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UN Volunteer Moustafa Boudria compares a cargo of humanitarian aid with a list of consignments sent by UN agencies to Syria. (Hurriyet Turkey, 2016)

## UN Volunteers support cross-border operations between Turkey and Syria

Five international UN Volunteers currently serve with UNMM in Gaziantep, Turkey, working closely with local customs officials to conduct visual and physical inspections of United Nations cargos going into Syria. Since cross-border operations started in July 2014, aid materials sent by UN organizations arrive at UN bases in Turkey, where materials are moved from Turkish international road transports (TIRs) to Syrian TIRs. □

Later, TIRs cross into Syria as aid convoys under the supervision of the UN. The aid is then distributed by the UN's local partners in Syria. The whole operation is coordinated by the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance \(OCHA\)](#).

The UN Volunteer Associate Monitoring Officers serving within the UNMM are responsible for the essential task of making sure that the trucks going into Syria are carrying humanitarian supplies and nothing else. They compare aid cargos with consignments, liaise with the logistics officers of

UN agencies and implementing partners, and actively seek information of United Nations-led cross-border movements.

Through the unanimous adoption of UN resolutions in 2014, 2015 and 2016, the UN Security Council authorized UN agencies and their partners to use routes across conflict lines and border crossings to deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need in Syria. A UN Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM) was established in 2014 to oversee loading of all humanitarian relief consignments of the UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners.

UNMM Director Jean-Luc Tonglet, who supervises the work of the UN Volunteers, explains: "Today, the scale of humanitarian suffering is greater than at any time since the Second World War. As a result of conflict and disaster, more than 130 million people around the world need humanitarian assistance to survive. Of this number, a staggering 13.5 million Syrian people are in need due to the conflict in their country.

UN Volunteers have been participating in the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism, which was established under Security Council Resolution 2165 to facilitate cross-border operations for Syria. They have been working relentlessly at the borders of Turkey and Jordan with Syria to make sure assistance is reaching people in need through the most direct routes."

UN Volunteer Moustafa Boudria (Algeria) is an interpreter by profession. He explains why he is volunteering: "Here I can see the difference between politics and the realities of humanitarian assistance. The Syrians are asking us 'Are you the ones who will solve our problems?'. Unfortunately, we do not have that capacity, but we are at least able to help in some way."

Patricia Mugenyi (Uganda) is a criminologist and has been in Turkey as a UN Volunteer since March 2016. She is in charge of supervising UNMM operations at the humanitarian base. She left her three children at home to come to Turkey: "I love my family, but I feel I have to do this for the benefit of future generations."

Veton Gorani (Kosovo) is an economist. After the war in his country was over, he started working for the United Nations. In 2014, he decided to become a UN Volunteer to support the Syria crisis from Turkey. "Syria is the hottest point of conflict in this region right now, and since I am very experienced in humanitarian aid, I thought I would be able to help."

As of 30 September 2016, a total of 10,259 trucks carrying UN assistance had crossed into Syria under Security Council Resolution 2165, including

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8,279 trucks (80%) from Turkey alone. The assistance crossing from Turkey is targeting hundreds of thousands of people in need in northern Syria.

To date, seven UN agencies, including the [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#), the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#), the [World Food Programme \(WFP\)](#), the [United Nations Population Fund \(UNFPA\)](#), the [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)](#), the [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) have participated in the cross-border operations, in partnership with several international and Syrian non-governmental organizations. UNOCHA has played a central role in facilitating cross-border operations and ensuring coordination between UN agencies and Syrian and international NGOs.

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*51 UN Volunteers are currently deployed in Turkey, serving with UNMM, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP and UN Women.*

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions](#)