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Seventy-seventh year

Provisional

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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Zhang Jun/Geng Shuang	(China)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	Gabon	Mr. Biang
	Ghana	Mr. Issahaku
	India	Mrs. Kamboj
	Ireland	Mr. Mythen
	Kenya	Ms. Muigai
	Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
	Norway	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Alhefeiti
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America	Mr. Mills

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022) (S/2022/635)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to extend, on behalf of the Council, a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Fergal Tomas Mythen. We look forward to collaborating closely with him and wish him every success.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022) (S/2022/635)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Geir Pedersen, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, and Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2022/635, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022).

I now give the floor to Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Let me start by informing the Security Council that Deputy Special Envoy Najat

Rochdi joined my team this month and hit the ground running. I look forward to working closely with her.

Since early 2020, I have stressed that the front lines have been frozen, and I have noted that this relative calm provided a window of opportunity to build a credible political process. However, that opportunity has so far not been seized, and I am worried that, in recent months, we have seen troubling signs of a military escalation along several axes. This month alone saw an increase in strikes attributed to a wide range of actors.

On 11 August, the Syrian Democratic Forces publicly acknowledged killing Turkish soldiers on the border, inside Turkish territory, stating that the strikes were in response to an escalation in Turkish drone and artillery strikes. Türkiye has reiterated its security concerns and made renewed statements threatening further military intervention inside Syria.

Syrian State media said that the Government carried out strikes on Turkish and armed opposition sites inside Syria in response to what it said were Turkish strikes, on 16 August, that targeted and killed Syrian Government soldiers near Ayn Al-Arab. Strikes on Al-Hasakah on 18 August, caused civilian casualties, including women and children.

On 19 August, strikes hit a crowded market in Al-Bab, causing significant civilian casualties, including women and children. And on 22 August, there were reports of a round of pro-Government air strikes in Idlib, with ongoing mortar, rocket and artillery exchanges across front lines, causing an increase in civilian casualties.

On 23 and 24 August, United States strikes targeted what the United States said were Iranian-backed groups and their infrastructure in Dayr Al-Zawr, in what it said was a response to two attacks on sites where United States forces are present in Al-Tanf and Dayr Al-Zawr.

August saw further air strikes in Tartus, Damascus and Hama, which Syrian State media attributed to Israel and said hit several Syrian Government soldiers. Meanwhile, there was an escalation in the south-west, including tit-for-tat security incidents, a Syrian Government offensive in Tafas and infighting in As-Suwayda. Moreover, listed terrorist groups continue to launch attacks on Government forces, the Syrian Democratic Forces and others.

Those are just some of the recent incidents of particular note. I am concerned about the possibility

that an escalatory cycle could see events further unravel, with civilians continuing to pay an already immense price. International peace and security will be at risk, given the international nature of many of the latest clashes. I have noted the various diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation. I hope that those various efforts can be united to restore calm across Syria with a view to achieving a nationwide ceasefire, something that we will underline to the International Syria Support Group's ceasefire task force participants here in Geneva. Of course, a ceasefire would also require parallel efforts to address the extensive presence of listed terrorist groups in a cooperative manner and in accordance with international law so as to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the members of the International Syria Support Group's humanitarian task force here in Geneva were extensively briefed on Friday on the action needed to support humanitarian priorities on the ground. That is more relevant than ever, given that military escalation will only increase needs and inhibit humanitarian access. I should also note that the continued support of all members of the Council for the implementation of all aspects of resolution 2642 (2022) is important via all modalities, whether cross-border or cross-line, and with support for early recovery. Let me remind members that any humanitarian effects of sanctions that could exacerbate the plight of ordinary Syrians have to be avoided and mitigated, particularly in terms of overcompliance.

We need a political process that moves steadily forward, and at the moment we do not have that. In closed consultations last month, I briefed the Council in detail on why plans for a ninth session of the small body of the Constitutional Committee are temporarily on hold. In Moscow last week, I met with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, who assured me that Russia remains focused on Syria and expressed support for advancing the work of the Constitutional Committee. We agreed to continue discussions to resolve issues that are preventing the holding of a ninth session. I also had direct communications from Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian, as well as interactions with senior officials from Türkiye. I appreciate their engagement and it is my hope that the Committee will soon be able to reconvene in Geneva. But let us be frank. The key challenge facing the Committee is not the delay but the lack of progress on substance. I reiterated my appeal to Mr. Lavrov and to the Foreign Ministers of Iran and

Türkiye ahead of the Astana format summit held in Tehran on 19 July to support the co-Chairs in ensuring political will, a faster pace and better working methods. That is how the Committee could become credible, and how it could fulfil its mandate and open the door to a wider political process.

We also need to move on the broader process on the many other aspects of resolution 2254 (2015). A series of step-for-step confidence-building measures could help unlock progress and build a safer, calmer and more neutral environment if done with precision and in a coordinated manner within the framework of the United Nations process.

I have nothing new to report to the Council on the Syrian presidential amnesty decree of 30 April. I look forward to further engagement with the Syrian Government on that decree and on other areas for confidence-building measures that I have raised with it. I have continued to work with outside players to be ready to meet real steps with real steps. I appeal to the Syrian Government not to miss this opportunity to make progress via its own sovereign moves. That was also my message in Moscow to Mr. Lavrov, who took note of the initiative.

I would like to add a note on the critical issue of missing persons — an enduring source of suffering for tens of thousands of individuals from all over Syria who remain arbitrarily detained, abducted or forcibly disappeared. Their families have the right to know the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones. The Secretary-General will shortly release a study commissioned by the General Assembly that points a way forward by proposing pathways to fulfil the right of families to know the truth. I also want to inform the Council that we are convening the Women's Advisory Board in Switzerland this week. Its members continue to present insightful analyses and remind us of the vital role that women play in preserving the resilience of Syrian society. The Civil Society Support room also continues its valuable work, with meetings planned soon for two new thematic working groups so that the spectrum of Syrian experts can make substantive contributions to the political process.

We clearly face mounting challenges in implementing resolution 2254 (2015). I regret that we have not taken advantage of what has been more than two years of relative calm to advance the process further. We need relative calm to be restored and we

need to work towards a nationwide ceasefire. We will continue to work intensely to resolve issues and resume the Constitutional Committee in Geneva and we will continue to look for opportunities for step-for-step confidence-building measures while paying special attention to the file of those detained, those abducted and those missing. But we have to be honest about the mismatch between the scale of our collective political efforts and that of the challenge at hand. The degree of fragmentation in Syria, the region and internationally, as well as a lack of trust and will, are preventing us from doing what needs to be done, which is addressing the conflict in a comprehensive manner with serious compromises and investment involving all players. I will continue to remind the Council that this is the only way to avoid another dangerous collapse. It is the only way to reunite and repair a fragmented country and people in order to genuinely restore Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, end the displacement crisis and enable the Syrian people to chart their own future.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Pedersen for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Msuya.

Ms. Msuya: To echo Special Envoy Pedersen, I am also deeply alarmed by the recent increase in violence in northern Syria, including in the northern Aleppo countryside and north-eastern Syria. Drone strikes and shelling have resulted in civilian casualties. An attack in Al-Hasakah on 18 August claimed the lives of four civilian women and girls, and an attack on a market in Al-Bab city on 19 August reportedly killed 13 civilians, including four boys and one girl. The lives of those Syrian children were wiped out or forever altered.

Violence breeds the fear of more violence, and both make people flee. As we hear repeated statements and read reports about preparations for a possible military operation in northern Syria, displacement is already happening.

Violence also impedes our ability to operate. The cross-line mission to Ras Al-Ayn was postponed due to increased hostilities, despite all of the necessary approvals and preparation. Once again, I would like to remind all parties to the conflict that international humanitarian law requires them to respect civilians and civilian objects and to take constant care to spare them throughout their military operations. I strongly appeal

to the members of the Council to ensure respect for the rules of war and accountability for serious violations.

This year alone, at least 26 murders have been reported at Al-Hol camp, including those of 20 women, and we continue to receive reports of sexual violence, some perpetrated by the camp's guards. In addition, humanitarian partners have reported an increase in sexual exploitation cases. If hostilities escalate in northern Syria, it is likely that there will be a negative impact on the protection of people in Al-Hol camp, where the security situation is already extremely dire. Security challenges in the camp may further compromise the grim situation, and women and girls especially will be at even greater risk.

Humanitarian organizations' movements to the camp and to neighbouring areas could be farther restricted, thereby disrupting emergency and essential services. Al-Hol residents and the humanitarian partners working to assist them need more protection, safety and security. Let me once again call on all Member States involved to take urgent action and fulfil their responsibility to repatriate their citizens through all available routes.

