



Security Council briefing on Syria (Political/Humanitarian), 22 July 2024

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

Thank you, President, and I also thank Special Envoy Pedersen and OCHA's Director Rajasingham for their briefings.

Malta remains deeply concerned with the perilous situation in Syria.

Economic calamity, airstrikes, shelling, and the impacts of an unfunded humanitarian response are a stark reflection of the fragile situation Syrians face.

Furthermore, over the past month, we have witnessed renewed clashes and violence along the northwest border with Türkiye, and numerous incidents of civilians trapped in conflict in the northeast and south.

Against this backdrop, we welcome the decision brokered by the United Nations and Damascus for the re-authorisation of the Bab Al-Hawa crossing for an additional six months.

Bab Al Hawa continues to be a critical pipeline for allowing humanitarian assistance reach millions trapped in the northwest.



We again call for the authorisation and functioning of all crossings for as long as the humanitarian need persists. We reiterate our support for all aid modalities which deliver assistance via the most direct routes, including crossline.

While we are pleased to see an increase in the funding for the UN's humanitarian response plan, we regret that the response remains only 18.7 percent funded.

Greater resourcing is needed. This would ensure that attention is given to gender equality, early recovery, resilience, and livelihoods programming, to support sustained and dignified living for Syrians. Such action would have positive, compounding effects. It would help break the cycle of a perpetual emergency response.

President

The continued stalling of the resumption of the Constitutional Committee only widens the gap between Syria's crises and any semblance of a just and lasting peace.



Malta once again calls on the parties, especially Damascus, to return to the table in good faith for the future of the people of Syria. There is no alternative pathway towards credible and real progress than the one outlined in Resolution 2254.

Greater engagement with the Special Envoy and his good offices is vital in this regard, including faithful engagement on his steps-for-steps initiative. We urge that women's full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation is ensured at every stage of the political process.

We remain especially concerned by the continued high number of grave violations committed against children.

We urge all parties in Syria to meaningfully engage with the UN on ending and preventing such violations, and to abide by their obligations under international law.

President

A defining feature of the brutal conflict in Syria has been the issue of those missing, disappeared, and arbitrarily detained.



Progress and cooperation here would give closure to hundreds of thousands of grieving family members and indicate genuine will to account for crimes committed.

In this regard, Malta once more reiterates its support for the UN's Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria, and urges that its mandate is implemented in a gender-responsive and survivor centred manner.

For Syrian refugees who wish to return, we again state that all returns must be voluntary, safe, and dignified.

We are concerned about recent reports of forcible returns to Syria from the region and note the responsibility of Damascus to ensure the rights, safety, and security of all returnees are respected.

In closing, President, Malta emphasises once again that it is critical for all parties in this conflict, as well as their international backers, to find compromise. Leadership and vision are required to bridge the divide now more than ever.

Thank you.