

Statement

Statement on project activities of Welthungerhilfe in Afrin, Syria

Bonn/Berlin, 10.11.2020. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe takes the allegations concerning a planned project activity in Afrin very seriously. Since 2013 we have been supporting people in need who fled the war within Syria. As in other difficult contexts, humanitarian aid in Syria, too, is in danger of becoming a punch bag of political confrontation time and again. Therefore, the four humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence are important pillars of our work. We make no difference what denomination people have or what ethnicity they belong to.

Since this year, Welthungerhilfe has been planning emergency aid activities in Afrin. The new refugee movements into the region have increased the need in this area and brought more people into a humanitarian emergency. Within four months, almost one million people in the northwest of the country fled intense violence and hostilities. According to the UN, some 410,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have fled to the regions of Afrin and A'zaz, thus increasing the needs of the host communities and overstressing the capacity of the refugee camps. Their greatest need is for safe and adequate shelter, access to food and other relief supplies.

As until today, no repairs have been made to houses. Like any other planned projects, extensive analyses and research activities have been carried out in the area in recent weeks to gain a comprehensive picture of the situation of the people. These analyses were coordinated, inter alia, with local community representatives in Afrin and working groups of the United Nations. After evaluating all the information, we have come to the conclusion that we will not repair the destroyed houses. We had legitimate doubts as to whether our basic principles of humanitarian aid, such as neutrality, could be guaranteed in the given circumstances.

***Welthungerhilfe** is one of the largest private aid organisations in Germany; politically independent and non-denominational. It is fighting for „Zero Hunger by 2030“. Since its establishment in 1962, more than 9,830 overseas projects in 70 countries have been supported with 3.95 billion euros. Welthungerhilfe works on the principle of help for self-help: from fast disaster relief to reconstruction and long-term development cooperation projects with national and international partner organisations.*

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