



## Security Council Briefing on Syria (Political/Humanitarian), 23 March 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Darren Camilleri,  
Political Coordinator of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you, President.

I begin by thanking Special Envoy Pedersen and Mr. Talahama for their sobering remarks. On this special day, we also wish all Muslim communities around the world *Ramadan Kareem and Ramadan Mubarak*.

President,

The devastating consequences of the earthquake continue to reverberate in Syria. Six weeks on, we are still grappling with the tremendous loss of life, the destruction of thousands of homes, and the deadly consequences of the already frail, and crumbling, civilian infrastructure across the country.

While we commend the work of the United Nations and its agencies, we also recognise the need to increase the amount of aid that is provided to northwest Syria, and to make sure that it arrives where it is needed as quickly as possible. We take note of the concerns highlighted by the Commission of Inquiry on Syria.

President



Enormous needs remain. Without a major scaling up and greater support for the UN and humanitarian agencies in Syria, levels of avoidable mortality are bound to rise.

In this regard, Malta takes positive note of the increase in the number of trucks through Bab Al Salam in recent days.

Bab Al Hawa is where the overwhelming majority of trucks are crossing to date. This further underscores the enduring importance of the cross-border mechanism remaining open and operational. Additionally, we call on all parties to support and facilitate the flow of crossline aid from Damascus into the northwest and the northeast.

Malta was concerned to see reports of airstrikes targeting Aleppo airport on 7 March. We share the concerns of the UN's Resident Coordinator for Syria on the potential implications of such attacks on the humanitarian aid operation.

President

The Syrian conflict entered its 13<sup>th</sup> year this month. The reality is that no remaining actor or group can resolve this conflict alone. As years of destruction have demonstrated so vividly, there is no military solution to this conflict, but there are many areas where progress can be made in line with Security Council Resolution 2254, which remains the only viable path forward out of the current status quo.



For example, the transparent and verifiable release of those detained arbitrarily in Syria, as well as information on the whereabouts, the fate of the missing, and those forcibly displaced, is within the power of the parties. Such steps would result in a true political breakthrough. We urge the Syrian authorities to allow the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Syria and to establish a field presence in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Constitutional Committee reconvening and resuming its work in Geneva would equally send a positive signal. This includes the developing of policies and legislation to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all spheres of life and achieve gender equality, including through quotas and special measures.

Violence against women and girls remains pervasive. Malta calls on the Syrian Arab Republic and all parties to the conflict to strengthen the national child protection framework, and to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children. We again reiterate our call upon all parties, particularly the Syrian delegation, to engage constructively in the process.

As such, Malta remains supportive of a genuine Syrian-led and owned political process facilitated by the UN, with all key stakeholders working constructively and coherently for the people of Syria.



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Additionally, we emphasise that any and all returns of Syrian refugees and those internally displaced must be safe, legal, and voluntary in line with criteria set forth by UNHCR.

I conclude by highlighting our full support for the work of Special Envoy Pedersen and his Step-for-Step initiative. Now is the time to break the deadlock, pursue accountability, and move towards a just and lasting peace.

I thank you, President.