a city populated by hundreds of thousands and celebrated in the history of civilizations to be obliterated before the end of the year. Parties to the conflict must lay down their arms. I urge the parties to immediately halt all military operations across the entire city of Aleppo. I urge the Syrian and Russian military forces to immediately put an

end to all aerial bombardments. Guns must fall silent. Civilians must be protected and the cessation of hostilities must be restored in all of the Syrian Arab Republic. As I informed the Security Council on 28 September, the situation in Aleppo has deteriorated beyond our ability to imagine. It is worse than a slaughterhouse.

36. Recent attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including on a United Nations-Syrian Arab Red Crescent convoy in Urum al-Kubra on 19 September, are absolutely and utterly unacceptable. There simply can be no explanation or excuse, no reason or rationale for waging war on civilians, on doctors, on children, on teachers, on humanitarian workers trying to reach those in desperate need of assistance. For the world not to pursue the perpetrators of such brutality would be a grave abdication of duty. It would deny Syrians justice and healing. It would shred the credibility of an international community that claims to be concerned about upholding our common humanity. As I have made clear in recent statements, I am gravely concerned that some of these acts of brutality are war crimes. I am therefore, once again, urging the Security Council to refer the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to the International Criminal Court.

37. On 21 September, I asked my Special Envoy for Syria to present a framework of proposals to the sides as a starting point for negotiations in resumed talks, as requested by the co-Chairs of the International Syria Support Group. My Special Envoy has stated his readiness to deliver the framework, but in order to create a favourable environment for a political track it is important that the cessation of hostilities be relaunched without delay and its implementation ensured. I am expecting the international community to develop a common course of action to enforce a cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic. The United Nations has continued its contacts with the Syrian sides and the co-Chairs and all members of the International Syria Support Group, and with a wide range of Syrian stakeholders, as it continues to call on all parties to do their utmost to ensure that political negotiations can commence in an environment conducive to a positive outcome.

38. Despite the enormous dangers in the Syrian Arab Republic, and despite attacks such as those witnessed on 19 September, the United Nations and its partners continue to provide lifesaving assistance. Each month, humanitarians deliver food to an average of 6 million people. Since the beginning of 2016, nearly 1.3 million people have been reached in besieged, hard-to-reach and priority locations through inter-agency cross-line operations. The deliveries are vital. They provide a lifeline to people largely trapped beyond our reach. They are, however, nowhere near sufficient to address the needs of all those in need of humanitarian assistance. It has been especially frustrating to see these last weeks and months pass without access improving, and delays in cross-line deployments are becoming commonplace. I therefore repeat my call to all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, to immediately lift any and all administrative restrictions and bureaucratic obstacles, and to facilitate unimpeded, sustained and safe humanitarian access to all Syrians in need. We are moving beyond the point where the lifting of sieges, for which I have so often called, would be enough to save those whose lives are being destroyed by this conflict. There must be an end, immediately, to the violence. Every day that fighting continues more civilians will die, and the country will be further decimated.