



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

**9068**<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Monday, 20 June 2022, 3 p.m.  
New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hoxha . . . . .	(Albania)
<i>Members:</i>	Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Costa Filho
	China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Gabon . . . . .	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Agyeman
	India . . . . .	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya . . . . .	Mrs. Toroitich
	Mexico . . . . .	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
	Norway . . . . .	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
	United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mr. Abushahab
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## 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) and 2585 (2021) (S/2022/492)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **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) and 2585 (2021) (S/2022/492)**

**The President:** 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 the meeting: Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Mr. Iyad Agha, NGO Forum Coordinator, North West Syria NGO Forum, Türkiye/Gaziantep.

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2022/492, 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) and 2585 (2021).

I would like to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

**The Secretary-General:** The humanitarian situation in Syria remains dire for millions of children, women and men across the country. Needs are at the highest point since the war began, more than 11 years ago. The world's largest refugee crisis continues to have an impact on the region and the world. I have just issued another report (S/2022/492) on the humanitarian situation in Syria, and after my short introduction, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs will brief the Security Council on the latest developments.

The figures are stark: 14.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance; 12 million people are food insecure, unsure where their next meal is coming from; 90 per cent of the population is living below the poverty line; infrastructure, destroyed by years of conflict, is crumbling; and economic activity has been halved during a decade of conflict, regional financial crises, sanctions and the coronavirus disease pandemic. The economy is set to contract further this year, according to the World Bank. People are living on the brink, no longer able to cope. Our current humanitarian appeal requires \$4.4 billion to assist people inside Syria and another \$5.6 billion to support refugees in the region. We have made great strides in scaling up the response, but we need to do more. The generous pledges made at the sixth Brussels Conference must be honoured. I appeal to donors to follow through and increase their support. The international community must help communities build resilience and create conditions that can facilitate the voluntary, safe and dignified return of refugees and displaced people.

The needs in Syria are too great to address through immediate life-saving efforts alone. More than one quarter of our appeal is therefore intended to support early recovery and resilience. In some sectors of the response, including education, that represents around half of all projects, a meaningful increase from previous years. Through projects that are already under way, millions will benefit from the rehabilitation of damaged hospitals, schools, water systems and other basic infrastructure. Those programmes also help communities get back on their feet by providing opportunities for work and generating income.

Needs in north-western Syria continue to increase, with 2.8 million people, mostly women and children, displaced. Many live in camps or informal settlements. More than 90 per cent of the people in the north-west are in need of aid. They have suffered particularly heavily during 11 years of conflict and humanitarian crisis. The massive humanitarian response that the United Nations and its partners are conducting in Syria has staved off the worst, but more is required. That is why I have consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining and expanding access, including through cross-line and cross-border operations. When it comes to delivering life-saving aid to people in need across Syria, all channels should be made and kept available. After the Council united last year to adopt resolution 2585 (2021), the United Nations responded.

Despite the incredibly challenging operating environment, the United Nations has delivered aid across front lines into the north-west. Five cross-line convoys have now provided life-saving assistance to tens of thousands of people in need, and efforts continue every day. We anticipate that more cross-line convoys will follow.

We have also taken full advantage of the cross-border authorization to save lives. Hundreds of trucks now cross from Turkey every month. Since cross-border aid was authorized in 2014, more than 50,000 trucks have crossed into Syria to provide assistance to those in need. The United Nations cross-border operation in Syria is one of the most heavily scrutinized and monitored aid operations in the world. There is no doubt that our aid reaches the people in need.

While increasing cross-line assistance was an important achievement, in the current circumstances it is not at the scale needed to replace the massive cross-border response. I strongly appeal to the members of the Security Council to maintain consensus on allowing cross-border operations by renewing resolution 2585 (2021) for an additional 12 months. It is a moral imperative to address the suffering and vulnerability of 4.1 million people in the area who need aid and protection. Some 80 per cent of those in need in north-west Syria are women and children.

Together, the international community has helped avoid a total collapse in Syria. We have improved access and built resilience. But the only way to end the humanitarian tragedy in Syria is a truly nationwide ceasefire and a political solution that enables the Syrian people to determine their own future. We must show the courage and determination to do everything that is necessary to reach a negotiated political solution, in line with resolution 2254 (2015).

I urge all members of the Council to do everything in their power to encourage the parties to engage in meaningful negotiations for peace. We cannot give up on the people of Syria.

**The President:** I thank the Secretary-General for his introductory remarks.

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths:** We have just heard the remarks of the Secretary-General on the humanitarian situation in Syria. I am grateful to him for his presence here. His remarks paint a very grim picture.

