



## Security Council briefing on Syria (Political/Humanitarian), 30 May 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, Deputy Director Mudawi, and Ms. Aveline for their remarks today. Your testimonies are a sobering reminder of the attention we must continue to place on Syria.

As we have just heard from our briefers, the depth and scale of humanitarian needs throughout all areas of Syria is barely within comprehension. Millions of Syrian men, women, and children continue to suffer in this brutal conflict.

Meanwhile, the UN and its humanitarian partners continue to try to meet the staggering needs within Syria. They do this despite the modest resources allocated to them and the major challenges they face in this complex humanitarian emergency setting.

President

As we have said many times before, Syria is first and foremost a protection crisis. Half of Syria's population remains facing hunger with malnutrition rates on the rise. Over six-hundred thousand children under the age of five are already stunted, leaving them contending with irreversible physical and psychological damage.



Around fifty-five thousand people are stuck in the spiralling Al Hol camp in northeast Syria, with an estimated two-thirds of the camp's children under five years of age. Across all displacement camps, only half of pregnant women and new mothers have access to maternal health services and emergency care. 8.5 million people are in need for assistance for gender-based violence, and the so-called '*widow camps*' in the northwest are largely neglected and under the radar. With no clear plan or strategy in sight for rehabilitation, repatriations, and returns, we are witnessing a lost generation of women and children before our eyes.

Against this backdrop, Malta commends the work of the UN in reaching an agreement with the Syrian regime in Damascus to extend the humanitarian border crossing points at Bab Al Salam and Al Raei for another two months. We are also looking forward to the holding of the 7<sup>th</sup> Brussels Syria Conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region on 15 June, and hope that it will make a substantial contribution to address Syria's humanitarian needs.

As we move towards July, we hope that we can see agreement in this Council on the extension of the cross-border mechanism at Bab Al Hawa. The people of Syria, and the humanitarians who support them, need steady and predictable humanitarian access into and throughout the country.

President



A UN-facilitated political process, in line with Resolution 2254, is the only way forward, and we urge the reconvening of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva. Progress requires a multilateral, coordinated, and inclusive effort that also engages Syrian civil society and women peacebuilders. No single party can secure a political solution or achieve a just and lasting peace alone.

Meanwhile, this Council must not forget that millions of Syrian lives have been torn apart and changed forever by the actions of the Assad regime over the past twelve years. We must not forget their ongoing suffering. We must not forget the forcibly disappeared, nor those who remain arbitrarily detained.

In this respect, Malta supports the work of all mechanisms designed to pursue justice and accountability in Syria for the atrocities committed over the past decade. We take note of the Secretary-General's recommendation for the General Assembly to establish a new institution to address ongoing, arbitrary detention, missing persons and enforced disappearances.

As Syria enters a time of great change, this Council must be steadfast in support of the work of the Special Envoy and ensure that Syria's future does not look the same as its recent, fearful, and violent past.

Thank you, President.