



Security Council

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Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/654, submitted by Belgium and Germany, in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”. In accordance with the voting procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council dated 27 March 2020 (S/2020/253), a procedure agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the draft resolution received 13 votes in favour, two against (China and the Russian Federation), and no abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

Pursuant to the above-mentioned procedure, I enclose herewith copies of the related documents:

- My letter dated 6 July 2020, addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (see annex 1), putting to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/654 (see enclosure to annex 1);
- Letters received in reply from members of the Security Council indicating their national position on the draft resolution (see annexes 2 to 16);
- Statements subsequently submitted by Security Council members providing explanations of their votes (see annexes 17 to 22).

This letter and its annexes and enclosure will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Christoph Heusgen
President of the Security Council



Annex 1

Letter dated 6 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

In accordance with the procedure agreed upon by the members of the Security Council in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, and as set out in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to all members of the Council (S/2020/253), I would like to draw your attention to the following issue:

The members of the Council discussed the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”. The draft resolution has been put in blue (S/2020/654, see enclosure).

In my capacity as President of the Security Council, I hereby put the above-mentioned draft resolution to a vote. The non-extendable 24-hour voting period for the draft resolution will begin at 4.30 p.m. on Monday, 6 July 2020 and will expire at 4.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 7 July 2020.

Please submit your vote (in favour, against or abstention) on the draft resolution, as well as your possible explanation of vote, by sending a letter to the Director of the Security Council Affairs Division in the United Nations Secretariat (egian@un.org) signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d'affaires a.i. within the non-extendable 24-hour voting period set out above.

It is my intention to circulate a letter listing the outcome of the vote within three hours of the conclusion of the 24-hour voting period. I also intend to convene a video-teleconference of the Security Council to announce the outcome of the voting shortly after the conclusion of the voting period, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 7 July 2020.

(Signed) Christoph **Heusgen**
President of the Security Council

Enclosure

United Nations

S/2020/654

**Security Council**Provisional
6 July 2020

Original: English

Belgium and Germany: draft resolution*The Security Council,*

Recalling its resolutions 2042 (2012), 2043 (2012), 2118 (2013), 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2175 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2209 (2015), 2235 (2015), 2254 (2015), 2258 (2015), 2268 (2016), 2286 (2016), 2332 (2016), 2336 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and its Presidential Statements of 3 August 2011 (S/PRST/2011/16), 21 March 2012 (S/PRST/2012/6), 5 April 2012 (S/PRST/2012/10), 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), 24 April 2015 (S/PRST/2015/10), 17 August 2015 (S/PRST/2015/15), and 8 October 2019 (S/PRST/2019/12),

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Emphasizing that more than 11 million people in Syria require humanitarian assistance and that the cross-border mechanism remains an urgent and temporary solution to address the humanitarian needs of the population, which cannot be reached through existing operations within Syria,

Expressing grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Syria and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, recognising that the pandemic presents a profound challenge to Syria's health system, socio-economic and humanitarian situations, and *calling for* the provision of humanitarian assistance to all parts of Syria,

Recalling the guiding principles of Humanitarian Emergency assistance as set out in the GA resolution 46/182 and reiterating the need for all parties to respect and uphold the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance, emphasizing the importance of upholding the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, in the provision of humanitarian assistance and recalling also the importance of humanitarian deliveries reaching their intended beneficiaries,

Taking note of the Report of the Secretary-General on the review of alternative modalities for the border crossing of Al Yarubiyah (S/2020/139, of 21 February 2020), and *further taking note* of the Review of United Nations crossline and cross-border operations (S/2020/401), and *encouraging* the United Nations and their implementing partners to continue to take steps to scale up humanitarian deliveries throughout the country,

Taking note of efforts to improve cross-line deliveries of UN humanitarian assistance and *encouraging* all relevant parties to further promote, on the basis of United Nations assessments of need, immediate and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance, including cross-line,

Determining that the devastating humanitarian situation in Syria continues to constitute a threat to peace and security in the region,

Underscoring that Member States are obligated under Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations to accept and carry out the Council's decisions,

1. *Calls* upon all parties to ensure principled, sustained and improved humanitarian assistance to Syria;

