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Proposed programme budget for 2021

Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for 2021 under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, and section 36, Staff assessment

United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Security Council, by its resolutions [2504 \(2020\)](#) and [2533 \(2020\)](#), extended the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic established under resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#) initially for a period of 6 months, until 10 July 2020, and thereafter for a period of 12 months, until 10 July 2021. The Council excluded the border crossings of Ya'rubiyah and Bab al-Salam from the list of authorized crossings for United Nations cross-border operations and authorized the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners to use the Syrian border crossing of Bab al-Hawa with Turkey, in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance reached people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic through the most direct routes, with notification to the Syrian authorities.

The present report contains the proposed additional resource requirements for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021 in the amount of \$1,972,000, net of staff assessment (\$2,166,900 gross).

The General Assembly is requested to approve the proposed resources for the Monitoring Mechanism for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021 and to appropriate an amount of \$1,972,000 under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, and \$194,900 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.



I. United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic

Background

1. Given that the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic is in its tenth year, the political and security landscape remains complex and fluid in large parts of the country. It is estimated that more than 11 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. The deteriorating economic situation and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has set back the recovery of the Syrian people and rendered many more vulnerable. It is expected that millions of women, children and men will continue to rely on humanitarian assistance as a vital lifeline and to meet their basic needs into 2021.

2. In the north-western Syrian Arab Republic, the humanitarian situation remains severe for approximately 4 million people living in Idlib Governorate and the northern part of Aleppo Governorate, including an estimated 2.7 million internally displaced persons. An estimated 2.8 million people, 70 per cent of the region's population, require humanitarian assistance. The mass displacement of almost 1 million people earlier in 2020, many who had already been displaced multiple times, and economic hardships, aggravated by the regional impact of COVID-19, have left civilians in this region among the country's most vulnerable people.

3. The delivery of humanitarian assistance in large parts of the Syrian Arab Republic remains challenging owing to several constraints, notably the presence of armed groups and different lines of control, geographical factors, explosive hazard contamination, and administrative and security restrictions. Cross-border assistance has remained a vital part of the humanitarian response for people in need in the north-western part of the country outside the control of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, which has remained inaccessible through conflict lines from inside the country.

4. In its resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#), the Security Council authorized the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners to use the Syrian border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa with Turkey, Ya'rubiyah with Iraq and Ramtha with Jordan, in addition to those already in use, in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, reached people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic by the most direct route, with notification to the Syrian authorities. It also established the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic to monitor, with the consent of the relevant neighbouring countries of the Syrian Arab Republic, the loading of all humanitarian relief consignments of the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners at the relevant United Nations facilities, and any subsequent opening of the consignments by the customs authorities of the relevant neighbouring countries, for passage into the Syrian Arab Republic at the above-mentioned border crossings, with notification by the United Nations to the Syrian authorities in order to confirm the humanitarian nature of those relief consignments. The Council subsequently extended the mandate of the Mechanism, first by its resolution [2191 \(2014\)](#), then by its resolutions [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#), [2449 \(2018\)](#) and [2504 \(2020\)](#), and, most recently, by its resolution [2533 \(2020\)](#) until 10 July 2021.

5. The Monitoring Mechanism had monitoring teams in place in three countries, which operated at the border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa (Turkey), Ramtha (Jordan) and Ya'rubiyah (Iraq). The monitoring team in Jordan was phased out in 2019 after United Nations cross-border operations through Ramtha had been discontinued in mid-2018, and the monitoring team in Iraq was withdrawn in January 2020 following the exclusion of the border crossing of Ya'rubiyah from the list of authorized crossings for United Nations cross-border operations in resolution [2504](#)

(2020). The Mechanism has operated only from Turkey since 1 February 2020. In accordance with resolution [2533 \(2020\)](#), which excluded the border crossing of Bab al-Salam from the list of authorized crossings for United Nations cross-border operations, all United Nations aid delivered into the north-western Syrian Arab Republic is now channelled through the border crossing of Bab al-Hawa.