Opportunities for durable solutions for the people in Al-Hol exist. For example, on 12 August, the Government of Iraq repatriated 151 families, mainly female-headed households and highly vulnerable people, to Jeddah 1 camp in Nineveh governorate, and 73 internally displaced families left Al-Hol on 14 August, to return to various areas in Syria's Deir ez-Zor.

Syria's economic crisis continues to affect civilians across the country. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reported that last month's wheat harvest in Syria was one of the lowest on record and the second failed wheat harvest in two years. Fuel shortages and radically reduced access to electricity have a crippling effect on the population, while eroding livelihood opportunities and severely limiting access to essential services. That is exacerbated by the water crisis across the country, which affects access to sufficient and safe drinking water and irrigation, as well as to water to produce food and generate power.

As always, the economic crisis disproportionately affects women, girls, boys and people with disabilities, particularly their mobility and access to basic services, including to reproductive health and protection services.

The United Nations continues to promote more funding for early recovery and resilience. At least 26 per cent of the overall request for humanitarian assistance in Syria aims to implement early-recovery and resilience programmes. That is critical to enabling Syrians to rebuild their lives with dignity. At least 228 projects have received \$333 million to implement early-recovery and resilience activities, representing 30 per cent of the funds requested. Furthermore, at least 51 of those projects contribute to providing electricity to support basic services, including water and sanitation, nutrition, health and education.

It is worth noting here that overall funding to Syria's humanitarian response plan currently stands at only 24 per cent of the requested funds. The biggest challenge for aid agencies right now is funding. As needs increase and will further increase as winter approaches, I would like to call for greater solidarity and increased humanitarian funding from the international community, especially for early-recovery and livelihood programmes.

Funding for mine action programmes, especially clearance, is critical. Progress has been made. Since December, more than 1 million square metres of agricultural land have been cleared in rural Damascus. Increased funding to scale up such programmes is needed.

Let me turn to an update on humanitarian access. The United Nations continues to do everything in its power to make progress on cross-line assistance to all parts of Syria. In the north-west, the sixth cross-line mission to Sarmada, in Idlib governorate, was completed on 4 and 5 August. I urge all parties concerned to expand those operations by allowing multiple cross-line convoys each month and increasing the number of trucks in each convoy.

The United Nations and partners still do not have humanitarian access to people in Rukban. We remain deeply concerned about those people, as they have limited access to essential food items, water, health care and other basic services. We remain committed to reaching those people, but need full access to assess their humanitarian needs and provide regular humanitarian assistance. We also need the necessary access and security conditions to support people who wish to leave the camp in a principled, voluntary and informed manner. The humanitarian community is planning a multisectoral response that includes

vaccinations. I call on all parties to support that plan and facilitate immediate humanitarian access and assistance to people in the camp.

Late last month, I visited Gaziantep and Hatay in Türkiye to review the cross-border humanitarian response in the light of resolution 2642 (2022). I witnessed the large scale of the operation and the high level of scrutiny applied. I also heard from affected women in Idlib about the dismal humanitarian conditions in north-western Syria. They told me that they need support to get back on their feet — what we technically call early-recovery programmes — and that they need better access to education for their children.

Over the coming months, the United Nations will do its utmost to facilitate the implementation of all aspects of resolution 2642 (2022). However, to make that happen, we need the support of all parties. We need meaningful resources and sustained, regular and predictable access.

I am very concerned about the irreversible damage caused by chronic underfunding. It could compromise life-saving assistance and curtail investments in livelihoods and essential services. Lack of funding comes with severe consequences, including more dropouts from school, higher malnutrition rates and fewer protection interventions. If we do not act now, a generation of Syrian children may be lost. It is critical that the Council share responsibility for humanitarian life-saving work in Syria. I also want to remind all parties of their obligation to facilitate rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to all civilians in need across Syria. I call on all the parties to facilitate access across all response modalities so that assistance can reach those in need.

That brings me to my last point. While we need the Security Council's support today, we will need it even more in the coming months, as winter approaches and our response shifts gears. We know that the Syrian winter will bring more hardship, and we remain determined to assist people everywhere we can. We count on the support of the Council to stay the course.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Msuya for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Special Envoy Pedersen and Assistant Secretary-

General Msuya for their briefings today. Their reports about the lack of progress in addressing the Syrian political situation, as envisioned in resolution 2254 (2015), and the further deteriorating humanitarian crisis should obligate the Security Council to come together in order to hold the Al-Assad regime accountable for the decade of war that it has waged and its ongoing violations of international law. Yet Council unity on Syria is impossible because one member is repeatedly putting its narrow interests and those of the Al-Assad regime ahead of peace, stability and Syrians' ever-growing humanitarian needs. The United States remains concerned about the unfounded and unnecessary delays in advancing the Constitutional Committee's process, and we call for an immediate resumption of the Committee's work. Delays prolong and increase the suffering of the Syrian people through no fault of their own. Russia has repeatedly told the Council that the political process in Syria must be Syrian-owned and Syrian-led. We agree. Yet Russia is not practicing what it preaches, because it is holding up the Constitutional Committee owing to its own bilateral concerns that have nothing to do with Syria.

Furthermore, the United States would like to remind the Council and the Al-Assad regime that there is more to resolution 2254 (2015) than just the work of the Constitutional Committee. The regime should also be pursuing a nationwide ceasefire and securing the release of all arbitrarily detained persons in an organized and humane manner. If the Syrian regime is serious about a political settlement, the United States and the international community need to see concrete steps to demonstrate that Syria is following through on its announcement of amnesty, for example, by announcing where and under what conditions it has released individuals from prison or by issuing lists of names of individuals released and granted amnesty. Those important tasks should continue regardless of the status of the Constitutional Committee, and we urge the Al-Assad regime to make progress on them immediately.

The Special Envoy mentioned the United States air strikes last week. As we stated in a letter to the Council dated 26 August, on 24 August the United States undertook precision strikes against a facility in eastern Syria — a facility used by militia groups affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. That action was in response to armed attacks against the United States and was taken in the exercise of the United States'

inherent right to self-defence, as reflected in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. On 15 August, Iran-backed militia groups had attacked United States forces at two locations in Syria. Those attacks followed a series of attacks by Iran-backed militia groups on United States forces and facilities in Iraq and Syria throughout 2022 and even before that, and all of which have threatened the lives of United States and coalition personnel. The United States military action was taken to protect and defend the safety of its personnel, degrade and disrupt the ongoing series of attacks against the United States and its partners and deter the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iran-backed militia groups from conducting or supporting further attacks on United States personnel or facilities.

The United States also calls for immediate de-escalation in northern Syria. We remind all the parties that they have an interest in stability and security. We remain deeply concerned about the destabilizing impact that military activity has on the region, including the mass displacement of civilians, as well as on our efforts to ensure the enduring defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham.

As we seek to build peace in Syria, it is as important as ever that we work to implement resolution 2254 (2015) in an authentic and enduring way. We urge all members of the Council, as well as the Al-Assad regime, to work diligently to implement those important steps and make progress towards peace, as well as to facilitate humanitarian access to the Syrian people, including through the cross-border mechanism that we authorized in resolution 2642 (2022). So far this fiscal year, the United States has given nearly \$900 million in humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, with nearly \$15 billion given since the start of the crisis. Our humanitarian aid includes early-recovery programmes across the whole of Syria. Those programmes help Syrians access livelihoods and basic services, thereby reducing their dependence on external aid. The United States has long supported early recovery efforts across all parts of Syria, but we remain opposed to reconstruction in regime areas without authentic and enduring progress towards a political solution.

There was broad support within the Council or a full 12-month reauthorization of life-saving aid through the renewal of the vital cross-border mechanism. Yet thanks to Russia's obstruction and its imposition of a truncated six-month duration, Syrian families and humanitarians are already fearing what January may

bring. They are stockpiling for the upcoming harsh winter and worried that aid may be cut off just as the cold and the snow descend. The United States welcomed the 14 truckloads of cross-line aid that moved from Aleppo to Idlib on 4 August, just as we welcome the more than 800 truckloads of aid moving through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing into Syria every month. The United States supports humanitarian access to all Syrians in need through all modalities. The Al-Assad regime and Russia cannot say the same. The regime and its Russian backers continue to block cross-line aid when it suits their cynical aims, including aid to the people of Tal Abyad, Ras Al-Ayn and Rukban. They continue to prevent baby formula and medicine from reaching the people of north-eastern Syria and to impede humanitarian access and independent monitoring in areas under regime control. Why else would the regime in Russia wish to end United Nations cross-border aid if not to subjugate the people of north-western Syria in the same way?