Hostilities continue on the front lines and in pockets across the country, killing more civilian men, women and children. Murders continue in Al-Hol camp, with 18 murders already reported this year. On 15 June, a car bomb killed the head of office of a humanitarian partner organization in Al-Bab city. That was a deplorable attack that should be investigated and whose perpetrators should be held accountable. Aid workers are not targets.

On 10 June, the Damascus airport, which was damaged by an air strike, was shut down and remains closed as of today. As a result, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service also had to suspend its operations across Syria, with direct implications for the delivery of essential aid and the movement of essential staff.

Landmines continue to threaten communities. On 11 June, 10 civilians were killed and 28 wounded when a landmine detonated under a civilian vehicle carrying farmers to work in a village in Dara'a. I therefore take this opportunity to remind all the parties to the conflict that international humanitarian law requires them to respect civilians and civilian objects and take all feasible precautions to avoid and minimize civilian harm.

It bears reminding Council members that Syria is indeed a deep humanitarian crisis. The number of people in need is the highest now that it has ever been in more than 11 years of war — and the numbers increase each year, not the reverse. It is a hunger crisis. Food insecurity has reached record levels. An unprecedented number of women and children in Syria are now battling high rates of malnutrition.

It is a water crisis. With the summer heat, water levels have fallen significantly in the Euphrates River. That means that families do not have sufficient clean water to drink. Children get sick from waterborne diseases. Farmers cannot irrigate their fields. Electricity production drops. That has a direct impact on basic services.

I would like to call on all parties to ensure that people have sufficient access to safe water across the north of the country. For that to happen, all critical infrastructure, including electricity facilities, need to remain functional. They are civilian objects.

It is an economic crisis. The United Nations continues to engage with all parties on how to improve the lives of ordinary civilians, including so that their

situation is not further worsened by the impact of sanctions. However, as we have said more than once in this Chamber, more than 90 per cent of the people of Syria live below the poverty line. The sad reality is that the situation is getting worse. I would invite us all to imagine how it might seem to the people of Syria that we have the same conversation here, every month, while their situation continues to worsen. I am sure that we will hear more about that from the next briefer.

Against that frankly dismal backdrop, as the Secretary-General already mentioned, the Council will soon discuss the renewal of resolution 2585 (2021), which was unanimously agreed nearly one year ago. Today I would like to add to the remarks of the Secretary-General about the progress made in those 12 months.

Some 26 per cent of our requests for humanitarian aid to Syria this year are aimed at early recovery. So far this year, 2.9 million people have benefited from those efforts. We know that early recovery is part of that resolution. The renewed focus on it and increased donations to it are a strong feature of the past 12 months of assistance in Syria. That trend must continue to be protected and ensured.

My deputy, Assistant Secretary-General Msuya, visited early-recovery projects in Syria in May. One of those, which is run by the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, rehabilitates canals and has enabled farmers, particularly women's groups, to farm their land. It is really as straightforward as that. One single mother told Ms. Msuya, "I can finally provide for my children; I have a new chance at life". All Syrians deserve that chance. I believe passionately in the right of everyone, no matter where they live or under whose administration they live, to a future — to be educated, have their livelihoods protected and have access to essential services.

We and our partners continue to scale up early recovery in response to immediate and protracted needs. From January to April, health-sector partners trained close to 15,000 health-care workers to make health systems more shock-proof. They rehabilitated 106 health-care facilities that service up to 400,000 people.

Education partners and agencies restored more than 1,500 classrooms, thereby allowing nearly 80,000 children in northern Aleppo and Idlib governorates to go to school. Since December 2021, humanitarian

mine-clearance teams have cleared more than 500,000 square metres of land to enable farming in Darayya, in rural Damascus. Members will find many more examples of such achievements in the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/492).

Turning to cross-line assistance, at this time last year there were no cross-line convoys into north-western Syria. Since the adoption of resolution 2585 (2021), we have carried out five convoys, each including 14 trucks, from Government-controlled areas into Idlib in the north-west. The most recent was just a few days ago, on 12 and 13 June. That has opened cross-line access to north-western Syria during the past 12-month period, for the first time since 2017. That is no small feat. Those deliveries have provided food for more than 43,000 people each time, along with nutrition, hygiene, medical and education supplies.

To facilitate those regular convoys, the United Nations developed its inter-agency operational plan, which we submitted here and updated to run through the end of this year. We also agreed on a new distribution modality with the parties.

We want to do more. We need to do more. We expect to do more. We are working to expand access, but we need an enabling environment. We need timely approvals from all concerned and security guarantees, especially for safe passage. Of course, we also need funding.

