



Joint Appeal by the UN Secretary-General's Envoys to the Middle East

11 April 2020

On 23 March, the Secretary-General launched an appeal for an immediate Global Ceasefire, urging all warring parties to pull back from hostilities, put aside mistrust and animosity, and silence their guns. Many parties have responded positively to the Secretary-General's appeal, but more needs to be done to translate these words into actions.

Too many in the Middle East have endured conflict and deprivation for far too long. Their suffering is now compounded by the COVID19 crisis and its likely long-lasting social, economic and political impacts.

We call on all parties to engage, in good faith and without preconditions, on negotiating immediate halts to ongoing hostilities, sustaining existing ceasefires, putting in place more durable and comprehensive ceasefires, and achieving longer-term resolutions to the persistent conflicts across the region.

We also appeal to all to exercise maximum restraint, de-escalate tensions and work to resolve differences through dialogue, negotiation, mediation or other peaceful means. We further call on all to refrain from any activities that can lead to further deterioration of stability and security in any country or the region as a whole.

We urge parties to reach out across conflict lines and cooperate locally, regionally and globally to stop the rapid spread of the virus and, where possible, to share resources, and allow access to medical facilities where needed.

We call on all sides to facilitate humanitarian access and assistance to the internally displaced and refugees, communities under siege, and all who have been ravaged by war and deprivation, without prejudice or discrimination. This requires fast-tracking the passage of health and aid workers at borders and in-country and ensuring they are protected. We further call on all to facilitate safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and IDPs to their homes by urgent, effective and meaningful action and measures.

We call for special attention to the plight of the detained, the abducted and the missing, and for humanitarian releases, access for humanitarian organizations, and urgent steps to ensure adequate medical care and protective measures in all places of detention.

We call on all partners at a time when all are facing immense national challenges, to work with the UN on urgent international response plans and recovery measures. No country, region or community can face the challenge of COVID-19 alone. Solidarity is required today and will be very much needed tomorrow.

Our teams will continue to focus on preventive diplomacy, on assisting all efforts to respond to the health and socio-economic consequences of the crisis, support broad cooperation in the interest of peace and the well-being of all, work relentlessly to facilitate humanitarian access to the most vulnerable, and engage resolutely for these objectives.

None of these efforts will succeed if the guns of war and conflict are not silenced. At a time like this, partisanship and narrow interests must yield to the greater cause and the good of the people. That is why we echo the Secretary-General in calling on all parties in the Middle East to work with the UN so we can “focus on the true fight of our lives.”

Geir O. Pedersen, UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria / OSES

Jan Kubis, UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon / UNSCOL

Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq / UNAMI

Martin Griffiths, UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen / OSESGY

Nickolay Mladenov, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process / UNSCO