In conclusion, the cross-border mechanism provides a critical lifeline of assistance. We urge all Security Council members to support and strengthen humanitarian access, both cross-line and cross-border. Ultimately, we reiterate that the only way to end the dire humanitarian crisis is through a credible, inclusive political process, as described in resolution 2254 (2015).

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Geir Pedersen and Ms. Joyce Msuya for their overview of the political and humanitarian situation in Syria.

We are convinced that long-term stability and security on Syrian soil can be established only through the full restoration of the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and an end to the illegal foreign military presence.

In that regard, we strongly condemn the ongoing air strikes carried out by the Israeli Air Force against various targets in Syria. This month alone, the Syrian port of Tartus has been subject to numerous Israeli strikes, which have resulted in the deaths of Syrian soldiers. The occupation of parts of Syria and United States strikes on its territory are other such violations. The most recent egregious incidents took place last week. The United States openly acknowledged that by issuing a letter to the Security Council to that effect. Such wrongful and irresponsible actions are a gross

violation of the fundamental norms of international law and must be stopped.

In addition, the threats to security in Syria and the entire region are related to the persistence of large pockets of terrorists that have taken refuge in territories outside the control of Damascus — in Idlib, Deir ez-Zor and Al-Tanf.

Against that background, progress on the Syrian political track is especially needed now. In that context, we held extensive consultations in Moscow with Mr. Pedersen, during which we confirmed the need for continuing direct intra-Syrian dialogue, with the support of the United Nations and within the framework of resolution 2254 (2015). We are interested in progress on the Syrian peace process on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the decisions adopted at the 2018 Syrian National Dialogue Congress, held in Sochi. It is critical that the Constitutional Committee meet regularly and, most important, in optimal conditions. That is not a bilateral issue, as our American colleague suggested. We will continue to facilitate the work of the Constitutional Committee so that the Syrians themselves, without external interference, can reach agreement on constitutional reform.

In that context, we would like to note the importance of the Astana format, which has proved its role as the most effective international mechanism for assisting in achieving long-term normalization in Syria. We expect to hold another meeting of the format in Nur-Sultan before the end of the year.

As for the humanitarian dimension, we note that the United Nations is beginning to recognize the destructive effects of illegal Western sanctions on the development of the Syrian economy and stress the rapidly deteriorating food security of the country. I am referring to the latest joint report of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme, entitled *Hunger Hotspots*. The United Nations information about this year's record-low wheat harvest in Syria is alarming. There is no need to explain the importance of bread products in the diet of Arab countries.

In that context, we would also like to draw attention to the report entitled *Syrian Arab Republic: Access to Electricity and Humanitarian Needs*, which also lists sanctions among the factors preventing the restoration of electricity in Syria. Given that resolution 2642 (2022) expanded the scope of recovery projects to include

the provision of sustainable electricity to critical infrastructure, maintaining sanctions would undermine the Organization's efforts to fulfil its humanitarian mandate. We believe that no one wants that.

It is clear that, without a radical solution to the urgent issue of sanctions against Damascus, we risk seeing, in the near future, the tragic consequences of the ill-conceived steps taken by Western States supposedly defending so-called liberal values. Against that background, the demonstrative humanitarian concessions for areas outside the control of Damascus and the ongoing looting by the United States of Syria's agricultural and oil resources are even more shocking. We see that as an attempt to maintain the fragmentation of the country.

As for cross-line humanitarian deliveries, we must agree with the Secretary-General on the importance of stepping up such efforts in the context of Idlib. After all, as stated in his report (S/2022/635), similar deliveries to Deir ez-Zor have continued over the past two years. It means that, where there is good faith among the parties, supplying all regions of Syria through intra-Syrian routes is possible. That became fully evident after the closure of the Al-Yarubiyah border crossing, despite the tales we heard from our Western colleagues about the supposedly tragic consequences of such a step. Experience shows the opposite.

We continue to look forward to tangible progress here in the coming six months. However, the information we are receiving that Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham fighters are once again threatening to not allow Syrian students to leave the Idlib de-escalation zone to continue their studies at universities in Government-controlled territory raises fears that the terrorists will obstruct humanitarian workers as well. We call on all sides to do their part to ensure that the efforts of the United Nations to establish stable humanitarian deliveries to Sarmada are not undermined. The United States representative today frightened us with the prospect of ending cross-border aid. I would like to say to him that, if our Western colleagues faithfully implement the agreements of the resolution on the extension of cross-border assistance, they need not worry about extending it.

We have high hopes for the first round of informal interactive dialogue, to be held in September, and look forward to a frank and non-politicized discussion and substantive input from the United Nations. We noted with interest the update on early-recovery projects

in the Secretary-General's report. As compared to the previous reporting period, the number of donor-funded early-recovery projects has increased from 133 to 288. We would like to discuss that issue in detail in September.

We also believe that it is important to have a substantive discussion on the situation of Syrian refugees. They have become a heavy burden for host countries, which are forced, among other things, to tolerate the presence on their territory of former White Helmets, who have been recognized as radicals even in the West and whose Western patrons in the United States and Canada, despite earlier assurances, have in the end refused to take them in because their involvement in terrorism is too obvious.

Mr. Mythen (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for your warm welcome this morning. I am honoured to join everyone here at this table and look forward to working with them in the coming months in order to advance the vital work of the Security Council.

I deliver this statement today on behalf of Norway and Ireland as co-penholders on the Syria humanitarian file. I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for her briefing today. As ever, the severe need of those on the ground is clear.

Humanitarian needs are at their highest levels, and civilians continue to suffer due to armed conflict and violence. Eighty-seven civilians, including 25 children, died between 1 June and 25 July as a result of hostilities.

It is deeply disturbing that many of the attacks resulting in those deaths appeared to target civilians or to take place near locations of a civilian character. We call on all parties to comply with international humanitarian law, including the prohibition on indiscriminate attacks and the obligation to take all feasible precautions to avoid harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

We commend the United Nations and its partners for their considerable work across all 14 governorates, in a challenging humanitarian landscape. We welcome progress on early recovery and the commitment shown to continue in that regard, including the 51 projects that contribute to the provision of electricity to support basic services. Almost 1.7 million people benefited directly or indirectly from early-recovery and resilience efforts in June and July. That important work must continue.

As co-penholders, Ireland and Norway strongly support the use of all modalities to deliver aid to the millions of Syrians in desperate need. We welcome the completion of the sixth cross-line delivery, earlier this month. We encourage continued progress on cross-line missions and again commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other United Nations agencies for their significant efforts in that regard. We reiterate the call for all parties to support cross-line deliveries, including by providing timely security guarantees.

Soaring food prices magnified by global inflation rates and the economic crisis have exacerbated food insecurity. It is extremely concerning that the World Food Programme has been forced to reduce rations to less than 1,200 calories per person in north-western Syria and to below 1,000 calories in other areas. Increased funding is urgent, not only to expand the vital work of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, but to maintain the life-saving assistance currently in place.

Soaring heat and critically low water supply are placing lives at risk. Civilian access to water is curtailed in numerous areas, and a lack of irrigation is threatening crop production as well as seeds for next year's yield, exacerbating already significant food insecurity. We knew that this season would come, just as we know that winter will present further fatal challenges.

While resolution 2642 (2022) allows the vital work of the cross-border mechanism to continue for six months, it is imperative that the Security Council confirms the decision to further extend its mandate. The cross-border mechanism remains a critical, irreplaceable lifeline for millions.

As co-penholders, Norway and Ireland will continue to be guided by the deep humanitarian needs of the people of Syria. The Council must work together, with the addressing of these needs as our focus.

I will now focus on the political situation and make a statement in my national capacity. First, I wish to thank Special Envoy Pedersen for his briefing.

Ireland is seriously concerned about the continuing escalation of hostilities in northern Syria. We are appalled by the attack in Al-Hasakah on 18 August that killed four women and girls, and injured 11 others, and the attack on 19 August on a busy market in Al-Bab city

that killed at least 13 civilians, including four boys and one girl, and injured dozens of others.

Ireland unequivocally condemns deliberate attacks on civilians and the civilian harm resulting from indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. International humanitarian law is clear: any attack must comply with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. We continue to see children in Syria paying a heavy price in the ongoing violence. We remind all parties that civilians must never be targeted, and we particularly deplore the impact of the violence on children. We call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and comply with their obligations under international law. There can be no military solution to the conflict in Syria.

Conditions for the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of refugees remain to be fulfilled in Syria. Ireland believes it is imperative that host countries continue to uphold the principles of refugee protection.

