



Security Council briefing on Syria (Political), 23 August 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Mr Darren Camilleri

Political Coordinator of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, Madame President, and I also thank Special Envoy Pedersen for his briefing. We commend your work, and that of your team, and share your concerns regarding the urgent need to make political progress. I also thank Ms. Alkanawati for enriching today's discussion with her insights and experiences.

Madame President,

The support and solidarity witnessed in the aftermath of the February earthquake must translate on the political track. Only a political solution can put an end to the suffering being endured by the Syrian population.

Resolution 2254 clearly outlines the only viable pathway for a political solution to the conflict. Malta remains supportive of the genuine Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process facilitated by the UN, with all key stakeholders working constructively and coherently for the people of Syria, as provided for in this Resolution.

We thank the Special Envoy for his unwavering commitment to its implementation and for his continued engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to try to find a way out of the current impasse.



Most relevant to advancing this stalled political process is through the resumption of the work of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva. The deadlock impacting this Committee is deeply regrettable, particularly as this remains the only format which convenes all parties together for dialogue.

We also stress that much greater investment is needed to support the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women, and to ensure that substantive gender equality remains a priority.

Similarly, Malta encourages sincere engagement between all stakeholders and the good offices of the Special Envoy when it comes to the *step-for-step* initiative. Efforts here must be reciprocal and verifiable, and a breakthrough here could have a substantial effect as a confidence-building measure.

Without a safe, calm environment on the ground in Syria, conditions will not be right for the safe, voluntary, and dignified returns of refugees and internally displaced persons to their area of origin. Refugees must be protected from refoulement. It is imperative that we see the urgently needed political will from both Damascus, as well as all key regional and international stakeholders present in Syria, to ensure that a nationwide ceasefire can take effect. Such action would facilitate the desperately needed confidence measures and allow real progress to be made.

One such confidence-building measure relates to establishing the fate of the detained, disappeared, and missing in Syria. Political will from all parties is



necessary in order to address this serious and urgent issue. Malta reaffirms its support for the newly established Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria, and urges that the implementation of its mandate is gender-responsive and survivor centered.

We also note the continued practice of arbitrary arrest, forced detention, torture and the recruitment of children into the military. Malta denounces such practices in the strongest terms, and calls for their immediate cessation. We urge Damascus to swiftly develop and adopt a comprehensive action plan to end and prevent such grave violations against children.

In conclusion, Madame President, we urge all parties to engage with the Special Envoy to ensure that the opportunities that arise from the renewed diplomatic attention to Syria are not wasted. We reiterate that stability in Syria and the region will only be achieved through a political solution, in line with Resolution 2254, that meets the aspirations of all Syrians.

I thank you.