



Statement by Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on protecting civilians inside Mosul, Iraq

Brussels, 31 March 2017

 [Message by Christos Stylianides on protecting civilians inside Mosul, Iraq](#)

Ensuring that civilians inside Mosul are protected during the conflict is the single most effective life-saving action that can be taken.

A few weeks ago I was in Iraq myself, visiting the conflict areas and seeing how our humanitarian aid can best help those in need. I was heartened to meet the brave doctors and medical staff working countless hours to treat the injured. I received reassurances from the Iraqi authorities that they would continue to protect and assist their citizens.

Unfortunately, Da'esh continue to disregard human life, using innocent people as human shields, positioning snipers and fighters on the rooftops of houses occupied by civilians, and deliberately targeting those aiming to flee areas still under their control. However, in spite of these war crimes and despite the enormous challenges of conducting this battle in such a densely populated urban setting, the protection of civilians couldn't be more crucial. Indeed these complicating factors should only enhance the determination of Iraqi forces to continue putting the safety and dignity of civilians first.

We must preserve humanity during conflict. A conflict in which civilians aren't adequately protected is a conflict that comes back. Therefore, ensuring the principles of precaution and proportionality in military action is paramount. Concretely what is needed are safe evacuation routes, capacity to extract the injured and lifesaving aid to reach civilians trapped by the conflict.

To help, the European Union is leading international humanitarian efforts and giving priority to medical response. We are funding trauma care facilities and also providing emergency supplies such as food, water and healthcare.

The EU remains fully committed to supporting the Iraqi people and the authorities at this time. Together, we must ensure that every effort is made so civilians are protected in the first place.

Background

On 7 March Commissioner Stylianides announced €42.5 million in initial humanitarian aid for the crisis in Iraq. This comes on top of over €159 million in humanitarian assistance that the European Commission has already made available in 2016 and the delivery of 266 tons of aid offered by countries through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism in response to Mosul emergency. EU aid is covering the essential needs of the most vulnerable in Iraq, including food, health care, water, sanitation and hygiene as well as protection, shelter and education in emergencies.

For more information:

[Press Release: EU announces €42.5 million in humanitarian assistance for Iraq](#)

[Video Commissioner Stylianides' statement on protecting civilians inside Mosul, Iraq](#)

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Press contacts:

[Carlos MARTIN RUIZ DE GORDEJUELA](#) (+32 2 296 53 22)

[Daniel PUGLISI](#) (+32 2 296 91 40)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)