It is deeply regrettable that last month's ninth round of the Constitutional Committee did not go ahead, following the decision by the Syrian Government not to participate. We reject any attempts to undermine the efforts of the Special Envoy to facilitate a Syrian-led and a Syrian-owned political process. We maintain that the Constitutional Committee should convene in Geneva as agreed by the delegations. We urge the Syrian Government to put the best interests of the Syrian people first and engage constructively with the Special Envoy and his efforts.

Ireland recalls the European Union's position that there will be no normalization with Damascus until an inclusive political solution, in line with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) is firmly under way. We know the pivotal role that women have to play in building a sustainable, lasting peace for Syria; their full and meaningful participation in the political process must be enabled.

Ireland will continue to support all efforts to pursue justice and accountability for crimes committed in Syria. Lasting peace in Syria is not possible without justice. Justice for Syrians includes the transparent and verifiable release of all those arbitrarily detained, as well as the provision of information on the fate and whereabouts of missing persons. We look forward to seeing the report of the Secretary-General on this very important issue soon.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the work of civil society actors in Syria and note the importance of supporting and protecting them, particularly those who continue to document casualties and violations.

Mr. Biang (Gabon): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely, Ghana, Kenya and my country, Gabon.

Allow us to start by expressing a warm welcome to our colleague from Ireland. We look forward to working together.

I thank Special Envoy Geir Pedersen and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their briefings on the latest developments in the political and humanitarian situation in Syria. We also welcome the participation of the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Türkiye in this meeting.

The A3 welcomes the appointment of the new Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, Ms. Najat Rochdi, and wish her every success in her duties to support a political solution in Syria.

We echo the Special Envoy's appeal to the parties and the key stakeholders in the Syrian conflict to shield the country from undue external pressures that could jeopardize peace and stability efforts. The parties and the stakeholders must instead strive to inject political life into the political process. They should demonstrate political maturity and commitment through constructive engagements and a return to the ninth session of meetings of the Syrian-led, Syrian-owned, United Nations-facilitated small body of the Constitutional Committee.

On a positive note, we welcome the upcoming meeting of the Syrian Women's Advisory Board from 29 August to 2 September in Geneva. We continue to commend the Special Envoy's useful exchanges with this critical group, which represents the perspectives of the wide spectrum of Syrian women.

The A3 recalls the amnesty decree announced by the Government on 30 April. Political will remains an imperative for resolving the issue of detainees and the forcibly disappeared, particularly women and the elderly. Meaningful progress in this regard will build confidence and create an environment for the political process to move forward. It will also contribute positively to the Special Envoy's step-for-step approach.

We are concerned about the security situation in Syria. In fact, this country continues to be the scene of military clashes, particularly in the north of the country, in a context marked by a worsening humanitarian situation exacerbated by the continuing effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic. It also remains the centre for peace-damaging rivalries and competition for influence among major Powers. In this regard, the A3 is alarmed by the worsening levels of insecurity as demonstrated by incidents that include continued air strikes and rocket attacks in the north-west, which have resulted in civilian casualties.

Unfortunately, it is civilians who continue to pay the heaviest price as violence continues to escalate in the country. The Secretary-General's eightieth report on the parties' implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions (S/2022/635) documents incidents in which 87 civilians were killed, including 15 women and 25 children. At the same time, at least 104 civilians were injured, including 16 women and 33 children.

The rising levels and escalation of violence will only undermine any peace efforts. We therefore underscore the urgent need for de-escalation and restraint by all parties as well as respect by all players for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

We note with interest that the Syrian conflict continues to have a gendered impact, with significant effects on women and girls. It is deeply worrying that in addition to the reports of sexual violence being perpetrated against women in the Al-Hol camp, as many as 77 per cent of the 26 people murdered in the camp this year were women. We therefore call for protection that takes into account that difference in needs. The economic crisis in the country is also making life more difficult for Syrians, who face many challenges in accessing water, health care and electricity and are dealing with inflation and insufficient funding, problems that often force people to adopt harmful and irreversible coping mechanisms to survive.

The humanitarian situation in Syria remains alarming, with more than half of the population in need of assistance. The cross-border humanitarian aid mechanism is still required to ensure the delivery of that aid. In that regard, we continue to support the ongoing cross-border operation, which remains a crucial lifeline for humanitarian assistance. Similarly, we welcome the fact that six convoys have delivered cross-line aid to north-west Syria since the beginning of the year, as well

as the plan to include the delivery of medical supplies in the cross-line operation in the north-east. We call for more support for activities aimed at early recovery and improving livelihoods as a key component in building resilience and the longer-term peace that Syria and the region need.

We reiterate that there can be no military solution to the Syrian crisis. What is needed is a frank dialogue aimed at finding sustainable solutions and involving all components of society, including women. We therefore reiterate our call to the parties to exercise restraint and commit to settling their differences by peaceful means, including through negotiations coordinated by the Special Envoy. We welcome the efforts of regional and international actors to achieve political stability in Syria while respecting the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The A3 stands in solidarity with the people of Syria in their quest for lasting peace.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Mr. Pedersen and Ms. Msuya for their briefings, as well as the efforts that they and their teams have made towards achieving peace and the protection of civilians in Syria. I would like to highlight three points.

First, the political process is being held hostage. Russia is effectively continuing to paralyse the political process by giving the Syrian regime an excuse not to participate in the Constitutional Committee's session, owing to bizarre considerations about the venue. But the terms of reference are clear. The Committee's sessions must be held in Geneva. After 11 years of conflict, there seems to be no political solution emerging in line with the provisions of resolution 2254 (2015), which was adopted unanimously. Yet that is a prerequisite for achieving any lasting peace in Syria. In that context, the French and European positions on lifting sanctions, normalizing relations and reconstruction remain unchanged.

My second point concerns humanitarian assistance. The renewal of the cross-border humanitarian mechanism for six months, with a single crossing point, remains largely inadequate in comparison to the scale of the humanitarian needs. We will be extremely committed to ensuring in January that this vital mechanism is renewed for one year. We hope that progress on cross-line access will continue. However, we must recognize that even if cross-line convoys were

being sent on a regular basis, they would not be able to replace the cross-border operations, which, as we heard today, enabled the delivery of 1,200 truckloads of aid in June and July. I also want to emphasize that all the parties, in particular the Syrian regime, must protect civilians and guarantee full humanitarian access. Everyone must respect international humanitarian law.

My third point concerns impunity. France will continue its tireless efforts to combat impunity in Syria. The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs has received extensive documentation of possible crimes committed by the regime's forces during the Tadamon massacre in 2013. The acts alleged to have occurred, which are likely to constitute the most serious international crimes, have been reported to France's national anti-terrorism prosecutor's office under the jurisdiction of the French courts for crimes against humanity and war crimes. We commend the human rights defenders whose courage and determined work made it possible to collect those documents. Their findings add to the unfortunately abundant documentation of the violence that Syrians have suffered, two examples of which include the well-known Caesar file and the United Nations reports that document the regime's systematic use of sexual violence. Those responsible for those crimes must be held accountable — and that is also a condition for achieving any lasting peace in Syria.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): I join others in thanking Special Envoy Pedersen and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their respective briefings. I also extend a warm welcome to the new Irish Ambassador on his first day in the Security Council.

It is disappointing that the small body of the Constitutional Committee has not met this month. We had hoped the three parties would engage constructively and purposefully, with a sense of compromise, to achieve credible progress in the meeting. Now it seems there is a question mark on the venue as well. External factors have proved detrimental to the overall political process. The engagement so far has not been able to bridge the trust deficit among the key stakeholders. The cancellation of the ninth session of the Constitutional Committee in July has further reinforced that view. As the July negotiations for a renewal of the cross-border mechanism on the humanitarian track demonstrated, entrenched vested positions held by the primary stakeholders can be counterproductive in the long run and detrimental to the interests of millions of Syrians.

We reiterate that it is for the Syrians to decide what is best for Syria and their own future.

The Special Envoy has been making efforts to engage with all sides and facilitate the political process, in line with resolution 2254 (2015). We believe that his efforts should be supported, particularly his step-by-step approach. In that context, we welcome his recent visit to Moscow and his meeting with Foreign Minister Lavrov. We hope that he will be able to visit Damascus soon and also engage with the Syrian Government. We continue to believe that the success of his efforts will also depend on actual relief to the people of Syria provided by an easing of the measures affecting their daily lives. There is also an urgent need for scaling up assistance and ensuring that humanitarian agencies receive the funding necessary to the full execution of their plans.

India has been consistent in calling for support to the regional efforts in finding a long-term solution to the conflict. We have welcomed the progressive normalization of Syria's relations with its Arab neighbours. Any acts compromising Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity will have a negative impact on the political process.