Resolution 2585 (2021) underscored Council members' concerns about the transparency of operations, which the Secretary-General referred to in his remarks here today. That was a focus of the Secretary-General's report issued in line with the resolution in December 2021 (S/2021/1030). Syria remains one of the most complex humanitarian operations globally, and the report described the robust systems in place to assist us in monitoring and mitigating risks and providing principled assistance to millions of people in need across Syria — not just in the north-west or north-east, but across the country.

That brings me to the imperative, as described by the Secretary-General, to retain our ability to deliver assistance across the border from Türkiye for an additional 12 months. There are 4.4 million people living in north-western Syria, more than 90 per cent of whom need humanitarian assistance and many of whom have needed it for many years. That is 20 per cent more than were in need last year. In 2021, the United

Nations sent some 800 trucks carrying cross-border aid to north-western Syria, reaching slightly below 2.5 million people every month. We brought in food for 1.8 million people, and so on and so forth. Our figures for 2022 show similar levels of aid going in.

Last year, the United Nations spent more than \$420 million inside north-west Syria, including \$150 million allocated through our Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund. I want to thank all the Governments that contributed so generously to that Fund. Simply put, without United Nations cross-border access, hunger will increase; medical cases will go mistreated or untreated; millions will be at risk of losing shelter; and assistance and access to water will decrease. The coronavirus disease is still there. Vaccine distribution plans will be disrupted and our ability to provide the minimum protection to women and girls who are at risk of gender-based violence will become severely limited — and that is a euphemism. The United Nations monitoring mechanism will also stop, lessening transparency and accountability.

Let us be honest. In an ideal world, much more progress would have been made on cross-line delivery and we would be further along in terms of implementing more early-recovery programmes. That is true, of course. It is not an issue, and it is not at issue. But we need to face reality — there has been some progress. There has been progress in the right direction, and we need to stay that course to see more of it. At the same time, the needs of the people of Syria, who should be our top priority, are increasing, with more of them requiring our assistance and our protection. At the moment there is simply no alternative available to meet the scale and scope of those needs other than a renewal of the resolution, an increase in funding and continued efforts to achieve the national ceasefire to which the Secretary-General referred in his remarks. I hope we can stay that course together.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Agha.

**Mr. Agha:** Thank you, Mr. President, for affording me the opportunity to speak about Syria at such a critical time, when the Security Council is deliberating on the reauthorization of the cross-border resolution (resolution 2585 (2021)). I am here to speak on behalf of the North West Syria NGO Forum, which represents more than 80 national and international organizations

that provide aid to more than 4 million people in need of assistance in north-western Syria.

Aid operations provide a wide range of services, from basic needs such as food, shelter, water and primary health care to providing livelihood opportunities suitable in the context there. I had hoped that I could bring something new today that the Council had not heard before, but as all my colleagues in the humanitarian community would say in their briefings, the dire humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate significantly. The numbers of people in need are rising on an annual basis, and our capacity to respond is decreasing, owing to reductions in funding as the world responds to additional humanitarian crises elsewhere.

People in north-western Syria remain displaced, with more than 2.8 million living either in camps or informal settlements that cannot shelter them even from normal weather conditions. And yet we are also seeing extreme weather conditions on a seasonal basis that claim the lives of many. The 1 million people who were displaced in 2019 due to the escalation of violence in Idlib are still displaced, meaning that cross-border humanitarian operations are the sole source for meeting their basic needs. An entire generation of Syrian children has been born and raised in camps, knowing only tents as their home. Humanitarian aid is an essential component in enabling them to carry on. The basics for us are a dream to them. To have access to clean water, regular meals and four walls to call home are luxuries that they do not dare to dream about.

Since 2014, with the passing of the first cross-border resolution (resolution 2165 (2014)), the humanitarian community of United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors have invested heavily to sustain life-saving aid to north-western Syria, ensuring that the population there is able to survive the harsh living conditions and providing little, but just enough, support to carry on. While the World Food Programme is working to provide food for more than 1.4 million people on a monthly basis, the overall number of people who are food-insecure in north-western Syria stands at 3.1 million, or more than 70 per cent of the population. The United Nations-led operations are complicated due to the sheer volume of services and aid that has to be provided to make life possible there. Millions of Syrians living in the country's north-west have benefited from United Nations-led cross-border assistance over the past eight years, including 2.7 million beneficiaries

targeted with education services; 9 million with food-security and livelihood interventions; 53.8 million with health interventions, 11.3 million with shelter and non-food-item support; 2.8 million with nutrition interventions; and 11.9 million with water, sanitation and hygiene services.

