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Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 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 resolution [2449 \(2018\)](#), extended the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic established under resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#) for a period of 12 months until 10 January 2020.

The present report contains the resource requirements for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019 in the amount of \$3,018,500 net (\$3,288,700 gross). Taking into account the unencumbered balance of \$225,900 net (\$227,700 gross) against the approved resources for the Monitoring Mechanism for 2018, additional requirements are requested under the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 in the amount of \$2,792,600 net (\$3,061,000 gross).

The General Assembly is requested to approve the proposed resources for the Monitoring Mechanism for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019 and to appropriate, after taking into account the estimated underexpenditure in 2018, an amount of \$2,792,600 under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, and \$268,400 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. As the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic is about to enter its ninth year, the political and security landscape in the country remains complex and fluid, most notably in the north-west and in parts of the north-east. Increased stability and security are expected in other areas, including in areas in which changes in control took place in 2018. In 2019, the level of spontaneous return of internally displaced people may exceed the level of new displacement for the first time, but more progress is required to be able to ensure safe, voluntary and dignified returns. Meanwhile, living conditions in overcrowded displacement sites, the needs of host communities and the impact of drought on food security and livelihoods will be key concerns. It is currently estimated that nearly 12 million people are likely to continue to require humanitarian assistance in 2019, with life-saving assistance, protection needs, and early recovery and livelihood support expected to continue to be the main priorities.

2. As was shown in 2018, the delivery of humanitarian assistance within the Syrian Arab Republic remains challenging owing to several constraints, notably ongoing hostilities, geographical factors, explosive hazard contamination and administrative restrictions. Cross-border assistance has remained a vital part of the humanitarian response for people in need in the north of the country and was equally critical for people in need across much of the south of the country over the first half of 2018.

3. 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, reaches 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 Monitoring Mechanism, first by resolution [2191 \(2014\)](#), then by resolutions [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#) and [2393 \(2017\)](#), and most recently by resolution [2449 \(2018\)](#) until 10 January 2020.

4. Monitoring teams have been in place in Turkey, Jordan and Iraq to operate at the border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa (Turkey) and Ramtha (Jordan), and Ya‘rubiyah (Iraq), where the United Nations cross-border operations began on 7 March 2018. As at 31 December 2018, a total of 916 shipments, or 23,193 trucks, had crossed the border into the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#) and [2393 \(2017\)](#), including 18,529 trucks from Turkey, 4,595 from Jordan and 69 from Iraq since July 2014. The Monitoring Mechanism has successfully monitored and confirmed the humanitarian nature of all consignments without incidents or complaints from any party.

5. 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, as deliveries from Jordan were discontinued for the last six months of the year after the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic re-established control in the south-west of the country and humanitarian assistance in that region was provided from within the country.

6. Cross-border operations, in accordance with resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#) and [2393 \(2017\)](#), have allowed millions of people to be reached with assistance. In 2018, the United Nations cross-border operations supported by the Monitoring Mechanism reached millions of people across the Syrian Arab Republic, including food assistance for 1 million people, many on a monthly basis, non-food items for 1.8 million people, water and sanitation supplies for 2 million people and medical and health supplies sufficient for 9.3 million treatments, in addition to vaccinations for approximately 2 million children.

7. The Monitoring Mechanism benefits from the excellent cooperation of the Governments of Iraq, Jordan and Turkey for the implementation of its mandate. It has good working relationships with the local authorities in all three countries, who ensure that the operating environment is safe and appropriate. The monitoring teams collaborate with the customs authorities at the border-crossing points to enhance the inspection of trucks, such as through the use of X-ray devices, as required.

8. 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 in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey as part of its commitment to contribute 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 Monitoring Mechanism.

9. The staffing structure of the Monitoring Mechanism for 2018 comprised a total of 41 positions for international and national personnel and United Nations Volunteers. This complement of staff has provided optimal operational capacity to deliver on the mandate. As at 31 December 2018, 36 positions were encumbered, representing a vacancy rate of 12.2 per cent. Of the five vacant positions, three were in Jordan, where staff members leaving the Monitoring Mechanism were not replaced given the discontinuation of United Nations cross-border operations through Ramtha in the second half of the year.

10. The United Nations cross-border deliveries from Jordan were discontinued after the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic re-established control over the south-west of the country in mid-2018 (the last delivery using the Ramtha border crossing occurred on 25 June 2018). Humanitarian aid to the south-western region of the Syrian Arab Republic is being provided from within the country. For that reason, the Monitoring Mechanism proposes to restructure its Jordan monitoring team by 31 January 2019.

11. Following an internal review of staffing requirements in Turkey, the abolishment of the position of Monitoring Support Officer (National Officer (NO)) in Gaziantep is proposed. That position was essential in facilitating the development of working relations with local authorities and stakeholders when the Monitoring Mechanism was established. As the Monitoring Mechanism has established good working relationships with all relevant stakeholders, the position is no longer needed. Residual functions will be assumed by other staff members.

