

To the Esteemed Excellences, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and The Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

To the Esteemed members of the Dutch Humanitarian Community,

We write to you in the spirit of our shared commitment as members of a humanitarian community that aim to protect and save the lives of people at risk.

The situation in Northwest Syria presents an unprecedented challenge at all levels. As the world turns inward to deal with the Coronavirus, people in Northwest Syria have been left to face their problems alone, albeit some generous, but insufficient attempts by several actors. We are confident that you share our concerns about the alarming deterioration in the humanitarian situation on the ground. The recent statistics on the percentage of malnourished pregnant women are a grim indication of the situation on the ground. A fourfold increase from last year at the level of 21 percent. In our daily work, we see horrifying cases among other vulnerable groups. Hundreds of thousands of people stand at the point of breaking, should there be no direct and urgent intervention. Next to the threat of starvation and malnourishment, immense challenges persist in all sectors including Health, WASH, Education, Protection, shelter and good security. The deteriorating situation is further compounded by a real and approaching threat of a coronavirus outbreak in the region.

In the face of these challenges, our capacities are strained, our resources are drained, and our capacity is stretched. With many international organizations downsizing their operations and the introduction of new regulations, which aim to minimize the risk of the spread of the virus, humanitarian operations have been hit hard and humanitarian work is hampered. This has impacted and continue to impact approximately 3.5 million residents of Northwest Syria. Albeit, our limited means, we are committed and determined to continue our work in the region.

Encouraged by your commitment as a government and a humanitarian community to help Syrians, and in light of the current situation as well as the looming expiry of the 2504 resolution over the cross-border operations, we reach out to you today and call on you to further increase your financial support and humanitarian diplomacy.

We further ask that you consider engaging directly with local NGOs, including non-signatories to this letter, and to support their work on the ground, as we constitute the first line of responders.

We thank you for your efforts to date, and we look forward to working with you to ensure the safety and dignity of millions of Syrians in Northwest Syria.

Yours sincerely

Syrian Networks League