2. *Reiterates* its demand that all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, immediately comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law as applicable and further demands the full and immediate implementation of all provisions of all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), and 2504 (2020) and recalls that some of the violations and abuses committed in Syria may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity;

3. *Decides* to renew the decisions in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), for a period of twelve months, that is, until 10 July 2021, excluding the border crossings of Al-Ramtha, and Al Yarubiyah;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in view also of the grave risk posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, to report to the Security Council no later than by the end of August 2020 on the impact of the pandemic on the need for and the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, to people in need throughout Syria, including in areas currently not under the control of the Syrian government, in particular in the Northeast of the country, through the most direct routes, and in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and on trends in cross-border and cross-line access;

5. *Further demands* that all parties allow safe, unimpeded and sustained access for United Nations' and their implementing partners' humanitarian convoys, including medical and surgical supplies, to all requested areas and populations according to United Nations' assessment of need in all parts of Syria;

6. *Reiterates* that the situation will continue to deteriorate further in the absence of a political solution to the Syrian conflict and recalls its demand for the full and immediate implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) to facilitate a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition, in accordance with the Geneva Communiqué as set forth in the ISSG Statements, in order to end the conflict in Syria and stresses again that the Syrian people will decide the future of Syria;

7. *Calls upon* United Nations humanitarian agencies to improve monitoring of the delivery and distribution of United Nations relief consignments and their delivery inside Syria and requests the Secretary-General to conduct, within six months of the adoption of this resolution, an independent written review of the United Nations humanitarian cross-line and cross-border operations, including recommendations on how to further strengthen the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism, in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need through the most direct routes, taking into account the views of relevant parties including the Syrian authorities, the relevant neighbouring countries of Syria and the United Nations Humanitarian Agencies and their implementing partners;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to brief the Council monthly and to provide a report on a regular basis, at least every 60 days, on the implementation of resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and this resolution and on compliance by all relevant parties in Syria and further requests the Secretary-General to continue to include in his reports overall trends in United Nations cross-line and cross-border humanitarian access and detailed information on the humanitarian assistance delivered through United Nations humanitarian cross-border operations as authorized by resolution 2165 (2014) and this resolution, including on the number of beneficiaries, locations of aid deliveries at district-level and the volume and nature of items delivered;

9. *Reaffirms* that it will take further measures under the Charter of the United Nations in the event of non-compliance with this resolution or resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), and 2504 (2020);

10. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

Annex 2

Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to the President of the Security Council's letter of 6 July relating to the draft resolution on the situation in the Middle East (S/2020/654).

In accordance with the procedure set forth for the adoption of resolutions under the current extraordinary circumstance caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, I am pleased to indicate that Belgium votes in favour of this draft resolution. At this stage, my delegation does not intend to deliver an explanation of vote.

(Signed) Marc **Pecsteen de Buytsverve**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

Annex 3**Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I thank you and your team for the continued strong support in facilitating the voting procedure.

Please be kindly informed that China votes against the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany (S/2020/654) in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”. Attached herewith is our explanation of vote.

(Signed) **Zhang Jun**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations

Annex 4

Letter dated 6 July 2020 from the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to your letter dated 6 July 2020 regarding Security Council draft resolution S/2020/654 in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”.

Upon instructions from my Government, the delegation of the Dominican Republic votes in favour of the above-mentioned draft resolution.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**
Ambassador

Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic

Annex 5**Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to inform you, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, that my delegation votes in favour of the Security Council draft resolution S/2020/654, in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” on Syria cross-border humanitarian aid.

(Signed) **Sven Jürgenson**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations

Annex 6

Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: French]

In reference to the letter dated 6 July from the President of the Security Council, requesting Council members to vote on the draft resolution on Syria cross-border humanitarian aid, under the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”, as submitted by Germany and Belgium and put in blue in document S/2020/654, France votes in favour.

(Signed) **Nicolas de Rivière**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

Annex 7**Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

It is my honour to write in response to the letter by the presidency of the Security Council dated 6 July 2020 initiating a written voting procedure, in line with the agreement reached between members of the Security Council.

