



Security Council Briefing on Syria (Political/Humanitarian), 27 April 2023

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

Thank you, and I also thank Special Envoy Pedersen and Director Doughten for their remarks today.

As we have just heard, the people of Syria continue to grapple with a multitude of complex humanitarian, protection, and political crises. Such levels of needs are a stark reminder of the urgent necessity for real, and just, political progress in Syria.

In the aftermath of the Türkiye-Syria earthquake in February, the immediate humanitarian needs have also given way to new, and compounded, protection needs. Examples of this can be found in the collective shelters which were rapidly established to support families who had lost their homes.

According to assessments carried out by UNHCR's Protection Sector in Syria, overcrowding, the limited availability of safe spaces, and adequate distribution of water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene supplies have increased exposure to gender-based violence. Respondents also reported acute psychological stress and trauma since the quakes, especially prevalent amongst children, who exhibit unusual levels of crying, sadness, nightmares, and fear of loud noises.



While understanding the grand scale of the needs present, we call on the UN and all its implementing partners to ensure adequate and appropriate shelter for women and children which account for their specific privacy and protection needs.

Within this unfolding tragedy we are dismayed, yet again, to hear of continued shelling and airstrikes in the northeast and northwest of Syria; attacks which have led to further civilian deaths. Malta was also gravely disturbed by the brutal murders of over 30 civilians in Hama province on 16 April attributed to Da'esh. This incident is yet another grim reminder of the dangers which ordinary civilians in Syria face on a daily basis.

Malta once again underscores the importance of rapid, safe, and unimpeded humanitarian access to all who need it in Syria; including those in Rukhban camp.

We are pleased to see the sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance through Bab Al Hawa, supported by the recently authorised crossings at Bab Al Salam and Al Ra'ee. It is essential that these crossings remain open, are renewed, and that the flow of the lifesaving and life-sustaining aid that passes through them remains free from impediments.

In this regard, we also express our desire to see an increase in the delivery of humanitarian assistance through the UN's crossline plan into the northeast and northwest. We regret that no missions to the northwest have



taken place since our last meeting. We call on the parties, and on those who have influence on them, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid through all modalities in Syria.

Despite more than a decade of war, no one group can resolve this conflict alone. Malta once again underscores the importance of political progress in Syria in line with UNSCR 2254. Such progress must include the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women. Credible, inclusive, and sustainable political transition is what is needed now more than ever. There is no military solution to this conflict.

We remain convinced that actions moving forward must also be rooted in the concept of a just peace.

In this regard, Malta reiterates its support for accountability and transitional justice based on due process when it comes to those who have committed grave violations of International Law.

We call again on the parties to reconvene work on the Constitutional Committee in Geneva. The millions of Syrians who seek and deserve peace must be placed at the centre of politics.

Information on the whereabouts and fate of the missing remains critical. It is within the power of the parties to meaningfully progress the transparent and verifiable release of those arbitrarily detained in Syria, and to give information on the whereabouts and fate of the missing. Such steps would



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help alleviate the pain and suffering felt by thousands of families desperate to know what has become of their loved ones.

To conclude, the people of Syria require simultaneous political progress and humanitarian certainty. We in this Council have a responsibility to do our part in supporting that, just as the parties on the ground have a responsibility to do theirs.

I thank you.