



Security Council briefing on Syria (Political/Humanitarian), 30 May 2024

Malta Statement delivered Darren Camilleri, Political Coordinator
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Thank you, President. Let me begin by thanking Special Envoy Pedersen and USG Martin Griffiths for their remarks.

On this occasion, Malta also sincerely thanks USG Griffiths for his exceptional leadership and principled approach to humanitarian action. It has been a guiding light for us all in these troubling times of global humanitarian need.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria continued unabated.

Hunger continues to stalk millions as we witness increased malnutrition in Homs, Hama, and Aleppo governorates, alongside water shortages in rural Aleppo.



The Syrian economy is in freefall and the value of the Syrian pound continues to crash. Inflation has eroded the modest purchasing power that few Syrians had to survive. The impact of the Red Sea crisis has driven up sea transportation costs, with goods now reaching Syria later and their prices higher than before.

These factors, and the 14 years of conflict in Syria, have also made the population more vulnerable to climate shocks. Heavy flooding in the winter months and drought in summer compound humanitarian needs. They erode the resilience of already fragile communities, and manifest in public health crises and outbreaks of communicable diseases such as cholera.

As Malta has noted on many occasions, Syria remains a grave protection crisis, with the impact of this protracted conflict being acutely felt by women, children, and older persons.



In the northwest, mounting security threats mean many emergency obstetric and newborn care facilities have suspended their services. Gender-based violence remains pervasive, and child marriage on the rise.

Within this context, Malta welcomes the extension of the border crossing points at Bab Al-Salam and Al-Rai earlier this month.

We reiterate, however, that all aid modalities must remain open for as long as they are required. Facilitating lifesaving humanitarian aid must never form part of political negotiations.

We must also see an expansion of crossline aid delivery, funding for early recovery, livelihoods and resilience programming, and overall greater resources for the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan for 2024.

As such, we welcome the outcome of the Brussels VIII conference, which concluded earlier this week, and the pledge of some 8.1bn USD in grants and loans for Syrians.



President

Turning to the political side, Malta commends the work of the Special Envoy in seeking to resume the Constitutional Committee. We remain deeply disappointed, however, by the lack of engagement from Damascus. The time has come to set aside differences over the venue, and to schedule and hold the next round of the Constitutional Committee. The status quo is untenable.

Verifiable, reciprocal, and meaningful Steps-For-Steps can break the political deadlock and spur progress. Making progress on the missing and those arbitrarily detained will showcase goodwill and a good faith effort to draw this conflict to a resolution.

Demonstrating progress in ensuring the protection and safety of returnees is also critical and paramount to creating the right conditions for safe, voluntary, and dignified refugee returns. The rights of Syrian refugees must be safeguarded.



Now, more than ever, it is essential to work towards advancing and implementing the political and humanitarian strategies required to place a floor under the suffering of the Syrian people; ensuring the millions in desperate need cannot fall any further.

After fourteen years of conflict, it is critical to resolve the root causes and issues of this conflict; firmly and faithfully.

As USG Griffiths just said, we cannot wait for the next cataclysm to come before the greater need of the Syrian people overcomes the current political deadlock. There is no more time to wait.

I thank you.