6. As at 31 August 2020, a total of 1,269 shipments, or 40,210 trucks, had crossed the border into the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#), [2449 \(2018\)](#), [2504 \(2020\)](#) and [2533 \(2020\)](#), since July 2014. These include 30,238 trucks through Bab al-Hawa and 5,268 through Bab al-Salam, as well as 4,595 through Ramtha and 109 through Ya‘rubiyah. The Monitoring Mechanism has successfully monitored and confirmed the humanitarian nature of all consignments without incident or complaints from any party.

7. The number of United Nations cross-border deliveries has remained steady since the adoption of resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#) in July 2014. By December 2014, 624 trucks had crossed the border into the Syrian Arab Republic; the number increased to 4,882 in 2015 and to 6,587 in 2016. In 2017, 6,061 trucks were dispatched to the Syrian Arab Republic. The number fell to 5,039 in 2018, given that deliveries from Jordan came to an end after the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had re-established control in the south-western region of the country and humanitarian assistance in that region was provided from within the country. In 2019, United Nations cross-border deliveries rose to 8,073 trucks, primarily in response to increased humanitarian needs in the north-western Syrian Arab Republic. In 2020, as many as 8,944 trucks were dispatched from Turkey during the first eight months of the year, which is more than the double of the volume of assistance sent during the same period in 2019.

8. Cross-border operations, in accordance with resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#), [2449 \(2018\)](#), [2504 \(2020\)](#) and [2533 \(2020\)](#), have allowed millions of people to be reached with assistance. In 2020, the United Nations cross-border operations supported by the Monitoring Mechanism scaled up its operations to reach millions of people throughout that the Syrian Arab Republic, including food assistance for 1.4 million people on a monthly basis and medical supplies for 2.3 million per month, as well as delivering non-food items in the first seven months of 2020 to more than 1 million people, water and sanitation support to more than 2.2 million people and 2.2 million pieces of personal protective equipment to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. The Monitoring Mechanism continues to benefit from the excellent cooperation of the Government of Turkey towards the implementation of its mandate. It has good working relationships with the local authorities at the border crossing of Bab al-Hawa, who ensure that operations are conducted safely and swiftly. The monitoring team collaborates with the customs authorities at the border crossing to ensure the integrity of the United Nations consignments crossing into the Syrian Arab Republic.

10. The Monitoring Mechanism also maintains links with all relevant humanitarian partners, including United Nations agencies and their implementing partner organizations, to ensure support for monitoring activities. It participates in relevant humanitarian coordination forums as part of its commitment to contributing to the facilitation of overall humanitarian efforts in the Syrian Arab Republic. Excellent working relations with all stakeholders have helped to garner support for United Nations cross-border humanitarian operations and the work of the Mechanism.

11. The staffing structure of the Monitoring Mechanism for 2018 comprised 41 positions for international and national personnel and United Nations Volunteers. After the completion of the phasing out of the presence of the Mechanism in Jordan on 30 June 2019, the number of staff was reduced to 30. Following the exclusion of the border crossings of Ya‘rubiyah and Bab al-Salam from the list of authorized

crossings for United Nations cross-border operations in Security Council resolutions [2504 \(2020\)](#) and [2533 \(2020\)](#), it is proposed that 11 positions be abolished in Iraq and Turkey. As a result of the above-mentioned phased changes, the number of positions proposed in support of the Mechanism would include the continuation from 2020 of 19 positions in 2021, including 18 in Gaziantep (Turkey) and 1 in New York (United States of America), which would provide optimal capacity for the Mechanism to deliver on its mandate.

II. Estimated additional resource requirements for 2021

12. The proposed additional resource requirements for the period from January to December 2021 is summarized in tables 1 to 3. The provision of resources for 12 months is in line with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see [A/71/811](#)) to include the fullest possible picture of the Organization's requirements, noting that the mandate of the Monitoring Mechanism has been extended since its establishment in 2014, and to avoid the piecemeal approach to the budget process. The recommendation was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [71/272 B](#).

13. No provision was made in the proposed programme budget for 2021 for section 27, Humanitarian assistance, because, at the time of the preparation of that report, the mandate for the Monitoring Mechanism was valid through 10 July 2020. The presentation of the additional resources reflected in tables 1 to 3 has been aligned with the presentation in the proposed programme budget for 2021, which showed the reduction of the 2020 appropriation in 2021 under technical adjustments as a non-recurrent item. Subsequently, the tables reflect the 2021 requirements under the change factor "new/expanded mandates".