12. As a result of the above-mentioned phased changes, the staffing structure of the Monitoring Mechanism would include a total of 31 positions as at 1 February 2019, including 21 in Gaziantep (Turkey), 8 in Dahuk (Iraq), 1 in New York (United States of America) and 1 in Amman (Jordan).

II. Relationship of the activities to the biennial programme plan and programme of work for the biennium 2018–2019

13. The activities of the Monitoring Mechanism relate to programme 23, Humanitarian assistance, of the biennial programme plan ([A/71/6 \(Prog. 23\)](#)). They also relate to section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019 ([A/72/6 \(Sect. 27\)](#)).

14. The objective, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures are set out below.

Table 1

Objective, expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement and performance measures

Objective: To ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic by the most direct route

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement	Performance measures		
		2018–2019	2016–2017	2015
(a) Increase in the number of humanitarian trucks crossing the border	Increased number of consignment crossings to the Syrian Arab Republic through the border crossings of Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Ya‘rubiyah and Ramtha	Target	500	500
		Estimate	400	450
		Actual	471	188
(b) Increase in the amount of humanitarian aid reaching people in need throughout the Syrian Arab Republic	Increased number of United Nations and partner agencies delivering aid through cross-border operations to people in need in the Syrian Arab Republic	Target	30	30
		Estimate	40	30
		Actual	40	7

Outputs

- Screening of trucks in accordance with the Mechanism’s verification procedures and the standard operating procedures (10,000)
- Reviews of the Mechanism’s verification procedures and the standard operating procedures (4)
- Notifications to the Syrian authorities of consignments crossing the border (800)
- Advocacy meetings with local authorities and the humanitarian community on improving trans-shipment and monitoring procedures (12)

External factors

15. The Monitoring Mechanism is expected to achieve its objective and expected accomplishments on the assumption that: (a) the authorities of the relevant neighbouring countries will continue to provide the support necessary to implement the mandate of the Monitoring Mechanism and ensure the safety and security of its personnel; (b) United Nations agencies and their implementing partners will carry out at least the same number of cross-border operations from Turkey and Iraq as in 2018; and (c) the border crossings of Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa and Ya‘rubiyah remain open.

III. Estimated additional resource requirements for the biennium 2018–2019

16. The additional resource requirements for the proposals described above amount to \$3,018,500 (net of staff assessment) and are summarized in the table below.

Table 2
Additional resource requirements by object of expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Object of expenditure</i>	<i>Appropriation (January–December 2018)</i>	<i>Estimated expenditures</i>	<i>Variance ((Under-)/Over-expenditure)</i>	<i>Additional requirements (January–December 2019)</i>	<i>Net additional requirements for 2019</i>	<i>2018–2019 revised estimate</i>
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(2)-(1)	(4)	(5)=(4)+(3)	(6)=(2)+(4)
Other staff costs	2 853.9	2 839.1	(14.8)	2 343.2	2 328.4	5 182.3
Consultants	4.6	1.7	(2.9)	9.1	6.2	10.8
Travel of staff	303.8	299.2	(4.6)	275.0	270.4	574.2
Contractual services	39.7	17.3	(22.4)	41.4	19.0	58.7
General operating expenses	357.8	268.7	(89.1)	227.7	138.6	496.4
Hospitality	0.5	0.0	(0.5)	0.5	0.0	0.5
Supplies and materials	68.4	36.3	(32.1)	40.4	8.3	76.7
Furniture and equipment	15.7	0.4	(15.3)	3.5	(11.8)	3.9
Grants and contributions	105.6	61.4	(44.2)	77.7	33.5	139.1
Total (net)	3 750.0	3 524.1	(225.9)	3 018.5	2 792.6	6 542.6
Staff assessment	340.0	338.2	(1.8)	270.2	268.4	608.4
Total (gross)	4 090.0	3 862.3	(227.7)	3 288.7	3 061.0	7 151.0

Table 3
Positions

	<i>Professional category and above</i>						<i>General Service and related categories</i>		<i>National staff</i>				<i>United Nations Volunteers</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>D-1</i>	<i>P-5</i>	<i>P-4</i>	<i>P-3</i>	<i>P-2</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Field/Security Service</i>	<i>General Service</i>	<i>Total international</i>	<i>National Officer</i>	<i>Local level</i>			
Approved 2018	1	1	4	5	3	14	–	–	14	5	13		9	41
Proposed January 2019	1	1	4	5	3	14	–	–	14	4	11		7	36
Proposed February 2019	1	–	3	5	3	12	–	–	12	3	9		7	31
Change	–	(1)	(1)	–	–	(2)	–	–	(4)	(2)	(4)		(2)	(10)

17. Currently, there are 41 positions approved for the Monitoring Mechanism. The proposed changes in the number of positions include the abolishment of a Monitoring Support Officer (National Officer) position in Gaziantep, as well as the phased abolishment of the following positions in Amman: one Team Leader (P-5), one Monitoring Officer (P-4), one Security Officer (National Officer), four Local level positions (one Administrative Associate and three drivers) and two United Nations Volunteers.