It would be impossible for the United Nations cross-border operation to be replaced by an NGO-led response or cross-line operations without a massive humanitarian impact. The north-west would experience a quick and catastrophic deterioration of the humanitarian situation due to the high level of dependency there. The current cross-border operation reaches almost 60 per cent of the 4.1 million people in need of assistance each month. Eighty per cent of all food assistance in north-west Syria is delivered by the United Nations through the current cross-border mechanism. United Nations agencies have played a vital role in procuring, pre-positioning and transporting a large volume of core relief items across virtually every sector in north-western Syria. In the case of food and shelter, the United Nations procures an overwhelming proportion of the total assistance delivered to people in the north-west. While many core items are available and procured within the region, mainly Türkiye, United Nations agencies' vital role in procurement provides stability and reliability in the humanitarian supply chain. NGOs rely heavily on the United Nations for its unique ability to procure pharmaceuticals and vaccines and provide key medicines that NGOs would not be able to procure bilaterally.

Back in 2013, we faced a polio breakout scare in northern Syria due to the failure of vaccine programmes to reach the people there. The circumstances in 2013 that led to the authorization of cross-border support are still the same, if not worse. That is why it is necessary to maintain the cross-border modality so that immunization campaigns and vaccines continue to reach people there. The threat of a disease outbreak is not something to be taken lightly and would have a global impact, not just in north-western Syria.

Reauthorizing the cross-border operations for a duration of at least 12 months is essential for north-west Syria. It will enable the timely and predictable delivery of humanitarian assistance and services, including early-recovery programmes, which are essential to meeting the humanitarian needs of affected populations in a safe and dignified manner. Any period of less than 12 months would create serious and unnecessary

life-threatening risks for Syrians in the country's north-west, just when the freezing temperatures of winter are beginning. There is currently no viable alternative for replacing the response being delivered through the cross-border modality. While progress has been made on cross-line access to the north-west, cross-line operations are currently unable to deliver at the scale or frequency of the assistance required, and it would not be possible to scale them up in the coming months to replace what is currently being delivered by cross-border.

To ensure that life-saving aid continues to reach the millions in need, we call on the Council to reauthorize — as it has generously done over the past years — the provisions of the cross-border resolution for at least 12 months to ensure that the United Nations cross-border response in north-west Syria remains in place. There are more than 4 million reasons to reauthorize the cross-border mandate — they are the people in need whose life depends on this humanitarian operation.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Agha for his briefing.

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Security Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

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

**Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland):** I make this statement on behalf of the co-penholders on the Syria humanitarian file, namely, Ireland and Norway.

I offer many thanks to Secretary-General Guterres and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, and I thank Mr. Agha in particular for his presence here today and his efforts in his capacity as NGO Forum Coordinator. Today's briefings again made plain the desperate needs of so many people in Syria.

Last week our Foreign Ministers undertook a visit to Bab Al-Hawa and learned more about those deep needs, along with the extraordinary work of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in delivering cross-border aid to north-west Syria. The severity of the situation could not be clearer. Syrians are experiencing a twelfth year of war, and humanitarian needs have never been greater.

In April and May, at least 72 more civilians, including 12 children, lost their lives owing to hostilities and explosive remnants of war. As many as 14.6 million people across the country are in need of humanitarian assistance, 4 million of them in north-west Syria alone. A total of 12 million people are food insecure, with almost 2 million more at risk of food insecurity. Food prices continue to rise, and rates of malnutrition are soaring. Every day, millions of people go hungry in Syria.

Negative coping mechanisms are on the rise. The futures of children are mortgaged away so that families can eat. Withdrawn from school and made to go to work, forced into early marriages, those children, who have known little but war, are also losing hope for a better future. Across Syria, only one third of schools are fully functional, and more than 1.5 million children currently in education are at risk of dropping out. Children with disabilities are particularly likely to be out of school, and many of the children in most desperate need are dependent on cross-border interventions. We owe it to them to find a way forward.

Since the Security Council came together last July to unanimously adopt resolution 2585 (2021) in support of the humanitarian needs of the people of Syria, we have seen significant progress in the implementation of that resolution. We welcome the substantial outcomes of a broad range of early-recovery and resilience activities. The Secretary-General has reported that, since January, early-recovery and livelihood partners have supported almost 320,000 individuals directly, with 2.9 million indirect beneficiaries across the country.

That means that nearly 3 million people have benefitted from training and work opportunities, health-care facilities, education, water and sanitation infrastructure, mine clearance and agricultural and cash interventions — to name but a few of the activities undertaken. The lives of nearly 3 million people have been improved by the early recovery mandated under resolution 2585 (2021).

