



HI urges humanitarian action in southern Syria

Amman, 4 July 2018 – Over the weekend the number of Syrians fleeing the conflict in southern Syria has quadrupled from an estimated 60,000 to 272,000 civilians. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the majority are fleeing towards the Golan Heights which borders Israel. An estimated 60,000 have moved towards the southern border with Jordan. Civilians are escaping heavy airstrikes and are left to languish at the borders in dire conditions without adequate humanitarian assistance. Many are living in overcrowded makeshift shelters, tents, or out in the open near the borders without sanitation, clean drinking water or medical support.

“The mass influx of civilians towards the Israeli and Jordanian borders raises grave protection concerns. Civilians are unable to safely cross into either Israel or Jordan. We urge parties to the conflict to stop bombing civilians, and to grant humanitarian actors access to all populations in need, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law,” says Jean-Pierre Delomier, humanitarian action director for HI.

“The high levels of destruction and unexploded ordnance in residential areas, schools, hospitals and other public infrastructure, poses further risks to civilians. Humanitarian mine action should be prioritised, including risk education and immediate assistance to injured people,” added Jean-Pierre Delomier, humanitarian action director for HI.

OCHA estimates that more than 450,000 civilians are in need of assistance in the southern governorates, many of whom are unable to flee.

Humanitarian assistance at the borders is not sufficient to meet the needs of displaced families. The ongoing offensive has further reduced humanitarian access both within Syria and cross-border. HI urges that current cross-border life-saving aid is maintained and that alternative options to increase assistance at the borders are explored in conjunction with the local authorities. This crisis at the borders emphasises of the lack of durable solutions available to Syrians. The international community must step up its responsibility-sharing and provide the necessary support to Jordan which hosts more than 666,000 Syrian refugees.