

Aid workers in Gaziantep struggle to deliver vital aid to Aleppo

- ***Aid workers struggle to deliver vital supplies inside the besieged city***
- ***Canadians in Gaziantep available for interviews***
- ***Staff on the frontlines in Aleppo delivering aid to the most difficult to reach civilians in Northern Syria***
- ***Pictures and videos available from Aleppo***

As fighting, death and destruction continue in Aleppo, aid workers struggle to deliver vital supplies inside the besieged city.

Islamic Relief is one of the few International NGOs still operating inside Aleppo city. Since the closure of the last route into Aleppo, our staff are facing huge difficulties and risks delivering aid to the needy families trapped. Despite the danger, our staff work on the frontlines to deliver aid to the most difficult to reach civilians in Northern Syria. We provide food items and flour to the families and also medical supplies to health facilities still functional inside the blockaded city.

Islamic Relief Syria's Country Director Ahmed Mahmoud says:

"The situation in Aleppo is one that I cannot describe in words. A picture of the Syrian boy in an ambulance is merely a glimpse into the devastation of what's happening in the country every day.

The last children's doctor in the city was killed in May in an attack on one of the hospitals supported through Islamic Relief's projects. Attacks have left hospitals (including the last women's hospital) inoperable, and only two makeshift 'field hospitals' now remain. The only blood bank in Aleppo has also been damaged, as well as the building where dead bodies are taken after airstrikes and barrel bomb attacks.

Most of the families left in Aleppo are those who are unable to leave - people with disabilities, older people, and the poorest of the poor. There was a time when the people were selling their furniture just so they could rent a car and leave the city. Some people remain because they don't want to die in an air strike on a refugee camp, or by drowning trying to cross the Mediterranean, or in a difficult situation in the desert because the border they are trying to cross is closed."

With safe routes in and out of Aleppo city constantly closing and reopening, getting aid into the city remains difficult. Islamic Relief Canada is calling for all sides of this conflict to ensure access to Aleppo remains open and safe for aid distribution.

Note to Editors

1. Two Canadian staff members of Islamic Relief Canada are currently in Gaziantep and available for interviews. To arrange interviews from Gaziantep please contact media@islamicrelief.ca or +16472004662
2. To arrange for pictures, videos and/or live shootings of distributions, please contact the media team (contact information as above)
3. Islamic Relief is an international aid and development charity that aims to alleviate the suffering of the world's poorest people. As well as responding to disasters and emergencies, Islamic Relief promotes sustainable economic and social development by working with local communities – regardless of race, religion or gender.
4. Huffington Blog Post by Ahmed Mahmoud to be published on: <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/islamic-relief-canada/>