As we know, some 570 projects — a full 26 per cent of the funding request for the humanitarian response plan — contribute to early recovery and resilience. Major donors have also greatly increased their investment in early recovery over the past year. As of late May, \$195 million had been contributed to early-recovery and resilience objectives. Further progress will be enabled with the renewal of the resolution. We

must ensure that aid reaches all people in need. As co-penholders, Ireland and Norway continue to strongly support the use of all modalities to reach Syrians in need with life-saving humanitarian assistance.

We welcome the fifth cross-line delivery, which was completed last week. We encourage further progress on cross-line deliveries and take this opportunity to commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other United Nations agencies for their work in that regard. We once again call on all parties to support cross-line deliveries. Despite the notable progress that has been made on cross-line deliveries, our Ministers saw very clearly that the cross-border operation at Bab Al-Hawa remains indispensable. There is no alternative for the millions of civilians who rely on the aid provided through that United Nations operation for their survival.

As the Secretary-General underlined, this operation is one of the most heavily monitored of its kind in the world, ensuring the humanitarian nature of its shipments in the north-west. Our Ministers saw for themselves the rigorous procedures for the control and monitoring of the aid. We commend United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners for continuing to address the logistical and operational challenges resulting from the operation being reduced to one authorized border crossing. A failure to extend the mandate would lead to further humanitarian suffering on an enormous scale.

For Ireland and Norway, our approach as co-penholders on this resolution is guided exclusively by humanitarian needs. We have all heard the figures — 12 years into the conflict, those needs are at their highest levels and continue to grow. A failure to renew the cross-border resolution would mean the loss of the transparency and accountability provided by the United Nations monitoring mechanism. Most important, it would end the delivery of life-saving aid to millions of vulnerable people in severe need of food, shelter, medical assistance, education material, livelihoods and water, sanitation and hygiene assistance.

There has been significant progress on implementing resolution 2585 (2021), and there is much more we can do — including on the cross-line and early-recovery fronts — by renewing this vital resolution. We must not abandon the people of Syria now. We call on the members of the Council to work constructively to ensure that aid can continue to reach the millions of

Syrians in need. To echo the Secretary-General, there is a moral and humanitarian imperative to do so.

**Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana): I have the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), that is, Gabon, Kenya and Ghana.

We are grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres for his briefing and thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths, as well as Mr. Agha, the civil-society representative, for theirs. We also welcome the participation of the representatives of Syria, Iran and Türkiye in this meeting.

As highlighted in today's briefings, the prevailing humanitarian situation in Syria, which has brought untold hardship and suffering to ordinary Syrians for more than a decade, remains a matter of grave concern to us. After more than a decade of violence, Syrians are exhausted from the impact of the conflict and look forward to the intercession of the international community to end the conflict and alleviate their suffering.

We are deeply concerned that the predicament of the Syrian people is being further exacerbated by a number of persistent challenges, including civilian casualties resulting from mine explosions and sporadic air strikes and shelling in some parts of the country.

At the same time, the food insecurity brought about by the raging conflict has given rise to an unprecedented number of women and children suffering from rising rates of malnutrition. Meanwhile, the reduced water levels of the Euphrates River and the Allouk water station have given rise to acute shortages of potable water, which is severely impacting the populations in the affected areas of the country.

We denounce the continued atrocities and mayhem visited on defenceless Syrians by terrorist groups such as Da'esh and Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham. We therefore condemn unreservedly Da'esh's sporadic attacks on civilians in areas across Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah and eastern rural Homs and Hama during the period under review. The A3 calls for a concerted effort by all stakeholders to bring the perpetrators of those barbaric acts to book and ensure justice for the victims. We are equally concerned about the increasing number of deaths in Syria among the humanitarian aid workers who ensure that critical life-saving assistance reaches those in need. The killing of a Syrian aid worker in a car

bombing this month, bringing the total of such fatalities in the north-west to 23 since 2020, highlights the troubling dangers that aid workers face as they risk their lives on a daily basis to provide much-needed assistance to vulnerable populations in Syria. The A3 emphasizes the responsibility that the conflicting parties have for the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers and stresses the need to ensure accountability.

We want to express our unwavering support for the ongoing efforts of the United Nations and other international partners to address the deteriorating humanitarian condition in both Government- and non-Government-controlled areas. We note with satisfaction the work of the United Nations cross-border operations, which benefits almost 60 per cent of the 4.1 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance each month. We commend the scaling up of the cross-line aid delivery of essential humanitarian supplies to about 43,000 people in Syria's north-west, under the auspices of the United Nations inter-agency operational plan and resolution 2585 (2021).