On the security front, we remain concerned about the overall situation in Syria. As pointed out in the Secretary General's 60-day report (S/2022/635), violence continued in the Idlib de-escalation area in north-western Syria, including through air strikes, mutual shelling and clashes. There is an urgent need for serious attempts to achieve a comprehensive, nationwide ceasefire in Syria. We believe that the withdrawal of all foreign forces is essential to that.

India has consistently cautioned about the looming threat posed by the resurgence of terrorist groups in Syria. United Nations-designated terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham continue to gain in strength not just in Syria but in Iraq as well. The global fight against terrorism cannot and should not be compromised for narrow political gains. The credibility of the international community's collective fight against terrorism can be strengthened only by ensuring the accountability of terrorists and terrorist groups.

Turning to the humanitarian dimension, the extension of the mandate for cross-border humanitarian assistance in July 2022 was indeed a welcome development. The fact that the Council was able to

adopt a resolution on Syria is in itself a significant development. It is also important to note that elected Council members played an important bridging role in finding solutions towards long-running problems and conflicts.

Resolution 2642 (2022) reassured nearly 4 million people in the north-west of Syria — 2.7 million of whom are internally displaced persons, many of whom are women and children — that the world remained engaged with them and is concerned with their well-being. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that more than 14.5 million people across Syria need humanitarian assistance in one form or another, while essential food items and fuel continue to remain in short supply. Food insecurity has reached historic highs, and an estimated 60 per cent of the population is food insecure, as per the United Nations, even as the conflict enters its twelfth year.

India continues to call for enhanced and effective humanitarian assistance to all Syrians throughout the country — without discrimination, without politicization and without preconditions. While cross-border operations are predictable and important, they cannot continue to exist in perpetuity. Concrete steps need to be taken to address the hurdles that are obstructing the functioning of cross-line operations.

Humanitarian assistance cannot be a matter of political expediency. Linking humanitarian and development assistance with progress in the political process will only exacerbate humanitarian suffering. The international community also needs to constructively look at promoting projects that will bring much-needed jobs and economic opportunities for the Syrian people.

In conclusion, let me underline India's sustained commitment to extending development assistance and human resource development support to Syria to the people of Syria. Our continued support to Syria in its endeavour for seeking lasting peace and stability remains steadfast and unwavering.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I make this statement on the political situation in Syria in my national capacity.

I thank Special Envoy Pedersen for his briefing on the latest updates.

We remain concerned by the troubling security situation, in particular recent escalations in northern Syria. The attacks on 18 August in Al-Hasakah and

on 19 August in the market in Al-Bab city resulted in numerous civilians killed or injured, including children. Those attacks are unacceptable and only add to the immense suffering of the civilian population. We urge all parties to demonstrate restraint and abide by their obligations to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. Furthermore, we urge all parties involved to contribute to lowering tensions.

Once again, we are reminded of the urgency of a nationwide ceasefire and reinvigorated efforts to find a political solution. It is therefore particularly disappointing that the ninth session of the Syrian Constitutional Committee has not been held. Progress towards finding a sustainable end to the conflict must be a priority for all. We urge all parties to cooperate constructively with the Special Envoy and convene again as soon as possible. Norway will continue supporting the work of the Special Envoy, the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) and the Syrian-owned and Syrian-led political process.

Finally, let me underline the importance of making progress on the issue of detainees and missing persons in Syria. So many Syrians and their families are personally affected by this issue and do not know what happened to their loved ones. We are therefore troubled to hear that there has been little progress in implementing the amnesty since April. We urge the Syrian authorities to share more information and build confidence on progress towards the implementation of the amnesty. Movement on this file is essential for breaking through the current political stalemate.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Geir Pedersen and Ms. Joyce Msuya for their thorough briefings.

Our meeting today comes at a time when the political process in Syria is going through a state of stagnation and as the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, in addition to difficult security challenges that raise many concerns and questions regarding the next stage and the fate of the Syrian people, who have suffered immensely for over a decade of conflict.

In the past few months, there was an opportunity to make progress in the meetings of the Constitutional Committee, marking an essential step forward on the political track. However, we regret the events that took place after the cancellation of the ninth round of meetings due to geopolitical reasons. How long will Syria remain a playground for settling foreign

political scores, of which the Syrian people are the primary victims?

Therefore, we believe that the coming period is critical to mobilize momentum and return to talks. That first requires the international community to stop linking the Syrian dossier to other political dossiers, and secondly, to support the mediation efforts led by the Special Envoy aimed at building confidence among the parties. In that regard, we emphasize our rejection of foreign intervention in Syria to preserve its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We reiterate that there is no military solution to the Syrian crisis. Reaching a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned peaceful solution is the only way to end the crisis and address all its humanitarian, economic and security ramifications radically and in a sustainable manner that meets the aspirations of the Syrian people to achieve stability, security and prosperity.

We express our concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria, where women and children bear the greatest burden. Millions of people continue to suffer from a shortage of clean drinking water. Furthermore, acute food insecurity has reached unprecedented levels, affecting more than 12 million Syrians. Providing electricity to Syrians also remains an urgent need, which requires intensified efforts to achieve that goal, in line with the recently adopted resolution 2642 (2022). As the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/635) indicates, hundreds of thousands of residents receive only one hour of electricity per day. Electricity is provided in public service facilities, such as hospitals and schools, for only eight hours a day in half of the country's regions, which greatly impacts the living conditions of Syrians. In the light of the current situation, how long will the Syrian people suffer from those dire humanitarian conditions?

We welcome the passage of the sixth cross-line humanitarian aid convoy to north-west Syria earlier this month. We regret the development mentioned by Ms. Msuya regarding the postponement of the cross-line mission to Ras Al-Ayn, despite having all the necessary approvals. As such, we continue to emphasize the need to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to all those in need, in all areas, without obstacles or politicization. There is a need also to ensure that the assistance responds to the specific needs of women and girls, especially their health needs.

The continued delay in addressing the political situation deepens the existing security vacuum that is already exploited by terrorist groups in the country, such as Da'esh terrorist organization. In addition to the threats posed by other terrorist groups, the report of the Secretary-General confirms that Da'esh continues in its attempts to recruit fighters, mobilize weapons and develop its combat capabilities to extend its influence over Syrian territory. That constitutes a grave threat, not only to the security and stability of Syria but also to the entire region. Again, how long will terrorist groups continue to exploit the Syrian crisis to spread their own agenda in the region?

Ending the Syrian crisis and its security, economic and humanitarian repercussions is not far-fetched. It is possible if efforts are focused on breaking the current stalemate on the political track.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): I thank the briefers for their presentations. My delegation would like to focus on three points. The first is the humanitarian situation in Syria, the second is the political process and the third lies at the intersection between the humanitarian and political aspects.

First, regarding the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the cross-border mechanism authorized by resolution 2642 (2022) has an expiration date, as was the case with every prior authorization. The mechanism, a temporary arrangement, was necessary to respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of millions of vulnerable Syrians. We now have five months ahead of us before the latest cross-border authorization expires. The Council must take advantage of that time to seriously measure and document the results of the cross-border mechanism. At the same time, a genuine assessment of what is holding back cross-line deliveries is needed. Brazil understands that cross-border humanitarian assistance is not a long-term solution. Eventually, it will have to be phased out in the context of a solution that allows the Syrian Arab Republic to take full responsibility for the provision of aid to its population. In the meantime, we encourage efforts to increase cross-line deliveries that are able to reach other parts of the Syrian territory.

Secondly, on the political process in Syria, it is deeply concerning that the United Nations-facilitated dialogue under the auspices of the Constitutional Committee has made virtually no progress in the past few years. Brazil continues to believe in the importance

of the role of the United Nations in facilitating the necessary Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process for ending the conflict in Syria. While there should be flexibility in terms of the format of the United Nations facilitation efforts, including on the venues for the talks, they should still be in line with the principles set out in resolution 2258 (2015) and should leave it to the Syrians to decide on their political future. Brazil's position remains unchanged. Only a Syrian-owned and Syrian-led United Nations-facilitated political process, with due regard for the preservation of Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty, can offer a lasting solution to the conflict.

Our third and final point relates to the interplay between politics and the humanitarian crisis in Syria. The sanctions imposed on the Syrian Government have had grave consequences for the Syrian population, despite humanitarian waivers. Such measures continue to exacerbate the hardship of all Syrians, adversely affecting the provision of humanitarian assistance and restricting the restoration of basic infrastructure and services in the country, including early-recovery projects, whose importance resolution 2642 (2022) acknowledged. Brazil reiterates the importance of conducting a thorough assessment of the potential deleterious consequences of unilateral sanctions on the civilian population.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Envoy Pedersen and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their briefings. We also welcome the participation of the delegations of Syria, Iran and Türkiye in this meeting.

