



**Statement**

**The United Nations Must Take Actions regarding Expired Food Aid in Syria**

On 18 October 2015, a food aid convoy entered Madaya and Al Zabadani cities in Damascus suburbs under the auspices of the United Nations. The two cities have been under government siege since 1 July 2015. The convoy was accompanied by a delegation from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Red Crescent; as the delegation was headed by Mr. Mansour Fakhri.

Almost 24 freight vehicles of food aid entered Al Zabadani in addition to two more that were loaded with food and medical aid. Local and relief aid councils distributed the humanitarian aid to the residents of those cities except the energy biscuits which were distributed on 20 October 2015. After its distribution, nearly 200 residents reached the makeshift hospitals and they presented symptoms of food poisoning.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights communicated with the local councils in Madaya and Al Zabadani in addition to makeshift doctors in those cities. We realized that the only substance that caused the food poisoning was the Italian-made biscuits that expired in September 2015. Further, it seems that the biscuits were poorly stored because it was moldy and rotted. Also, we realized that the Syrian Red Crescent filled the freight cars with biscuit packages from the warehouse of the expired materials after a lack in the quantity of the edible packages which was supposed to be sent in the relief-aid convoy.

*An image that depicts the expired energy biscuits which were entered to Madaya and Al Zabadani cities through the humanitarian aid convoy on 18 October 2015 under the auspices of the United Nations:*



Image shows the kind of the expired biscuits that entered Madaya and Al Zabadani cities in Rif Dimashq governorate through the United Nations sponsored aid convoy in October 18, 2015 ©SNHR

Dr. Khaled, a doctor who works in the makeshift hospital in Madaya City treated some of the poisoning cases. He gave us his testimony:

“On 20 October 2015, nearly 200 individuals were rushed to the hospitals. They presented symptoms of pain in the abdomen, fever, vomiting and diarrhea. We realized that all the poisoning cases were recorded on the day when the biscuits were distributed to the residents in Madaya; as we received almost 700 packages of the energy-biscuits from the humanitarian aid convoy.”

**Based on the above, we appeal to the United Nations to investigate this incident, hold those responsible accountable for their actions, and inform the Syrian society of the results of the investigations.**

