



وكالة الأنباء الكويتية (كونا)  
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## IOM reaches over 1.3 mln Syrians affected by conflict

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GENEVA, Feb 25 (KUNA) -- The International Organization of Migration (IOM) said on Tuesday that to date it has been able to provide humanitarian assistance to over 1.3 million individuals across Syria. Almost half of this caseload benefited from winterization activities across the country through distributions of clothing, thermal blankets and mattresses, as well as winterization shelter interventions. The Geneva-based IOM said in a press release it has also provided health-related items, psychosocial support, and cash for work, as well as repatriation assistance to vulnerable stranded migrants inside Syria. Nearly 25 percent of IOM operations are conducted in cross line areas in various locations in Idlib, Ar Raqqa, Homs, Aleppo, Hama and Rural Damascus, among others. IOM interventions in 2014 remain primarily focused on the distribution of core relief items and shelter (rehabilitation in line with the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP). IOM continues to expand its network of local staff and partners inside Syria to be able to identify new displacement sites, roll out timely interventions through direct or inter-agency assistance operations, and to conduct direct monitoring visits. Recently, UN partners and IOM were able to undertake an inter-agency road convoy to Bloudan (Rural Damascus), a locality which had remained inaccessible for over six months. Also, through inter-agency operations, IOM started to airlift non-food items from IOM Iraq's central warehouse in Erbil to the Logistics Cluster warehouse in Qamishli in northeast Syria. We remain concerned for vulnerable people in need, and continue to do our best to overcome" operational challenges we face every day to assess and access affected population. More needs to be done to access besieged communities inside Syria, and protect millions of civilians affected by the crisis," says IOM Emergency Director Mohammed Abdiker. IOM's 230 staff inside Syria, as well as our local NGO partners strive every day to identify displacement sites, negotiate access, and deliver essential lifesaving items," said the IOM Syria Chief of Mission Maria Rumman. To scale up plans and increase outreach program, more funding is critical. Our 2014 appeal for Syria is" only 0.4 per cent covered. "Funding for the procurement and delivery of non food relief items (NFIs) is drying up," Rumman added. An estimated 9.3 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, including 6.5 million internally displaced persons. In addition, a quarter of a million are estimated to live in 40 besieged areas and over three million are trapped in hard or impossible to reach areas. (end) ta.gb KUNA 252018 Feb 14NNNN