
Lost Trust Beyond Eight Hours

Washington, D.C. (October 19, 2016) – Humanitarian efforts to save lives in Aleppo need far more than a tiny eight-hour gap in bombing raids.

The [American Relief Coalition for Syria \(ARCS\)](http://www.ARCSSyria.org), a group of 13 American humanitarian organizations that aid over 5.7 million Syrians in the country and worldwide, is calling for an immediate, sustained ceasefire for meaningful humanitarian access to eastern Aleppo. Any ceasefire should not force civilians out, and allow neutral observers, such as the United Nations, doctors and humanitarian workers, to enter the city.

The announced ceasefire would halt Russian and Syrian military activity from 8:00-16:00 GMT on Thursday, October 20 to purportedly allow for medical and humanitarian relief, access to medical staff, and safe exit routes for civilians and militants. That is simply not enough time to transport the needed resources in and out of eastern Aleppo. Furthermore, previous patterns of similar ceasefires were recipes for forced evacuation and ethnic cleansing.

Rami Bitar from [Swasia](http://www.swasia.org), a U.S. based non-profit organization providing humanitarian assistance and aid to the Syrian people, and an ARCS member organization responded, “We trusted ceasefires before and were met with cruel brutality. With the US-Russia brokered ceasefire last month, we were hopeful for a break of what felt like hell. My friends who worked with different humanitarian organizations in Aleppo were among those killed in the aid convoy attack. As Syrians, we lost trust in these promises and agreements made by politicians.”

Lena Arkawi, spokesperson for ARCS stated, “An eight-hour ceasefire will not provide enough time to deliver the urgent relief needed in eastern Aleppo. The past three weeks alone, airstrikes have destroyed numerous hospitals and schools, hundreds of people have been killed and thousands injured. Innocent civilians are still starving from lack of access to food, water and aid. Even in the face of hellish conditions, the people of Aleppo are resilient and want to continue to live in their homes.”

The spokespeople are available for interviews.

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The American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS) is a 501(c)3 coalition of non-political, Syrian diaspora led humanitarian organizations that provide multi-sector relief inside of Syria, as well as assistance and services to Syrian refugees in regional host countries and in the United States. Together the efforts of ARCS organizations help millions of Syrians, both those who remain in Syria and those displaced as refugees. ARCS programs cover the full range of humanitarian sectors, including health, psychosocial support, community services, education, food and non-food items, protection, water/ sanitation/ hygiene, and women’s empowerment. In addition to emergency relief, ARCS organizations have established development projects that promote sustainable living and lay the groundwork for voluntary refugee return, such as building schools, facilitating jobs and skills training, and helping to establish bakeries and flour mills.

ARCS Member Organizations:

- Hope for Syria • Karam Foundation • Mercy Without Limits • NuDay Syria
- Rahma Relief Foundation • Shaam Relief Foundation • Swasia Charity Foundation
- Syria Relief & Development • Syrian American Engineers Association • Syrian American Medical Society • Syrian Community Network • Syrian Expatriates Organization • Syrian Forum USA