Despite the wider reach of the cross-border delivery mechanism, the A3 is united in its view that aid delivery across the front lines is equally essential, and we therefore call for a continuation of the cross-line aid delivery mechanism supplementing the United Nations-facilitated cross-border deliveries. With the expiry of the mandate of resolution 2585 (2021) impending on 10 July, the A3 expresses its full support for its renewal and urges the Security Council to give it unanimous support in order to safeguard the continued delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid to the recipients in north-west Syria. Given the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country, it is imperative to have unhindered humanitarian access to all areas where people need that assistance. We therefore call for the removal of all physical and administrative obstructions impeding the delivery of life-saving aid.

In conclusion, while reiterating our collective call for a nationwide ceasefire, as well as the pressing need for the parties to work together to negotiate a political settlement that will bring comprehensive and lasting peace and stability to Syria in the long term, we would like to reiterate our joint call for support for the renewal of the cross-border resolution's mandate. If we fail to do that, north-western Syria will be plunged into an even deeper and more catastrophic humanitarian crisis. At the same time, we call for respect of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his presence here with us today and for his crucial remarks. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his briefing, as well as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations humanitarian agencies for their work on this very important issue. And I thank Mr. Iyad Agha for bringing the voice of civil society to the Security Council today.

A little more than a year ago, after we unanimously reauthorized the cross-border humanitarian mechanism (see S/PV.8817), I told the Council that millions of Syrians could breathe a sigh of relief. I was able to say that because we put politics aside and came together to address a clear humanitarian need. Starving children would receive food, sick mothers would receive medicine and a population ravaged by the coronavirus disease pandemic would receive vaccines. And that was exactly what happened, even though we now can and must do more. The facts speak for themselves. Last year, the United Nations-led cross-border response enabled aid workers to reach more than 2.4 million people in north-west Syria every single month. It helped feed 1.8 million people each month, pulling children and families back from the brink of famine, and it allowed us to ship essential vaccine doses into north-west Syria.

Earlier this month, I again made a trip to the border of Türkiye and Syria to see the operations of the mechanism for myself, with my own eyes. I saw first-hand what is going across the border — vaccines, grains, diapers and pouches of ready-to-use therapeutic food used to treat children under five years old who are so severely malnourished that they are wasting away. While there, I saw how the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing is one of the most closely monitored and inspected crossings in the world. At the transshipment hub, aid workers confirm the contents of the boxes and seal the trucks. There are multiple points of verification. Having worked on humanitarian issues for decades, I can say that their work really sets a gold standard. I was briefed on how we have made encouraging progress on cross-line aid deliveries, and I reaffirmed the United States' support for early-recovery efforts, which we know continue to be an important component of sustainable response efforts.

In short, we have followed through. We have made progress on everything outlined and promised in resolution 2585 (2021). And the United States is

committed to making even more progress on all those fronts in the coming year. But as every aid worker told me during my trip, cross-line aid alone cannot come close to meeting the dire needs on the ground. It can reach thousands, but not millions. Much more help is needed. And tragically, today the situation in Syria is even worse than it was before. As the Council just heard from the Secretary-General, people are living on the brink and are no longer able to cope. Right now, more than 4 million in north-west Syria rely on humanitarian assistance. The global food crisis has sent malnutrition rates soaring and the price of a food basket has increased to record levels for the eighth consecutive month. As I heard on my visit, without cross-border aid, many people will die. Babies will die.

Frankly, that visit was different from my visit last year. I have rarely seen such desperation in the eyes of the aid workers, who were unsure whether they would be able to continue to deliver food, medicine and other critical aid to those who need it most. They know that the 10 July deadline to renew and expand the cross-border mechanism is fast approaching and they are wondering if they will be able to continue the life-saving work that they do and keep this vital lifeline open. Those aid workers are supporting a critical operation in a challenging and risky security environment, tragically underscored by the death on 15 June of an aid worker in north-west Syria. We condemn attacks on humanitarian workers, and it is our mission to ensure that they can carry out their life-saving work. I did my best to reassure those aid workers, as well as the refugees I met, who are constantly worried about their loved ones in Syria. But the only way for us to truly relieve their anxieties — the very least we can do — is to renew and expand the United Nations cross-border mechanism.