18. The estimated requirements of the Monitoring Mechanism for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019 amount to \$3,018,500 net (\$3,288,700 gross) and would provide for salaries and common staff costs for 31 positions (1 D-1, 3 P-4, 5 P-3, 3 P-2, 3 National Officers, 9 Local level and 7 United Nations Volunteers) (\$2,343,200), and for operational requirements including consultants (\$9,100), travel of staff (\$275,000), contractual services (\$41,400), general operating expenses (\$227,700), hospitality (\$500), supplies and materials (\$40,400), furniture and equipment (\$3,500) and grants and contributions (\$77,700).

19. The requirements of the Monitoring Mechanism for the portion of the current mandate period that falls in 2020 would be included in the proposed programme budget for 2020.

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

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

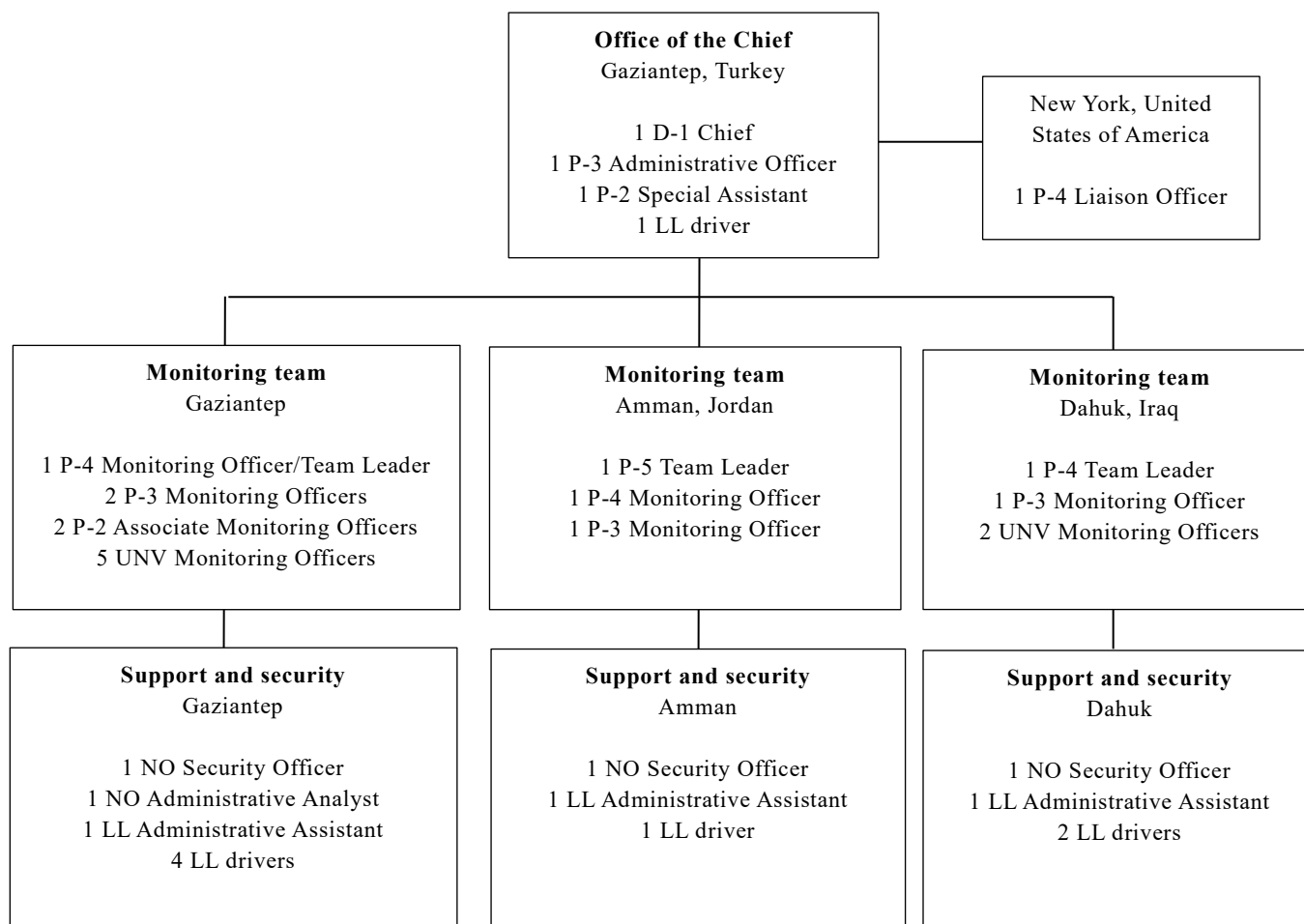
21. **The General Assembly is requested:**