Table 1
Financial resources by object of expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2019 expenditure	2020 appropriation	Changes					2021 estimate (before recosting)	Recosting	2021 estimate (after recosting)
			Technical adjustments ^a	New/ expanded mandates	Other	Total	Percentage			
Other staff costs	1 953.8	2 205.4	(2 205.4)	1 521.3	–	(684.1)	(31.0)	1 521.3	35.8	1 557.1
Hospitality	–	0.5	(0.5)	–	–	(0.5)	(100.0)	–	–	–
Consultants	12.3	8.2	(8.2)	–	–	(8.2)	(100.0)	–	–	–
Travel of staff	239.0	238.0	(238.0)	166.7	–	(71.3)	(29.9)	166.7	3.2	169.9
Contractual services	21.6	39.6	(39.6)	23.2	–	(16.4)	(41.4)	23.2	0.5	23.7
General operating expenses	168.9	245.2	(245.2)	152.8	–	(92.4)	(37.7)	152.8	3.6	156.4
Supplies and materials	15.0	23.1	(23.1)	22.2	–	(0.9)	(3.9)	22.2	0.6	22.8
Furniture and equipment	3.9	2.2	(2.2)	–	–	(2.2)	(100.0)	–	–	–
Improvements to premises	2.3	3.0	(3.0)	–	–	(3.0)	(100.0)	–	–	–
Fellowships, grants contributions	19.2	78.3	(78.3)	41.2	–	(37.1)	(47.4)	41.2	0.9	42.1
Total (net of staff assessment)	2 436.0	2 843.5	(2 843.5)	1 927.4	–	(916.1)	(32.2)	1 927.4	44.6	1 972.0

^a As presented in the proposed programme budget for 2021 ([A/75/6 \(Sect. 27\)](#)).

Table 2
Changes in general temporary assistance and United Nations Volunteers positions

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Level</i>
Approved for 2020	30	1 D-1, 3 P-4, 4 P-3, 3 P-2/1, 3 NPO, 9 LL, 7 UNV
Abolishment	(11)	1 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 NPO, 3 LL, 4 UNV
Proposed for 2021	19	1 D-1, 2 P-4, 3 P-3, 3 P-2/1, 1 NPO, 6 LL, 3 UNV

Abbreviations: LL, Local level; NPO, National Professional Officer; UNV, United Nations Volunteers.

Table 3
General temporary assistance and United Nations Volunteers positions

<i>Category</i>	<i>Changes</i>				<i>Total</i>	<i>2021 proposed</i>
	<i>2020 approved</i>	<i>Technical adjustments^a</i>	<i>New/expanded mandates</i>	<i>Other</i>		
Professional and higher						
D-1	1	(1)	1	–	–	1
P-4	3	(3)	2	–	(1)	2
P-3	4	(4)	3	–	(1)	3
P-2/1	3	(3)	3	–	–	3
Subtotal	11	(11)		–	(2)	9
General Service						
National Professional Officer	3	(3)	1	–	(2)	1
Local level	9	(9)	6	–	(3)	6
Subtotal	12	(12)	7	–	(5)	7
Other						
United Nations Volunteers	7	(7)	3	–	(4)	3
Subtotal	7	(7)	3	–	(4)	3
Total	30	(30)	19	–	(11)	19

^a As presented in the proposed programme budget for 2021 (A/75/6 (Sect. 27)).

14. As reflected in table 1, the overall resources (non-recurrent) proposed for 2021 amount to \$1,927,400 (net of staff assessment) before recosting, reflecting a decrease of \$916,100 (or 32.2 per cent), compared with the appropriation for 2020. The proposed resources would provide for the continuation of the mandate pursuant to resolutions 2504 (2020) and 2533 (2020). The decrease of \$916,100 is due to the exclusion of the border crossings of Ya'rubiyah and Bab al-Salam from the list of authorized border crossings for United Nations cross-border operations in resolutions 2504 (2020) and 2533 (2020).