When I met with non-governmental organizations and spoke with Mr. Mark Cutts, who leads the United Nations operation on the ground, the message I continued to hear was that the current cross-border operation is not even reaching the bare minimum of those who need aid. I heard from mothers in Türkiye that when they called their adult children in Syria, they learned that they did not have enough food to eat or enough medicines to treat their illnesses. It is clear that what is needed right now is more cross-border aid, not less.

And it is equally clear that a failure to renew the cross-border mechanism would have dire consequences. United Nations humanitarian leaders issued a joint

statement last week to make that exact point, in which they said that such a failure

“will immediately disrupt the United Nations life-saving aid operation, plunging people in north-west Syria into deeper misery and threatening their access to the food, medical care, clean water, shelter and protection from gender-based violence currently offered by United Nations-backed operations”.

This is literally a life-or-death decision. And I firmly believe that we can get it done, just like we did last year, because it is not about politics — it is about continuing to provide humanitarian assistance to the millions of people who are counting on us. Some votes we take in the Council are difficult and complex, but this vote could not be more straightforward.

As the Secretary-General states in his report (S/2022/492) and in his remarks today, the humanitarian needs on the ground cannot be met without the United Nations cross-border mechanism. And we know our friends in the League of Arab States also share that view. This is our chance to come together again with one voice, with unity and a commitment to humanity. This is our chance to live up to the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations. This is our chance to continue to provide life-or-death assistance to the Syrian people.

Everyone I spoke to during my visit had just one message they asked me to bring back to the Security Council to share with everyone. They asked us to make a choice to save lives — to make a choice to ensure that humanitarian aid continues to flow to those Syrians who need it most. And today, on International Refugee Day, we owe that to the refugees in Syria.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Türkiye for hosting so many Syrian refugees. Let us all work together to get this done.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Martin Griffiths for sharing their views. We also took note of Mr. Iyad Agha’s briefing. We would like to raise a number of points concerning the Secretary-General’s report (S/2022/492).

We are increasingly concerned about the reports of a food and fuel crisis in Syria. Regrettably, the report again fails to point out that the United States, as a result of both its unilateral sanctions on Syria and its ongoing occupation of the north-east of the

country, is responsible for causing the crisis. The population, including children, is starving, and the work of civil and medical facilities is being stalled. The fuel shortage is also affecting the operations of water stations and power plants, as well as Syrian agriculture. Humanitarian workers on the ground in Syria have themselves denounced the Western sanctions. As we have said on many occasions, their difficulties include obstacles to financial operations and logistics, as well as humanitarian exemptions that do not work.

The claims by Washington and a number of other capitals that by imposing unilateral sanctions they are supposedly fulfilling their international obligations, as well as claims that such sanctions are targeted and well balanced, are not only false and unconvincing but also demonstrate their inhumane treatment of Syria’s civilian population.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation continues to worsen owing to tragic incidents that undermine security. Of particular significance in that context is the series of air strikes launched on 10 June by the Israeli air force on the suburbs of Damascus, which damaged the Damascus International Airport runway and building and caused it to be shut down. As a result, all Damascus-bound flights were put on hold, including those of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, a key humanitarian channel that provides life-saving support to more than 2 million people.

Such acts are unacceptable, as they cause serious implications for the people of Syria and create risks of escalation for the entire region. We are astonished by the lack of reaction in that regard from of all those who are so keen to support the delivery of humanitarian aid to Syria. For our Western colleagues, when it comes to the delivery humanitarian aid, there are apparently two different categories of Syrians: those in Government-controlled areas and those in non-Government-controlled areas.

In that context, there have been reports that the United States has found ways to sponsor the Maghawir Al-Thawra-affiliated militants in the Rukban camp. If true, that is absolutely deplorable, especially against the backdrop of the anti-Syrian sanctions. Our American colleagues are also quick to show similar concern for internationally listed terrorist groups, such as Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham. For several years in a row, the experts of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the Security Council Committee pursuant to

resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, have repeatedly confirmed that Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham has been profiting from humanitarian assistance to Idlib and that it constitutes one of their main sources of income.

It appears that, in order resupply its fighters, all that Washington needs is to ensure the renewal of the cross-border mechanism. We also note the recent discussions in United States political circles in favour of exonerating those terrorists. According to reports, Idlib is seeing an increase in flows of Western weapons sold by corrupt Ukrainian officials. In summary, the terrorists in Idlib are doing just fine. The black market for arms that has recently been surging in Europe has become a real treasure trove, both for terrorists in Syria and radical Islamists throughout the Middle East.

