



Press Release

## **NORTHWEST SYRIA, PROTEST AT BAB AL-HAWA CROSSING "HUMAN LIFE IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN A UN VOTE"**

*Hundreds of people demonstrated against the UN Security Council's failure to agree to the passage of humanitarian aid without the consent of the Damascus regime. Still I Rise organization joined the protest, too.*

**18/07/2023** - A demonstration at the Bab al-Hawa crossing, Northwest Syria, was held yesterday at 6 p.m. (local time) to protest **the UN Security Council's failure to renew its authorization** to use this corridor to send vital humanitarian aid, due to Russia's veto. People also protested against the Damascus government's request to grant the UN use of the crossing under the condition of total control of aid by the regime itself: this is an unacceptable condition for the survival of civilians in the northwestern area. About 300 people attended the demonstration, including several aid workers from local organizations and a representative of Still I Rise international organization.

"Bab al-Hawa is the only crossing that ensures the survival of about 6 million people in northwestern Syria: **more than two million civilians live in tents and are totally dependent on aid** coming through this border. The UN, Russia, and the Syrian regime are politicizing this aid with a vote to get it through the regime in Damascus. However, Russia and the regime are using humanitarian aid as a weapon to bend the civilian population. They have already done this in Aleppo, Ghuta, and many other areas," explains **Abdulkafi Alhamdo**, Program Manager of Still I Rise in Northwest Syria. "The survival of these people is a priority and should not be put to a vote. Human life is much more precious".

Russia's veto of the Security Council's renewal of authorization for the passage of humanitarian aid to the Syrian-Turkish border precedes by a few days the **non-renewal of the Black Sea agreement on grain exports from Ukraine**. This will lead to higher prices for several countries and an even more noticeable rise in the most fragile areas, such as northwestern Syria, where food and basic necessities prices have long been very high.

"All this will give even more power to the Syrian regime to control the northwest area through the supply of raw materials such as grain and flour," Alhamdo adds.

After the failure to reach an agreement in the Security Council on July 10, the UN will now have to halt deliveries of humanitarian aid through Bab al-Hawa or decide to submit to the regime's demands, pending a new vote, which is currently

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not on the agenda. The crossings at Bab al-Salameh and Al-Ra'ee will remain open, but these are not enough to supply the population in the region, three-quarters of which consists of women and children.

"In the last few months already, UN support had proved insufficient. After the earthquake, no action was taken to change the situation on the ground," Abdulkafi Alhamdo concludes. "We have lost trust in the International Community, and the message coming through is definitely clear: **we are left alone.**"

#### **MULTIMEDIA**

[Abdulkafi Alhamdo's video testimony](#)

[Videos of the protest](#)

[Photos of the protest](#)

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