15. Currently, 30 positions are approved for the Monitoring Mechanism. The proposed decrease in the number of positions includes the abolishment of the following 11 positions in Iraq and Turkey: 1 Monitoring Officer (P-4), 1 Monitoring Officer (P-3), 1 Security Officer (National Professional Officer), 1 Administrative Analyst (National Professional Officer), 3 Local level positions (one Administrative Assistant and two positions of Driver) and 4 United Nations Volunteers positions.

16. The estimated requirements of the Monitoring Mechanism for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021 would provide for salaries and common staff costs for the continuation from 2020 of 19 positions, including 1 D-1, 2 P-4, 3 P-3, 3 P-2, 1 National Professional Officer, 6 Local level and 3 United Nations Volunteers (\$1,521,300), and for non-post requirements, including travel of staff (\$166,700), contractual services (\$23,200), general operating expenses (\$152,800), supplies and materials (\$22,200), and fellowships, grants and contributions, which provides for contributions to the Department of Safety and Security cost-shared security budget, information and communications technology support from the Global Service Centre and administrative support from the United Nations Development Programme (\$41,200).

17. No extrabudgetary resources are projected for the Monitoring Mechanism.

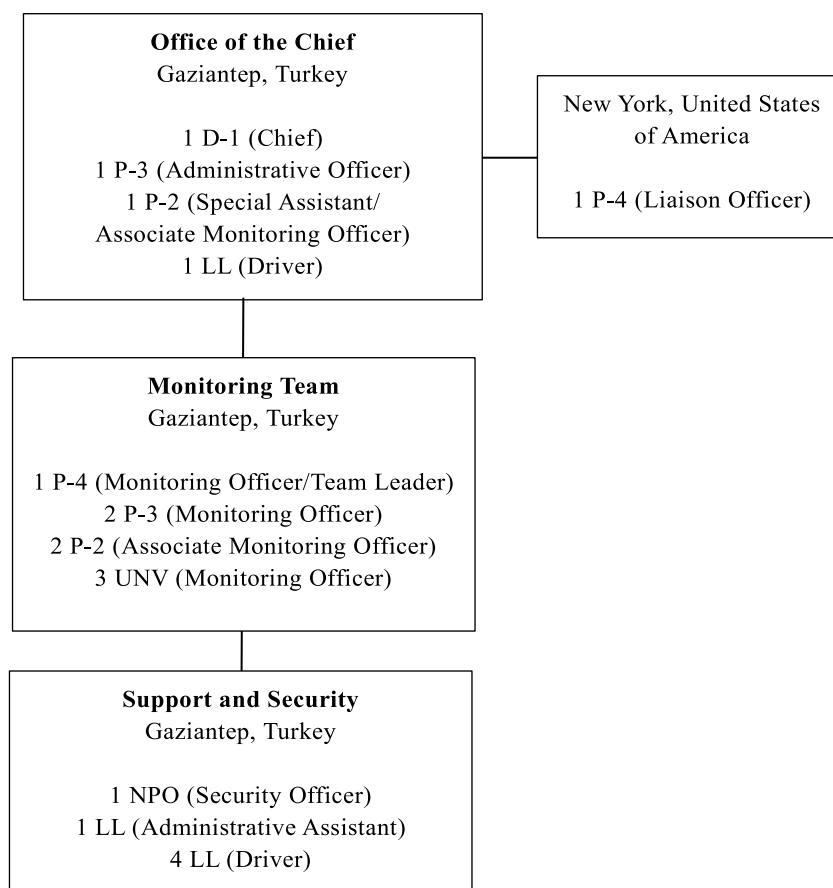
IV. Conclusions and recommendations

18. **The General Assembly is requested:**

(a) **To appropriate an additional amount of \$1,972,000 (net of staff assessment) for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021, under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for 2021, which would represent a charge against the contingency fund;**

(b) **To appropriate an additional amount of \$194,900 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the programme budget for 2021.**

Annex

Proposed organizational structure for 2021

Abbreviations: LL, Local level; NPO, National Professional Officer; UNV, United Nations Volunteers.