



## Security Council Briefing on Syria (Political/Humanitarian), 25 January 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Vanessa Frazier  
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you, President

I also thank Special Envoy Pedersen and Deputy-Director Mudawi for their remarks. As always, your updates are a pertinent reminder of the continued suffering endured by the Syrian people and the need for a political solution, in line with UNSCR 2254.

President

As the Syrian conflict nears its thirteenth year, millions of Syrians are desperately poor, hungry, and sick.

In 2023, around 15.3m will require some form of humanitarian assistance. Year by year, living conditions for the Syrian population are only worsening.

The impact of years of violence inflicted upon the Syrian people by the Syrian regime, instability, corruption, economic struggles, and the lack of progress on the political front have rendered it impossible for the population to be able to meet its most basic needs.

Cholera is spreading rapidly across the country.



More than two million children are out of school and often forced into work or pushed into early marriage to support their families. These are the agonising, consequences of conflict, for millions of children in Syria.

As noted by our briefers today, the situation in Syria remains first and foremost a protection crisis.

President

Malta was pleased about the unanimous adoption of UNSCR 2672 on 9 January, which saw the humanitarian cross-border mechanism renewed for a further six months.

We encourage the continuation, and expansion, of efforts to successfully deliver assistance via crossline aid convoys in the northwest of Syria. However, it is clear that these crossline operations cannot substitute for the size and scope of the cross-border mechanism at Bab Al Hawa.

Malta supports the use of all modalities to meet the needs of millions throughout the country. The Syria of today is one where mothers are skipping meals to feed their children. Since much of the country's infrastructure has been destroyed, electricity and fuel are scarcer than ever. Major cities face lengthy power outages.

We stress the importance of supporting primary health care services and strengthening maternal health care and nutrition programs for mothers and their children. We also express our thanks and gratitude for the work of



OCHA and all the humanitarians who strive to reach millions of Syrians each day at great personal risk.

Malta remains committed to assisting the Syrian people and to providing humanitarian support as well as ensuring it reaches those most in need.

President

There simply can be no further delay to meaningful, and substantive, political progress in line with UNSCR 2254. Malta urges the swift reconvening of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva and calls upon the Syrian Government to engage in good faith in this regard.

We also highlight the importance of ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all stages of the political process. In this regard, we welcome the Special Envoy's engagement with the Syrian Women's Advisory Board in November, and stress that women's participation must be more than a formality. The agreed 30 per cent threshold should be seen as the minimum.

President

Time is of the essence. As Special Envoy Pederson outlined, the dangers of a military escalation in parts of the country remain real.

Therefore, the first step is for all parties to step back from escalation and work towards a nationwide ceasefire.



We must remain guided by the needs of the Syrian people; steadfast in the pursuit of justice and accountability for the crimes perpetrated against them.

In this vein, Malta reiterates its support for the work being carried out by the International, Impartial and Integrated Mechanism on Syria (IIIM) to ensure accountability for the most serious crimes committed under international law committed since March 2011.

Malta also continues to support the implementation of targeted sanctions against relevant individuals and entities involved in the repression of the Syrian people.

President

We also stress that all returns of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons, must be legal, safe, dignified, and voluntary, in accordance with the criteria set by UNHCR.

Furthermore, we call on the Government of Syria to ensure the immediate, transparent, and verifiable release of all those detained arbitrarily, and for the provision of information on the whereabouts, and fate, of the thousands who are missing.

In conclusion, I reiterate Malta's support for Special Envoy Pedersen, and for his tireless work in advancing a political process for Syria.



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Geir, Malta stands by your *Step-for-Step* approach and calls on the Government of Syria to engage faithfully, and substantively, with your good offices.

The People of Syria must come first. This is the only viable way forward.

I thank you.