



Security Council briefing on Syria (Political/Humanitarian), 25 April 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

I will now make a statement in my national capacity.

Let me begin by thanking Special Envoy Pedersen, Director Rajasingham, and Ms. Hayford for their remarks to the Council this morning.

The political, security, humanitarian, human rights, and economic spheres of Syrian affairs continue to stagnate or deteriorate.

Frequent and deadly attacks by ISIL have seen civilians once again targeted across Syria.

The persistent use of airstrikes and ground-based shelling in densely populated areas continues to kill and maim ordinary Syrians including children.



In response, humanitarian workers, and organisations like Malteser International, work to provide comfort, solace, and solidarity with the people of Syria. Malta commends all their incredible efforts.

The people of Syria, especially young boys and girls have known little justice or peace in their short lives.

We are moved by the stories shared by Ms. Hayford this morning. They represent the pain and anguish of millions who feel utterly abandoned by their governments, by this Council, and by the world.

This is evident in the lack of resourcing for the UN's humanitarian response plan in Syria. As we speak, programmes in health, water, sanitation, and hygiene are being scaled back.

Last month we heard of the suspension of the WHO's referral programmes in the North-West. The impact of this is not only limited to health, but to nutrition and education programmes across Syria.



With thanks to the great work of OCHA, and in coordination with Damascus and all other stakeholders to this conflict, humanitarians largely have the access they require but not the resources they need. Bridging this humanitarian gap is critical in providing the people of Syria with the support they require and deserve. [In this regard, we look forward to the outcomes of the upcoming Brussels conference on Syria in May.](#)

In this respect, we remain pleased to see the continued authorisation of the border crossing points at Bab Al Hawa, Bab Al Salam, and Al Rai. These must remain in place as long as the needs persist.

We also view the need for aid via all modalities, including that of crossline, as critical in this overall response. Early recovery, livelihoods and resilience programming will sustain communities while they await their long deserved just and lasting peace.



However, as we all know, there are no humanitarian solutions to humanitarian problems. In Syria the root causes of this fourteen-year conflict continue to remain unaddressed.

Malta remains deeply disappointed with Damascus for declining the bridging proposal of the Special Envoy to reconvene the small body of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva.

The reconvening of this Committee, alongside genuine engagement with the Special Envoy's Steps-For-Steps initiative, could yield meaningful political progress. An action which in turn could greatly reduce the political, security, humanitarian, human rights, and economic crises throughout the country.

There remains no prospect for a military solution to the Syrian conflict. Only advancement consistent with Resolution 2254 can yield the progress needed. Progress on the arbitrarily detained, the forcibly disappeared, and the missing is more critical than ever.



We are especially concerned of reports of continued arbitrary detention, torture, and sexual violence in places of detention across several parts of Syria.

This desperate practice should and must end. In this context, we welcome the essential investigative work done by the IIIM and look forward to the operationalisation of the independent institution on missing persons in Syria.

Today, the many parties to this conflict have once again heard what is required to protect the people of Syria.

Political progress in line with Resolution 2254, a nationwide ceasefire, and genuine engagement with the office of the Special Envoy on his Steps for Steps initiative.

Such actions can reinvigorate the prospects for peace. They can defuse regional tensions and restore the inherent dignity and futures of the Syrian people.



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