The vote of the Federal Republic of Germany on the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”, as contained in document S/2020/654 is as follows:

The Federal Republic of Germany votes in favour of the above-mentioned draft resolution.

(Signed) **Christoph Heusgen**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

Annex 8

Letter dated 6 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing in reference to the letter dated 6 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, in his capacity as the President of the Security Council, regarding the draft resolution submitted under the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” (S/2020/654).

I hereby indicate that Indonesia votes in favour of the said draft resolution.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

Annex 9**Letter dated 6 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I am writing in response to the letter from the President of the Security Council dated 6 July 2020, calling on the members of the Council to express their votes on the draft resolution (S/2020/654), presented by Belgium and Germany under the item “The situation in the Middle East”.

In accordance with the agreed temporary procedures for the adoption of resolutions during the coronavirus disease pandemic restrictions, I have the honour to indicate that the Republic of the Niger decides to vote in favour of the said draft resolution.

(Signed) Abdou **Abarry**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations

Annex 10

Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 6 July 2020 on the beginning of the voting procedure in respect of the draft resolution in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” (S/2020/654).

In accordance with the procedure for the adoption of Security Council resolutions in place during the duration of the restrictions on movement in New York due to the coronavirus disease pandemic, outlined in a letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council (S/2020/253), I inform you that the Russian Federation votes against the draft resolution S/2020/654.

(Signed) Vassily **Nebenzia**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

Annex 11**Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to refer to the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany for the extension of the Syria cross-border mechanism.

In that respect, I wish to inform you that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines votes in favour of the above-mentioned draft resolution.

(Signed) Inga Rhonda **King**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations

Annex 12

Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to your letter dated 6 July 2020 regarding the draft resolution concerning “The situation in the Middle East”, contained in document S/2020/654.

The delegation of the Republic of South Africa votes in favour of the above-mentioned draft resolution.

(Signed) Jerry Matthews **Matjila**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa

Annex 13**Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

Further to the letter dated 6 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Germany, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, regarding the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”, as contained in document (S/2020/654), I would like to inform you that Tunisia votes in favour of the draft resolution.

(Signed) Kais **Kabtani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations

Annex 14

Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With reference to the letter from the President of the Security Council of 6 July, the United Kingdom votes in favour of the draft resolution in connection with the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East" (S/2020/654).

(Signed) Jonathan **Allen**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland to the United Nations

Annex 15**Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

On the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” (S/2020/654), the United States of America votes in favour.

(Signed) **Kelly Craft**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the United States of America
to the United Nations

Annex 16

Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In reference to the letter of the President of the Security Council of 6 July 2020 relating to the draft resolution in connection with the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, as contained in document S/2020/654, I would like to hereby inform you that Viet Nam has decided to vote in favour of the said draft resolution.

(Signed) **Dang Dinh Quy**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations

Annex 17**Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

[Original: English and Chinese]

China attaches great importance to the humanitarian situation in Syria and supports the international community and United Nations agencies in stepping up humanitarian relief for the Syrian people. China has been providing a wide range of assistance to Syria through bilateral and multilateral channels, including in the areas of food, medicine, education and public services, and played a positive role in improving the humanitarian situation on the ground. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), China has provided two batches of medical supplies to Syria and held video-conferences with Syrian health experts in an effort to help the Syrian Government and people fight the virus.

It must be pointed out that unilateral coercive measures have further aggravated the economic and humanitarian crisis in Syria. Years of illegal sanctions have had an immeasurable impact on the economic and social development of Syria, devastated livelihoods and brought untold suffering to innocent civilians. The unilateral coercive measures have also severely undermined Syria's capacity to respond to COVID-19. Secretary-General Guterres and Special Envoy Pedersen have repeatedly called on the relevant countries to lift unilateral coercive measures. To that end, China proposed amendments to the draft resolution (S/2020/654). It is disappointing that the draft resolution submitted by the co-penholders completely ignores China's amendments and does not contain a single word about unilateral coercive measures. China is compelled to vote against such an unobjective and unbalanced draft resolution.

