



Statement on the non-renewal of the UNSC resolution on cross-border aid

The [Syria Public Health Network](#) (SPHN) and [R4HSSS](#) condemn the deplorable politicization of the humanitarian mechanism that allows vital aid to reach northwest Syria. The non-renewal of the UN Security Council Resolution due veto of a 9-month extension by Russia will affect the lives of more than 4 million people¹. Of these, more than 65% are internally displaced from other parts of Syria due to the protracted conflict; of these more than 80% are women and children².

Northwest Syria is heavily reliant on cross-border aid and was the most seriously affected part of Syria during the February 2023 earthquakes³ which caused large-scale destruction. This event showed that that aid could not be relied upon to be delivered from areas under government control, leaving the population without immediate search and rescue or subsequent aid for the first week after the earthquakes, potentially leading to more loss of life and suffering⁴.

Diana Rayes, chair of the Syria Public Health Network says 'The Russian veto of the resolution will have further consequences for the dire humanitarian situation in northwest Syria. With over 90% of the population living in poverty and relying on this life saving aid, the implications are severe. Especially after the earthquakes, communities have felt abandoned, with limited access to emergency aid. There needs to be urgent action to ensure unimpeded access for those who rely on this border mechanism.'

We call on the international community to address cross-border access to northwest Syria such that it is not depending on the whim of Member States. As it stands, this resolution has focused on only one border crossing (Bab Al Hawa) after previous resolutions resulted in the closure of the only other border crossing to northwest Syria (Bab Al Salama). After the earthquakes, only after international pressure, two other border crossings were opened, allowing more direct access to the population⁵. The letter from the Syrian government on 13th July granting conditional permission for the UN to provide cross-border humanitarian aid as long as it is coordinated through Damascus will leave humanitarian to northwest Syria subject to interference; this has been seen in other parts of Syria including the northeast and could lead to the further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Donors and humanitarian organisations must urgently shift funding to Syrian organisations in northwest Syria and support local governance structures.

Dr Abdulkarim Ekzayez, a public health specialist and deputy chair of SPHN says, 'The cross-border aid delivers a lifeline to the four million people of northwest Syria, without which many, particularly children, would not be able to survive. It is essential that every available border crossing to this region remain open in order to ensure a reliable and continuous flow of aid, especially that this month has seen further attacks by the Syrian government on this area leading to the deaths of civilians and first responders. The interruption of the border mechanism will have a significant impact on the Gaziantep-based Health Cluster's ability to support cross-border supplies and will place strain on humanitarian organizations with no means to provide health or humanitarian relief. There is precedent evidence from northeast Syria and from northwest Syria that cross-line aid is ineffective.'

Read more about the public health impacts of border closures and the impact of the earthquakes on the health and humanitarian response on our websites: www.syriahealthnetwork.org and www.r4hsss.org. @HealthSyria @R4HSSS For further information, please contact info@syriahealthnetwork.org.

¹ <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1y/k1y6meym57>

² <https://www.syriahealthnetwork.org/unscc-resolution-on-border-crossing-to-northwest-syria-failure-to-renew-in-january-2023-will-lead-to-a-worsening-public-health-crisis/>

³ <https://www.syriahealthnetwork.org/urgent-health-needs-in-northwestern-syria/>

⁴ <https://www.syriahealthnetwork.org/urgent-health-needs-in-northwestern-syria/>

⁵ <https://www.syriahealthnetwork.org/health-and-humanitarian-response-after-the-earthquakes-in-northern-syria-challenges-and-recommendations/>