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Kuwait makes good on \$300 million pledge for Syria aid



Kuwait has come through with the \$300 million it pledged towards aid for stricken Syrians at a January donor's conference, the emirate and the United Nations said Thursday, urging other nations to follow its lead. "We are ... matching our words with our deeds," Kuwait ambassador Dharar Abdul-Razzak Razzooqi told reporters in Geneva, detailing how the cash had been split between nine U.N. agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. "We hope that other (countries) will come and fulfill the pledges that they have made at the Kuwait conference," he added. The donor conference resulted in some \$1.5 billion in pledges of aid -- of which \$520 million was specifically to help people trapped inside Syria, with the rest going to help the nations hosting refugees. However, before Thursday, only about 30 percent of the promised cash had come through. Kuwait's contribution brings the funding level of the January pledges to around 50 percent, according to the U.N. humanitarian agency, OCHA. The United Nations says more than 70,000 people have been killed in Syria over the past two years in a conflict that broke out after the regime unleashed a brutal crackdown on a popular uprising that later morphed into an insurgency. As of Wednesday, some 1.35 million Syrians had also sought refuge in neighboring countries, Guterres said, adding that with around 8,000 people flooding out of Syria each day, that number could easily triple by the end of the year. In its appeal for the \$1.5 billion to fund its Syrian operations during the first half of this year, the United Nations had expected to see only 1.1 million refugees by June.