(a) **To approve the proposed resources for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic for the period January to December 2019 in the amount of \$3,018,500 net (\$3,288,700 gross);**

(b) **To appropriate an additional amount of \$2,792,600 (net of staff assessment) under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, as well as an additional amount of \$268,400 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment, for the biennium 2018–2019.**

Annex I

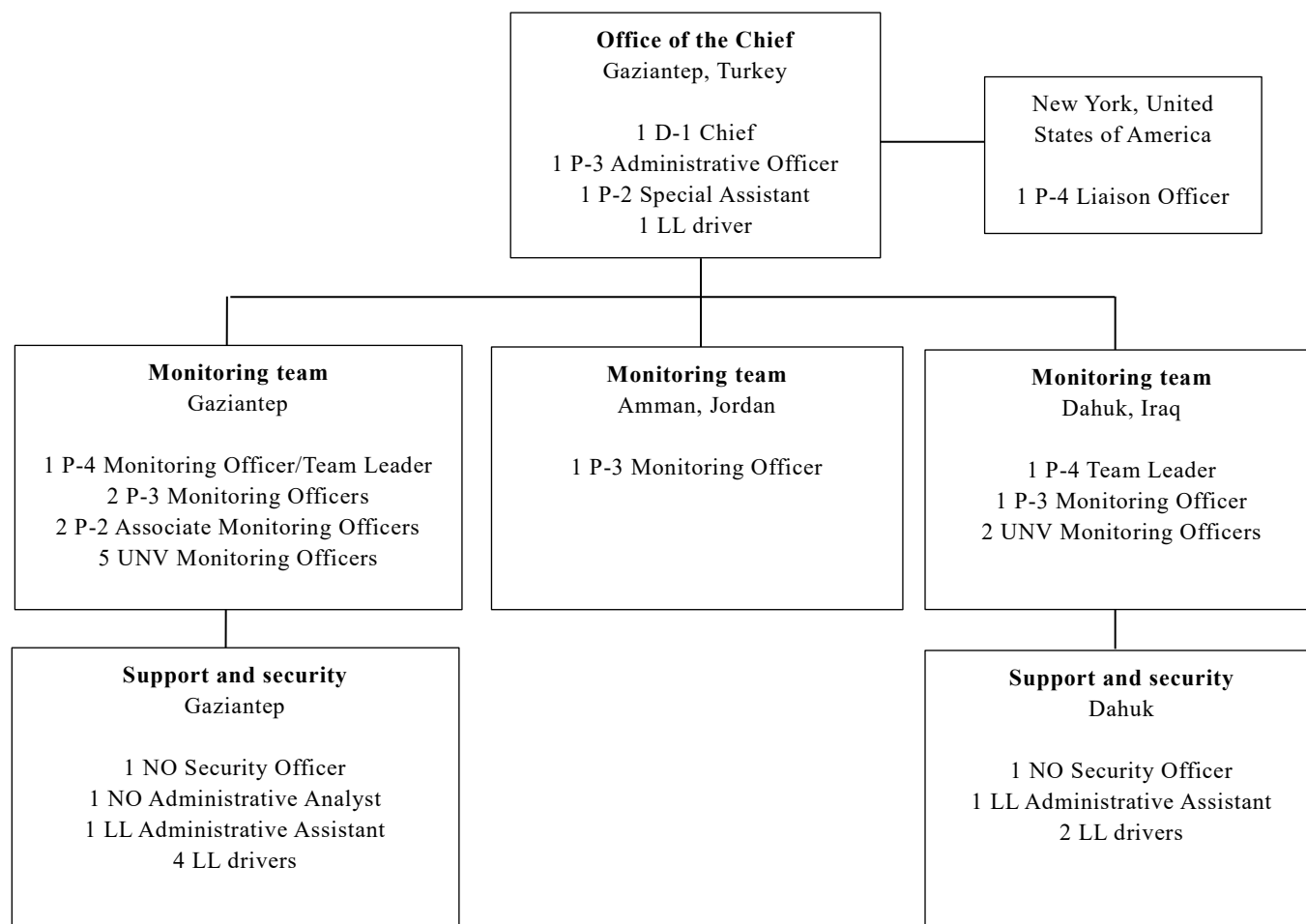
Organizational structure as at 1 January 2019



Abbreviations: D, Director; LL, Local level; NO, National Officer; P, Professional; UNV, United Nations Volunteers.

Annex II

Organizational structure as at 1 February 2019



Abbreviations: D, Director; LL, Local level; NO, National Officer; P, Professional; UNV, United Nations Volunteers.