As long as the unilateral coercive measures are not lifted, there will be no fundamental improvement in the humanitarian situation in Syria. Some country, while claiming to be concerned about the suffering of Syrian civilians, has imposed additional unilateral coercive measures on Syria, ruthlessly stifling the livelihoods of Syrian people. China once again calls on the Security Council to address this critical issue, and urges the relevant countries to immediately lift the unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria. We also request a comprehensive assessment by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the impact of unilateral coercive measures on the overall humanitarian situation in Syria, to be presented by the Secretary-General in a focused report to the Security Council.

China has repeatedly stated that the cross-border mechanism is merely an urgent and temporary arrangement. It is the primary responsibility of the Syrian Government to improve the humanitarian situation in the country, and its role is irreplaceable. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria must be respected. We take note of the recent progress in cross-line humanitarian operations in Syria. China encourages the relevant parties to step up their efforts to effectively remove obstacles to cross-line operations, give priority to the provision of humanitarian assistance from within Syrian territory and make corresponding adjustments to the cross-border mechanism.

Considering that there are still needs for cross-border humanitarian assistance in Syria, China does not object to retaining the cross-border mechanism at this stage. Meanwhile, cross-border operations should strictly follow the guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance set out in General Assembly resolution 46/182, strengthen monitoring and increase transparency to ensure impartiality, neutrality and credibility. Coordination with the Syrian Government must be enhanced to

prevent the use of crossing points for other purposes or diversion of relief supplies. China notes that there are still fundamental differences among Security Council members on the number of crossing points and the extension period. China hopes that members will reach consensus through consultations.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize that China has consistently advocated a holistic and comprehensive approach to the Syrian issue. The political, counter-terrorism, security and humanitarian aspects must be considered altogether. Ultimately, the differences among parties concerned on the humanitarian issues in Syria must be resolved by advancing the Syrian political process. We urge all parties to strengthen dialogue, increase mutual trust, respond positively to the Secretary-General's global ceasefire appeal and move towards a political solution to the Syrian issue.

Annex 18**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

The Russian delegation voted against the draft resolution on the extension of the cross-border mechanism of humanitarian aid delivery to Syria, presented by Belgium and Germany (S/2020/654).

Our position on the cross-border mechanism, established in 2014, is known and remains unchanged. It was established as an exceptional and temporary measure, approved by the Security Council to support the humanitarian relief activities in the war-torn country. It has to be gradually phased out and replaced by humanitarian deliveries, in accordance with the principles outlined in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

Over the past six years, the situation on the ground has changed. The territory beyond the control of the Government of Syria has reduced drastically.

However, we fully understand the need to meet the humanitarian needs of all Syrians.

Guided by that, we will introduce our own draft resolution, which extends the work of the cross-border mechanism for another six months and limits the number of crossing points to one, namely, Bab Al-Hawa. With the territory in Idlib controlled by terrorist groups reduced by 30 per cent, we are confident that this border crossing can meet all essential humanitarian needs of the population in that area. The cross-border point of Bab Al-Salam was providing only 14 per cent of the overall cross-border deliveries to Idlib.

At the same time, we call once again on all relevant actors, including the Syrian Government and United Nations humanitarian agencies, to engage in facilitating humanitarian deliveries to all parts of Syria by enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of cross-line supplies.

We also call on our partners in the Security Council and other United Nations Member States not to politicize the humanitarian file but to swiftly adopt our draft resolution to continue providing United Nations humanitarian assistance to the population of Idlib.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

Let me begin by reiterating South Africa's call for a cessation of all hostilities across Syria and for the safe, unimpeded and impartial delivery of humanitarian aid throughout the country and assistance to all who require it, no matter where they are.

My delegation also wishes to commend the United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and other aid organizations, as well as the donors, for the important work and contributions in respect of the provision of the humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria.

The prolonged conflict has left lasting effects throughout Syria and has left a permanent scar on its people. Children born in the last decade have known no peace. They have known only war and seen the devastation around them.

As we have seen from the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/576), the humanitarian situation in Syria remains dire, with women and children bearing the worst of the conflict and deteriorating humanitarian circumstances. South Africa is deeply concerned that the number of people throughout Syria who are now food insecure has reached 9.3 million in the past six months, the highest number ever recorded in Syria.

The spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) virus also remains a threat in Syria, with a significant increase in positive cases in the past month and the potential for a further increase in the coming months.

Preparedness and response planning are an essential component of any humanitarian response. This is even more critical in a situation where the health system is fragile and there are large groups of people staying in overcrowded spaces, such as refugees, internally displaced persons, the elderly and people with underlying health conditions, who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

We also furthermore note the dire economic situation in Syria resulting in rising food prices and increased food insecurity. This situation is further exacerbating the humanitarian situation in the country.

In that regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the unilateral sanctions imposed on Syria have had a further deteriorating impact on the economic and humanitarian situation in the country. The impact of the conflict is exacerbated by these measures, which has led to a further deterioration of the economy, thus affecting the livelihoods and food security of ordinary Syrians throughout the country. The intended impact of these sanctions, which surely is not to resolve the conflict, must be questioned. Measures adopted by the international community and individual Member States should be to save lives and improve the humanitarian situation, not lead to further hardship.

The Secretary-General has clearly stated in his report that

“[t]he provision of humanitarian assistance requires timely, safe, sustained and unimpeded access by the United Nations and all humanitarian partners to people in need across the Syrian Arab Republic” (S/2020/576, *para.* 28).

South Africa fully supports the Secretary-General in his call and will continue to advocate for the provision of humanitarian assistance to all Syrians in need through all available and direct means and modalities, including through cross-border and cross-line deliveries. We commend the United Nations, the World Health Organization and other aid organizations working with the Syrian Government for

the improvement in the facilitation of cross-line humanitarian assistance, while noting from the Secretary-General's report that cross-line assistance has to be bolstered by cross-border assistance.

It is for this reason that South Africa voted in favour of the draft resolution before us.

Finally, we wish to reiterate that the situation in Syria can be resolved only through negotiation and dialogue. We therefore call again on all parties to exert every effort towards the full implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) to further avoid the displacement of Syrians and loss of innocent lives.

Annex 20

Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen

The United Kingdom thanks the German and Belgian delegations for their unstinting and principled efforts to ensure that the United Nations and its humanitarian partners have what they have repeatedly told the Council they require in order to meet the needs of millions of people in Syria.

The United Kingdom remains committed to ensuring that aid in Syria reaches those who need it. We support strongly the text in the draft resolution to extend for a period of 12 months the two border crossings in north-western Syria. Millions of lives depend on this.

We therefore deeply regret that Russia and China have used their veto. In so doing, Russia and China have again put political calculations above the needs of the Syrian people and so politicized this humanitarian issue.

Today the Council has been unable to fulfil its responsibility to ensure that the humanitarian needs of millions of Syrians, the majority of them women and children, are met. The United Kingdom will continue to support the penholders to find a way through.

Annex 21

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft

Today the United States voted in favour of Belgium and Germany's draft resolution (S/2020/654) to renew the Security Council's authorization of the cross-border humanitarian lifeline into north-west Syria. In the midst of a global pandemic, that draft resolution would have made it possible for the United Nations and its implementing partners to continue to provide life-saving humanitarian aid through the Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al-Salam border crossings in north-west Syria, reaching nearly 3 million people over the next year.

Although the draft resolution falls short of meeting the needs of the millions of Syrian people who rely on humanitarian assistance, the United States supported it because we will not play a game of dangerous brinkmanship at the behest of Russia and at the expense of Syrian lives. Had it been adopted, the draft resolution would have provided reassurance to the Syrian people, who rely on United Nations cross-border shipments for food, shelter and medicine to ensure that they will not go hungry for the next year, that they will have tents and blankets to protect them against the summer heat or the winter cold, and that they will have immunizations for infants and support for those fighting the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In short, it would have saved lives.

We vote today with the overwhelming majority of Council members to take a principled humanitarian stand in support of the impartial, apolitical and needs-based recommendation of the United Nations to the Council to reauthorize the existing cross-border mechanism — two crossings in the north-west — for 12 months. This is, more importantly, a vote for the Syrian people in Idlib, Azaz, Tel Rifaat and throughout north-western Syria, people who have reason to expect that the Security Council will act in the interests of innocent civilians.