Mexico has taken note of the joint communiqué of the summit held in Tehran in July and recognizes the importance of the dialogue between some of those major players to resolving the situation in Syria. However, my country regrets that the ninth meeting of the small body of the Constitutional Committee has not yet taken place. We agree with Mr. Pedersen on the importance of ensuring that other conflicts do not negatively affect those negotiations, which are vital to advancing a credible and inclusive political process on the basis of resolution 2254 (2016). That is essential to ending the deep political and humanitarian crisis resulting from 11 years of conflict. We trust that the impasse can soon be overcome, the meeting of the Constitutional Committee can take place and substantive agreements be reached.

As it goes hand in hand with the constitutional process, priority attention must be given to the situation of detained and disappeared persons, as Mr. Pedersen mentioned. Above all, efforts must be redoubled to clarify cases of forced disappearance and to continue with the release of arbitrarily detained persons. To achieve that goal, humanitarian organizations must have access to detention centres. Efforts to ensure accountability must also continue. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of cooperation with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 in order to investigate systematic violations of international law.

My delegation notes with dismay that hostilities have increased significantly in several areas of Syrian territory, mainly in northern Aleppo, Manbij, Ayn Issa and Tal Tamr. The situation inflicts even greater costs on the civilian population, who have been trapped in this reality for more than a decade. A nationwide ceasefire is urgently needed to avoid further civilian losses and damage to the existing fragile infrastructure.

Against that backdrop, the situation is exacerbated by the increasingly worrying state of food security, as early warnings from the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization have indicated. Crop projections are not encouraging, and as Ms. Msuya said, that is being compounded by inflation, volatile international markets and the energy crisis. In the light of the increasingly critical food situation, it will be crucial to maintain all modalities of humanitarian access. In that regard, we welcomed the sixth cross-line convoy providing humanitarian assistance, which reached more than 43,000 people in the north-west in addition to the more than 2.4 million people assisted through the cross-border mechanism. And while the cross-line modality should be strengthened, the existing needs emphasize the importance of renewing the cross-border mechanism in January, as those needs will increase during the winter.

With regard to north-eastern Syria, we are concerned about the violence that continues to prevail in Al-Hol and which we condemn. In particular, we note that it has a direct impact on the provision of humanitarian assistance and services. The disruption of health and humanitarian services in general makes living conditions even less tolerable. We emphasize

that 94 per cent of the population of Al-Hol are women and children. The camp is clearly no place for children. Mexico is concerned about the children who continue to be deprived of their liberty and about the various detention centres. In that regard, we reiterate our call for giving priority to the repatriation and reintegration of nationals from other countries.

In conclusion, we take note of military actions in eastern Syria that have invoked Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate Mexico's position that based on that provision, invocations of self-defence justifying the use of force against non-State actors in a third State under the so-called unwilling and unable doctrine are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and customary international law.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): First, let me express our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan regarding the terrible death toll and widespread destruction caused by some of the worst flooding the country has experienced. We stand in full solidarity with the Pakistanis and join their call for international help and solidarity. We remain convinced that climate change and its effects constitute a direct security threat and deserve proper and continued attention by the Security Council.

Were there a perfect situation for which we could use the phrase "no end in sight", it would certainly be the situation in Syria, given the fact that, after 11 long years, brutality, killings, the forced displacement of civilians, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and atrocities of all kinds continue unabated. In the past two months alone, verified incidents have left more than 80 civilians killed and more than 100 civilians injured, many of them women and children. The lack of respect for basic norms and rights, especially the protection of civilians, persists with impunity.

As we have heard, humanitarian needs throughout Syria are at the highest level. Those huge and increasing needs demonstrate once more the vital importance of the cross-border mechanism that the Council renewed last month. We urge the Council not to politicize that humanitarian mandate and work towards its smooth renewal in January 2023 in order to provide the necessary conditions, certainty and predictability for aid workers to do their job and reflect the real needs on the ground in order to expand access to life-saving aid across the country, as well as through all modalities, including, of course, cross-line deliveries.

The humanitarian crisis continues to deepen because the political transition is paralysed. We deplore the actions of the Syrian regime and its supporters that prevented the holding of the ninth session of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva last month. Those who derailed that process must know that they continue to hold hostage the country's future. We support Special Envoy Pedersen and his efforts to produce tangible results. His work is far from easy. Without general goodwill and good faith, the political process will go nowhere. We call on all actors involved to support the transition and to exert the necessary pressure on the parties to move forward.

Beneath the humanitarian catastrophe and the political paralysis lies the mountain of atrocities committed, mainly by the Syrian regime, and a cry for justice. More than 130,000 people have been arbitrarily arrested, are missing or have been forcefully disappeared. The anguish of nearly every Syrian family for loved ones continues to be ignored. We support the creation of an independent mechanism with a strong international mandate to clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing people. We also expect full clarity and accurate data on the amnesty.

As recalled by Ms. Msuya, the conditions in Al-Hol camp, where 55,000 people live, 94 per cent of them women and children, continue to deteriorate. This year alone, there have been 33 murders — six of them in June and July. A solution is urgently needed, including through the repatriation of the detainees. Residents of the Rukban camp continue to live in dire conditions, with limited access to basic services. We support efforts by United Nations agencies to obtain access to reach those in the camp.

The protection of civilians, international law and human rights law must be ensured by the parties to the conflict. It is not an option; it is an obligation. Impunity for serious violations and abuses of human rights and of international humanitarian law remains a grave concern. Accountability for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law is crucial to achieving sustainable peace, based on an inclusive political solution, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015). That will require credible justice and a genuine reconciliation process. Lasting peace will be achieved only if human rights are respected.

Let me end by highlighting that the people of Syria need food, protection and security, but they

also need a new perspective. We echo the calls for the implementation of a nationwide ceasefire, which would feed into efforts for a genuine political process to start a new chapter for Syrians to build their future — a future for all, with hope and freedom.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Special Envoy Pedersen and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their sobering briefings.

Let me join others in welcoming our new Irish colleague, Ambassador Fergal Mythen, to the Council.

The United Kingdom continues to stand with the Syrian people in their desire for a sustainable solution to the Syrian conflict. As we have said many times, the only way to achieve that is through the full implementation of resolution 2254 (2015). That includes a nationwide ceasefire, unhindered aid access, the release of the arbitrarily detained, conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified refugee return and free and fair elections, pursuant to a new Constitution.

Special Envoy Pedersen's ongoing efforts to deliver on resolution 2254 (2015) have our full support. We are disappointed about the fact that the regime continues to stall discussions on political and constitutional reform. We are also disappointed that Russia is further undermining political progress in Syria by asserting that Geneva should no longer be the venue for what should be Syrian-led and Syrian-owned Constitutional Committee talks.

While the Syrian regime continues to fail in its responsibility to respect the basic rights of Syrians, provide for their needs and engage in the political process, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. Currently, approximately 14.6 million Syrians require humanitarian assistance — more than 67 per cent of the population. Some 12 million face acute food insecurity this year.

The United Kingdom recognizes that early recovery is necessary for addressing humanitarian needs. That is reflected in our support. Our funding has helped with the rehabilitation of water networks, provided agricultural training and inputs for livestock and vegetable production and provided apprenticeships and small business grants to help create jobs. But humanitarian assistance, particularly cross-border assistance, remains a lifeline for millions. By reducing the United Nations cross-border mandate from 12 to six months, resolution 2642 (2022) has caused uncertainty

for the United Nations and its partners, while impacting humanitarian operations and early-recovery programming — a priority avowedly shared by Russia, as well as other Council members. We therefore call on all Security Council members to work together to ensure a renewed agreement in January to meet the critical needs of the Syrian people. Further uncertainty or the closing of that lifeline at the height of winter would be catastrophic for millions of people.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I thank Special Envoy Geir Pedersen and Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for their briefings.

I would like to make five brief points.

First, violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria must end. Respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity is an important principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and a cornerstone of international relations. The provisions of the United Nations Charter are not mere quotations to which only lip service is paid. They are not optional and should not be selectively applied. They certainly do not lend themselves to misinterpretation or misapplication.

There is no doubt that the recent United States military operations in eastern Syria constitute a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and have nothing to do with the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter. The unlawful presence of foreign forces and illegal military operations in Syria must end.

Secondly, terrorists and all forms of terrorism must be met with zero tolerance. Terrorist organizations such as Da'esh, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement continue to run rampant in Syria and pose threats to international peace and security. It has repeatedly been reported that some of the organizations that the Council has designated as terrorist continue to enjoy access to various forms of funding. Terrorism is terrorism, full stop, and any contrivance aimed at shielding terrorist forces or using them for political ends is analogous to raising ferocious tigers and can only lead to further danger. The international community must work together to combat all forms of terrorism and terrorist activities.

