



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Statement by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat on the situation in the Middle East

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UN-Habitat is deeply concerned by the rapid military escalation in the Middle East. We echo the statement of the UN Secretary-General condemning the use of force by the United States and Israel against Iran, and the subsequent attacks by Iran across the region, which pose a grave threat to civilian lives and urban infrastructure.

Across the Middle East region, more than 19 million people are already internally displaced due to conflict, violence and disasters, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). These figures underscore the fragile situation in the region and the risk of further instability and a protracted displacement crisis.

According to preliminary assessments by [UNHCR](#), up to 3.2 million people are temporarily displaced within Iran as the conflict intensifies. In Lebanon, intensified strikes and evacuation orders have forced at least [1.3 million people](#) from their homes, with only approximately 10 per cent residing in 663 collective shelters, and the majority seeking refuge in cities – hosted by families, staying in informal shelters, or residing in public spaces.

UN-Habitat shares the concern of the UN Secretary-General regarding ongoing attacks on densely populated neighbourhoods, civilian infrastructure and diplomatic premises. As urban centres become front lines, more homes are being destroyed, forcing families from their homes and turning schools into shelters.

UN-Habitat echoes the call of the UN Secretary-General for de-escalation and an immediate cessation of hostilities. Civilians and civilian infrastructure, including housing and basic services in cities, must be protected.

About UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity working for sustainable urbanization. With programmes in over 90 countries, it supports policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in urban areas through knowledge, policy advice, technical Page 2 of 2 assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit [unhabitat.org](#) or follow us on X [@UNHABITAT](#).

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