



**Washington DC, USA and Gaziantep, Türkiye** - On May 13th, 2023, Syrian authorities extended their consent for UN humanitarian agencies to use international border crossings at Bab Al-Salameh and Al-Ra'i for 90 days, until August 13th, 2023. This follows consent having previously been given for UN humanitarian agencies to use those border crossings on February 13th, 2023, after the devastating earthquakes of February 6th, 2023.

The crossings at Bab Al-Salameh and Al-Ra'i remain essential to meet unprecedented humanitarian need in northwest Syria.

Although prior American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS) [analyses](#) have demonstrated that state consent is not a legal prerequisite for remote cross-border aid programming by UN humanitarian agencies, the extension of consent reinforces the basis on which they may do so, and fulfils basic legal obligations not to arbitrarily refuse, and more importantly not to arbitrarily withdraw, consent to humanitarian-need-centred offers of principled humanitarian aid.

However, even if consent is given, renewal periods must be longer than 90 days and these crossing points must remain open with reliable mandates for as long as there is humanitarian need in northwest Syria that cannot be met by aid delivered across front-lines from Damascus. The absence of any such reliable mandate adversely impacts humanitarian organizations' planning and their capacity to respond to the increased suffering of civilians in earthquake impacted areas. The American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS) and the Syrian NGOs Alliance (SNA) therefore encourages the international community to ensure the reliable and long-term continuation of aid through border crossings at Bab Al-Hawa, which remains the primary avenue for cross-border humanitarian aid into northwest Syria.

As part of these efforts, ARCS and SNA will continue to advocate for the consideration of alternative legal bases that allow for UN humanitarian agencies to continue providing all activities pertaining to cross-border humanitarian response, including procurement, funding, and coordination, into Northwest Syria, regardless of the consensus method in line with the humanitarian needs in Syria.

May, 24<sup>th</sup> 2023.

-The End-