Thirdly, we must stay the course in promoting a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process. The only path to a political solution rests in enabling the Syrian people decide their country's future on their own, without external interference. China supports Special Envoy Pedersen's efforts to encourage and facilitate continued consultations and to forge consensus among the Syrian parties. We welcome the important messages recently relayed by the Astana process with regard to supporting the political process in Syria. We note the announcement by the Syrian Government that local council elections will be held in September, and we hope for their successful outcome.

Fourthly, the transition from cross-border humanitarian operations to cross-line deliveries must be accelerated. Since the adoption of resolution 2642 (2022), only a single cross-line operation has been completed in north-western Syria, with no significant improvement in terms of either efficiency or scale. We want to register our profound disappointment with that. I would like to reiterate that the cross-border relief was a temporary arrangement made under exceptional circumstances and that the transition to cross-line operations should shift into a higher gear, with a clearly established timetable for the eventual termination of cross-border relief. At the same time, it is vital to vigorously promote early-recovery projects throughout Syria, mobilize the international community to provide adequate financial support with no strings attached, promote the early operationalization of additional projects and foster Syria's domestic drivers of economic development.

Fifthly, the unilateral sanctions against Syria and illegal plundering of its resources must stop. Economic recovery and development are the ultimate means by which Syria can extricate itself from its humanitarian crisis. However, unilateral sanctions have long been disrupting the lifelines of Syria's economic recovery and development, and the illegal plundering of resources crucial to the country's economic recovery and development has done incalculable damage to the Syrian people. One case in point is oil. Eighty-three per cent of Syria's daily oil production is sold illegally outside the country, with long lines of oil-smuggling convoys forming at illegal border crossings. The international community must not ignore such practices, and the Security Council should unequivocally call for an end to them.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Sabbagh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As this is the first time that I am speaking during China's presidency of the Security Council this month, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your successful leadership of its work. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Ambassador of Brazil, for his successful and outstanding presidency of the Council last month. My delegation has listened to the briefings by Mr. Pedersen and Ms. Msuya, and would like to make the following points.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is working diligently to promote national reconciliation, create the conditions necessary for a dignified life for its citizens, rehabilitate infrastructure and basic services for the people and rebuild what has been destroyed by terrorism. We are working to ensure the conditions necessary for a voluntary, safe and dignified return of refugees to their homes.

The adoption of resolution 2642 (2022) was an additional step towards improving and promoting the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need and providing support for basic services. The resolution has also expanded the reach of humanitarian activities, including through support to early-recovery projects, especially in the area of electric power, which is a vital sector and indispensable to other basic-service sectors such as health, education and water. Almost two months after the resolution's adoption, my delegation looks forward to seeing the Council guarantee its full implementation and hold an informal and interactive dialogue to review and monitor it, including progress on early-recovery projects. We also hope that the mechanism will be able to identify and determine the underlying reasons for the flaws and gaps hindering that implementation and that countries will work constructively to take responsibility for ensuring that it gets done.

The Syrian Government and its partners such as the United Nations bodies and humanitarian agencies continue to face great challenges and difficulties in their efforts to improve the humanitarian situation and the living standards of the Syrian people for the following reasons.

First, Western countries continue to politicize humanitarian and development efforts and clearly violate the guidelines that govern such work.

Secondly, some donor States have reneged on their pledges to support humanitarian work and failed to uphold their obligations to provide the funding for it, including through the implementation of early-recovery projects, as stipulated in resolution 2642 (2022). So far the plan for the Syrian humanitarian response has received only a fraction of the required funding.

Thirdly, the United States and its Western allies continue to impose and increase unilateral coercive measures that are inhumane and illegitimate and cause suffering among the Syrian people, owing to the severe shortages of food, medicine, fuel and other basic supplies that affect every aspect of their lives.

Fourthly, the United States occupying forces continue to plunder the Syrian people's wealth, including wheat, oil, gas and cotton. Almost 66,000 barrels of Syrian oil are being stolen every day, and in the past few days more than 500 trucks laden with stolen Syrian oil have left Syria for American bases in Iraq.

As a result of its desire to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches everyone in need throughout Syria without discrimination, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has offered every means possible to help the United Nations improve and promote the delivery of humanitarian aid. However, the terrorist organizations that are running rampant in north-western Syria and their supporters continue to obstruct the delivery of such assistance. Since the adoption of resolution 2642 (2022), attention has remained focused on the cross-border mechanism. More than 1,000 trucks have crossed the border in order to justify the continuation of the mechanism and guarantee the continued flow of supplies to terrorist organizations in that area.

Landmines and explosive ordnance left behind by the terrorist organizations continue to pose a grave threat to the lives of Syrians, especially children. The lack of progress in the removal of those landmines and explosive ordnance has prevented Syrians from returning to their homes, farms, jobs and schools. Moreover, it continues to obstruct the delivery of vital humanitarian aid.

According to the Secretary General's report (S/2022/635), Syria is one of the countries with the

highest number of reported direct victims of landmines and explosive ordnance worldwide. My delegation calls on the United Nations to give this issue the importance it deserves and to move from raising awareness of the dangers of those landmines and explosive ordnance to drawing up a comprehensive plan for field work with a clear time frame in order to clear all areas in Syria of those landmines and explosive ordnance in a manner that would help save the lives of Syrians and provide the necessary conditions for the safe return of displaced persons and refugees to their homes so that they can live normal lives. I would like to note that the Syrian Government — thanks to its own efforts and the support of allies and friends — has succeeded in resettling more than 2.4 million Syrian citizens to their places of permanent residence.

At the Tehran summit on 19 July, the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated their firm commitment to Syria's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity, as well as to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They reiterated their rejection of secessionist plots seeking to undermine Syria's sovereignty. They condemned the repeated acts of Israeli aggression.

Moreover, the Tehran summit expressed determination to continue working to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The summit also reiterated that the only solution in Syria is through a Syrian-led and -owned political process that is facilitated by the United Nations.

Putting an end to the illegitimate foreign presence on Syrian territory, along with terrorist organizations and secessionist militias affiliated with them, as well as ceasing the repeated and systematic Israeli attacks against the sovereignty of Syria and putting an end — immediately and unconditionally — to the policies of economic terrorism and collective punishment imposed by the United States and the European Union on the Syrian people is the only way to guarantee respect for Syria's sovereignty, independence, territorial unity and integrity. It is the only way to eliminate the remnants of terrorist organizations and related entities and groupings. It is the only way to put an end to all forms of displacement and demographic change. And it is the only way to give Syrians back their national economic resources.

Syria demands from the States that sponsor armed groups and separatist militias and those that plunder Syrian wealth to pay reparations to the Syrian people, because looting those national resources is a violation of international law.

Before I conclude, I would like to respond to the representative of the United States of America and his attempt to justify the attacks launched by his country's forces in Deir ez-Zor governorate. I would like to clarify for the members of the Security Council that the presence of the United States forces on Syrian territory is illegal and without the request or consent of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. Therefore, their presence is illegal, and that in itself is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant Security Council resolutions that underline the need to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria. The justification made by the representative of the United States occupying forces and the pretext of Article 51 of the Charter and what he called the right to self-defence is a legal misrepresentation and political insolence. The United States justification can be described as an excuse, which is worse than the action itself.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Ms. Ershadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for their briefings.

The humanitarian situation in Syria remains dire, and the country's economic crisis continues to affect the people across the country. The provision of humanitarian aid is essential, and political circumstances should not be allowed to prevent humanitarian aid from reaching the people in need. However, that must be done with full respect for Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 2642 (2022) and consider it an important step towards addressing Syria's urgent needs. The resolution expressly calls for early-recovery projects and greater transparency in relief efforts. Furthermore, it emphasizes the critical importance of increasing cross-line delivery throughout Syria.

The first report of the United Nations on the implementation of the resolution emphasizes the

importance of early-recovery projects and claims that the lack of electricity has made it more difficult to access necessary basic services. According to the report, limited access to electricity has also hampered the provision of essential humanitarian services and other response activities, including the provision of hospital and clinic services, food production and water distribution.

Given the severity of the situation, early-recovery projects, such as electricity projects, are critical in re-establishing access to essential services and must not be affected by unilateral sanctions. In that regard, the resolution's provisions and content are explicit, leaving no room for arbitrary interpretation or selective reading. We demand that the resolution be fully and effectively implemented. We also demand that unilateral sanctions against Syria be lifted, as they are impeding the resolution's implementation.

