



**04.03.2016 - Stephen O'Brien, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, met with both the Belgian government and the relevant EU institutions during his visit to Brussels on Thursday, March 3rd.**

## **Progress**

At a press conference O'Brien made clear that his priority is to reach the most vulnerable people in Syria, especially those in besieged areas that the UN has not yet been able to reach. He cited the aid convoy that was able to reach the starving Syrian town of Madaya two months ago.

Furthermore, O'Brien announced that 236 trucks have served 115,000 people in besieged areas in the last three weeks, reflecting a significant improvement compared to the first three

months of last year, when humanitarian aid workers were unable to get any supplies into these areas.

By helping and saving as many people as possible, the UN's humanitarian chief aims to create a 'climate of confidence' which should ultimately lead to a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

### **Donor conference**

The UN aid chief underlined the success of the major [donor conference](#) which took place in London on 4 February and generated pledges of 12 billion dollars. He described the event as “a very necessary, massive step forward”, not only financially, but also concerning the willingness to help people locally in Syria.

### **Rocky Road to Peace**

O'Brien nevertheless acknowledged the enormous difficulties humanitarian aid workers face in Syria. For instance, he was unable to confirm that the WFP food drops had reached the people in need – but they are a last resort as there is no alternative at this moment in time. O'Brien stressed that it is therefore of vital importance to “continue to use everything at our disposal to negotiate with all the parties all the time” and stated that he remains “determined, realistic and optimistic” that a political solution will eventually be reached.

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