Unfortunately, the Council failed the Syrian people today. Through their vetoes today, Russia and China have chosen to ignore the facts on the ground and to disregard the call for collective Council action to respond to the worsening humanitarian crisis in Syria. On numerous occasions over the past several months, the Council has received actionable information from trusted, credible and impartial sources — including the Secretary-General — who have described in great and tragic detail the severity of the humanitarian situation in Syria and the insufficiency of cross-line assistance to meet the needs of the Syrian people.

To be clear, there is no alternative to the United Nations cross-border operations through the Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al-Salam crossing points. In paragraph 38 of his second report mandated under resolution 2504 (2020), dated 14 May 2020 (S/2020/401), Secretary-General Guterres writes on the north-west that it is

“simply impossible to replicate with cross-line assistance what is being delivered through the cross-border operation” (S/2020/401, *para.* 38).

The report further notes that this response

“must entail a renewal of the cross-border authorization for the use of Bab Al-Salam and Bab Al-Hawa border crossings for an additional 12 months” (*ibid.*).

As Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock noted in his remarks before the Council just last week (see S/2020/635), cross-border assistance into north-west Syria provides a critical lifeline for 2.8 million of the most vulnerable people in all of Syria. The Under-Secretary-General rightly called for cross-border assistance

to be scaled up and noted that a failure to renew the resolution would undoubtedly cause suffering and death.

There is no justification for Russia's and China's vetoes today, and this action cannot be spun into false choices between humanitarian aid, sovereignty and sanctions. Put simply, rather than voting to save the lives of the Syrian people, Russia and China voted today to save Al-Assad. We should all be saddened, outraged and more determined than ever to hold Russia and China accountable as an accomplice to Al-Assad's reign of death and destruction.

The United States fundamentally believes that this draft resolution actually did not go far enough. A temporary reauthorization of the Al-Yarubiyah border crossing in the north-east is warranted, but this was a principled compromise in the light of Russia's politically motivated rejection of any consideration of reopening Al-Yarubiyah.

The United States remains committed to helping the voiceless, the hungry, the displaced and the orphaned receive the humanitarian aid that they require to survive. As the largest humanitarian donor in the world, the United States has provided more than \$11.3 billion to displaced and conflict-affected Syrians in Syria and the region. During the COVID-19 crisis, the United States has been working tirelessly with partners on the ground to combat the virus. We are proud of our principled stance to help every Syrian in need, regardless of location or affiliation.

Just this morning, I had the opportunity to speak with a brave and bright young woman in Idlib, who shared with me the story of her family and articulated the real human costs on the ground of failing to renew access to these border crossings. I promised her that I would carry her with me into this vote in the Council today and that I would carry her voice, her story and her family's story with me.

I hope that my Council colleagues remember that this vote is not just a bureaucratic procedure to be filed away but that there are millions of families and lives counting on our action. We have a moral obligation to ensure that our actions here today spare these lives. And to repeat — we have failed them.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

The delegation of Viet Nam would like to express its profound disappointment at the fact that the Security Council has been unable to adopt a draft resolution renewing the cross-border humanitarian assistance mechanism for Syria. It is our strong belief that discussion on the renewal should continue in the next few days to find an optimal solution for supporting the most vulnerable population.

Viet Nam voted in favour of the two draft resolutions contained in documents S/2020/654 and S/2020/658, bearing in mind the critical need to maintain the life-saving humanitarian operations in Syria. It is crystal-clear to us that the continuation of this mechanism must be ensured in order to respond to the considerable humanitarian needs on the ground at this time.

The humanitarian situation in Syria is alarming, especially when it is being further aggravated by the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the exceptionally severe economic crisis. The gravity of the situation now continues to prove the need for enhancing the humanitarian response.

As the lives of millions of people are at stake, we would like to emphasize that Council members cannot afford to be in disaccord. This requires constant efforts by all parties to find a way out of this current impasse through genuine dialogue and extensive consultations focusing solely on humanitarian aspects.

My delegation supports the efforts of the international community in providing humanitarian assistance to people across Syria and will continue to engage actively towards that common noble goal. Without a doubt, it is of the utmost importance that the Security Council show unity in supporting people in need. The Syrians and the international community expect nothing less from us.