We trust that the special report of the Secretary-General requested by resolution 2642 (2022) will include general trends regarding unimpeded and secure United Nations cross-line operations, which should reach all of Syria, as well as early-recovery projects and accurate information on humanitarian assistance provided through United Nations humanitarian cross-border operations, including their transparency, and the distribution mechanism.

Furthermore, an informal interactive dialogue of the Security Council, as set out in the resolution, to review and monitor the implementation of that resolution on a regular basis could be an appropriate mechanism to allow the Council to keep track of how the resolution is being implemented effectively and fairly.

With regard to the political process, we would like to reiterate our steadfast position that the Syrian crisis must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with the principles of international law, particularly the full respect of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. In order to achieve this goal, the occupation must end, and Syria's full sovereignty must be restored.

We highlight the Constitutional Committee's crucial role in the political resolution of the Syrian crisis, and we commend and support the United Nations Special Envoy's efforts aimed at interacting with the Syrian parties in order to facilitate the work of the Committee's ninth session. In this regard, we highlight the tripartite summit held within the framework of the Astana format in Tehran on 19 July 2022, where the

presidents of the Astana format guarantor countries emphasized their unwavering commitments to the Syrian Arab Republic's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity and the advancement of a sustainable political process led and owned by the Syrian people in accordance with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). They also emphasized the Constitutional Committee's critical role and reaffirmed their willingness to support ongoing interactions between Committee members and the Special Envoy for Syria as a facilitator in order to ensure long-term stability and the effectiveness of the work of the next sessions of the Committee.

The Israeli regime continues to violate Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity and carry out terrorist attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure within Syrian territory. According to the report of the Secretary-General, the Damascus International Airport was forced to close owing to the damage caused by Israeli terrorist attacks on 10 June. All flights for the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, which is run by the World Food Programme and is the primary enabler of access for humanitarian operations in the country, have been cancelled as a result of this criminal act. We strongly condemn the continuing Israeli military attacks in Syria, including on civilian infrastructure, and recognize Syria's legitimate right to self-defence under international law and the United Nations Charter. The continuation of such criminal acts will destabilize and exacerbate tensions in the region. The Security Council must abandon its double standards and unequivocally condemn Israeli aggression and terrorist attacks on Syria's territory that are being pursued in flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and international law, particularly the principle of a sovereign State's territorial integrity and independence.

Finally, my delegation categorically rejects the unfounded accusation made by the representative of the United States against my country at this meeting. Indeed, the United States presence in the north-east of Syria under the pretext of combating terrorism is a clear violation of the United Nations Charter, international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. It is the United States that is working with the terrorist groups in Syria and destabilizing peace and security in the region. The United States must cease its violation of international law and the United Nations Charter by ending its continuing support of terrorist groups

and occupation of the north-eastern part of Syria. The Security Council should live up to its mandate under the United Nations Charter and demand that the United States honour its international obligations.

As a responsible State and in line with its international obligation, Iran continues its efforts to assist the Syrian Government to combat terrorism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Türkiye): I thank Special Envoy Pedersen and Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for their briefings.

Let me start by emphasizing that it is vital to accelerate efforts in favour of a political solution in Syria. For its part, and from the very beginning, Türkiye has been supporting every effort towards a political solution that will ensure a united, free, safe and democratic Syria. We have played a constructive and leading role in all initiatives that aim to reach a lasting solution as soon as possible. At the forefront of these efforts is the political process based on resolution 2254 (2015). As we have underlined time and again, there is no way to end the Syrian conflict and offer a lasting settlement other than a political solution to be agreed upon by all segments of the Syrian people.

Our longest land border is with Syria — 911 kilometres in length, to be exact. The protection of the territorial integrity and unity of Syria is therefore indispensable for us. Equally vital is the elimination of the threat posed by terrorist organizations to both Syria and Türkiye. It is also crucial that Syrians are able to return to their homes in safety and peace, play a role in the future of their country and contribute to its redevelopment and to the establishment of lasting peace. We believe that a political solution based on these elements is not impossible if all segments of Syrian society make sincere and constructive efforts. Türkiye will not withhold its support for efforts made in this direction.

The Syrian opposition has so far acted in good faith to contribute to the success of the political process. We will continue to encourage the opposition in this direction. Throughout the eight rounds of the Constitutional Committee, the opposition's positive approach was clearly seen and appreciated by the United Nations and other observers. However, progress can be made only if a similar approach is displayed by

the regime. We hope that the ninth round will be held as soon as possible under United Nations facilitation with a results-oriented approach.

Eliminating the threat posed by terrorist organizations in Syria, primarily the Kurdistan Workers' Party/People's Protection Units (PKK/YPG) and Da'esh, requires joint efforts. The terrorist organization PKK/YPG continues to attack Syrian civilians as well as our own citizens within our borders, using the very weapons provided to them to fight Da'esh. The so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which is actually nothing but PKK/YPG, carries out on average a hundred terrorist attacks every month in northern Syria. In the last two years, around 500 Syrians have lost their lives in these attacks.

Türkiye's borders have been targeted more than 10 times in the last two years. Most recently, on 16 August, two Turkish soldiers were killed as a result of a mortar attack on our border province of Şanlıurfa, launched from an area under the control of the SDF. No one should expect us to remain indifferent to these attacks. The countries that support the PKK/YPG/SDF, including those in this Chamber, should understand that the main purpose of these terrorist organizations is not to fight Da'esh, but to support separatist terrorism in Syria and Türkiye. The images the SDF has shared on its social media accounts are not those of their fighting Da'esh, but rather of attacks on Turkish security forces, accompanied by expressions full of hatred and hostility. These images are unfortunately no surprise to us, but we wonder if and how the supporters of PKK/YPG/SDF are responding to them.

Let me repeat once again: the real fight against Da'esh can and must be carried out only with legitimate actors. The mentality that a terrorist organization could be fought with the so-called help of another terrorist organization is fundamentally flawed and doomed to fail.

As I have said time and again in this Chamber, Türkiye will continue its resolute fight against all terrorist organizations threatening its national security in exercise of its inherent right of self-defence, as embodied in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions on the fight against terrorism. Our determination in this regard is also a guarantee for Syria's territorial integrity and political unity. Our past operations against the PKK/YPG terrorist organization

have made us ready to cooperate with all actors that have a genuine interest in and determination to preserve the unity of Syria as well as an interest in the fight against terrorism.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria continues unabated, and other conflicts have also had a negative impact on the already dire situation. It was disappointing, to say the least, that despite the strong calls from the United Nations and the humanitarian community for a 12-month extension, the Council had to settle for a six-month renewal of this lifeline operation (resolution 2642 (2022)). We are glad that 4.1 million people living in north-west Syria are safe for now. But when the mandate of the cross-border mechanism comes to an end, on 10 January 2023, it will be in the depths of winter. That is literally the worst time one can think of to reconsider life-saving humanitarian support. It is critical that the cross-border mandate be extended once again in January, as foreseen in resolution 2642 (2022).

We call on all relevant parties to act responsibly and support the Syrian people without discrimination. On our part, we will maintain our support to the United Nations and the international humanitarian community in providing cross-border assistance to Syria. As seen with the six cross-line aid deliveries to Idlib so far, Türkiye provides the greatest support to the implementation of the resolution. We will continue to do so. However, we are against the arbitrary implementation of the resolution. The cross-line modality should continue, but it cannot be the ultimate aim. The ultimate aim should be to deliver humanitarian aid. Ignoring cross-border deliveries in other parts of

Syria cannot be justified by increasing the number of cross-line deliveries.

We also expect the United Nations to officially report that the most important obstacle to cross-line activities to Idlib is the non-stop ceasefire violations by the regime and its backers in the region — just like in Ras Al-Ayn, where the negative attitude of the regime and its backers prevented planned cross-line deliveries.

We also have difficulty in understanding why both the United Nations and some donor countries are hesitant in extending aid to the opposition-controlled areas in Syria and implementing humanitarian assistance projects. Inaction in that regard cannot be justified by any of the excuses put forward. Selectivity and discrimination have no place in delivering humanitarian aid. In that regard, I would like to know the reasons that there are no cross-line deliveries to Rukban camp. We would like once again to request detailed information on the cross-line missions to north-east Syria. Finally, we want to see real progress on the water issue in Al-Bab, which has been left unaddressed for too long. The promise of access to Ayn Al-Baida came very late. We will follow that issue closely.

Türkiye will continue supporting all segments of the Syrian population without discrimination on humanitarian issues. We call on all other responsible actors to do the same.

Our support for a political solution in Syria in line with resolution 2254 (2015) that is acceptable to the people of Syria will continue unabated.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.