

**EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR'S  
KEY MESSAGES ON SYRIA  
10 February 2012 • Issue Number 4**

**I. Key Messages**

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1. The intensifying assault by Government forces upon Homs, as well as other towns and cities including Zabadani, Dara and Al-Rastan, increases the risk of a humanitarian crisis in Syria. Hundreds of people have reportedly been killed since the beginning of the month, and thousands more reportedly no longer have safe access to food, water and medical care. We must do all in our power to stop the situation from deteriorating further. All sides must ensure that the Syrian people are spared from the violence.
2. The use of mortars, rockets and other explosives against people in some of the most densely populated parts of Homs, is abhorrent. It is causing widespread suffering now, and the damage to buildings and infrastructure will lead to far reaching problems in the future. I call on the Government of Syria to comply with international law, to immediately end the shelling, and to refrain from the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas.
3. The escalating violence has made it impossible for humanitarian organizations to deliver the food assistance scheduled for 15,000 vulnerable people in Homs, in January and February. There are extremely worrying reports of people being denied access to medical care, and of medical practitioners being harassed. I call on all parties to allow unfettered access for humanitarian partners to assess and respond to the situation.
4. Humanitarian workers in Syria face increasing threats to their lives. The recent murder of a Syrian Arab Red Crescent official highlighted the insecurity faced by many, and a callous disregard for humanitarian symbols. Such attacks must be universally condemned, investigated, and those held responsible must be brought to justice. Any political action must take into account the potential consequences for humanitarian workers.
5. I thank Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan for keeping their borders open to people fleeing the violence, as well as for their support for refugees. I hope neighbouring countries will continue to offer assistance to those who need it.
6. Governments and humanitarian organizations need to mobilize resources now, in order to cope with rapidly escalating humanitarian needs. I welcome the EU decision to provide three million euros for humanitarian assistance, and other initiatives underway.

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