Predictably, many have spoken today about the need to renew the cross-border mechanism in July. We have also heard about the many shortcomings on the Syrian humanitarian track, all of which are apparently beyond the control of the United Nations. That point is highly debatable, and it is hard not to conclude that there are double standards with regard to the settlement of the situation in Syria. One example demonstrating that was the recent joint statement to the Council by high-ranking United Nations officials on the issue of the cross-border mechanism.

We regret that we are not seeing similar responses with regard to other Syrian matters, including early-recovery projects and cross-line humanitarian deliveries. The results of the United Nations engagement in that area are disappointing, especially the fact that there have been only five cross-line humanitarian convoys this year. Was this what we had in mind when we adopted resolution 2585 (2021) a year ago?

We are convinced that it is possible to organize humanitarian deliveries in coordination with Damascus to every region of Syria, and the Syrian Government is seeking to facilitate that process. That became evident after the Al-Yarubiyah crossing point at the border with Iraq was shut down. Similarly, closing the Bab Al-Hawa crossing could enable a significant increase in cross-line deliveries to Syria's north-west.

There is no denying that marginal terrorist elements are blocking United Nations efforts and undermining trust in humanitarian workers in general. It seems that the tail is wagging the dog,

and our Western colleagues — who had a whole year to prove the opposite — find that situation perfectly acceptable. Yet they do not seem particularly eager to deal with this issue as they are to care for Idlib-based or other terrorists. In addition, some of our colleagues are politicizing the dialogue on humanitarian assistance to Syria. As a result, the Council has not been able to adopt even modest documents that are nevertheless important and could lay the groundwork for a constructive discussion on the cross-border mechanism. We simply cannot ignore that extremely unfavourable context.

In conclusion, we would like to request that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provide more detailed information about the so-called Action Plan for Dignified Shelter and Living Conditions in North-west Syria. Which specific regions does the programme cover and what progress has been made in its funding? We would also welcome more details from OCHA on early-recovery projects that have already been funded by donors. We believe that such efforts should be expanded, including in the Government-controlled areas, in order to ensure that refugees returning to Syria have roofs over their heads.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I join others in thanking the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Mr. Agha for their briefings.

As we have heard, the Security Council will soon consider the United Nations mandate to deliver cross-border aid into Syria. The United Kingdom is in no doubt that the Council should take decisions that alleviate suffering and contribute to peace and security. We base our decisions on evidence and the advice of the humanitarian actors on the ground working to save lives. This month, a United Kingdom ministerial delegation visited the Turkish-Syrian border and witnessed the enormous effort that goes into ensuring regular and transparent cross-border humanitarian operations.

As we have heard today, the situation in Syria, driven by 11 years of conflict, continues to worsen, with 80 per cent of the population in need of humanitarian assistance. The call this past week from humanitarians at the border, as well as United Nations leaders and more than 32 leaders of non-governmental organizations, is clear. An end to the mandate would be catastrophic. It would mean the loss of food, water and basic services for nearly 2.5 million people; reduced access to services for women and girls, who represent 80 per

cent of north-western Syria's population; the loss of oversight provided by the United Nations gold-standard monitoring mechanism, which has scrutinized more than 56,000 trucks since 2014 and prevented aid from getting into the hands of terrorists; and a devastating hindrance to efforts to tackle the coronavirus disease pandemic in the north-west, where only 5.7 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated.

The closure of previous crossings should serve as a clear warning. Needs in the north-east have escalated since the closure of the Al-Yarubiyah crossing. Across Syria this year there have been more than 2.9 million indirect beneficiaries of early-recovery projects of the sort set out by Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, backed by \$195 million in international funding. The United Kingdom will continue to play its part and has pledged nearly \$200 million in humanitarian support in 2022. That will support ongoing early recovery across all areas of Syria, supporting urban and rural livelihoods, the rehabilitation of water networks and quality education for children. But without mandate renewal, early-recovery projects in north-west Syria would be compromised.

I therefore urge Council members to review the evidence and listen to the experts. Humanitarian need and regional stability necessitate the renewal and expansion of resolution 2585 (2021). The United Nations and humanitarian partners require a minimum 12-month extension in order to continue to expand early-recovery programming. There is no justification for bringing that vital lifeline to an end. As Mr. Agha said, there are more than 4 million reasons to renew the cross-border mandate — one for each person depending on it. We must stand by the people of Syria.

**Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil):** I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres for very forcefully outlining the gravity of the situation in Syria. I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his update and presentation of the latest report on the humanitarian requirements in Syria (S/2022/492), and Mr. Iyad Agha for his briefing. Let me also welcome the representatives of Syria, Iran and Türkiye to this meeting.

Next month, the Security Council will once more have to make an important decision regarding the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need across Syria. The numbers presented in the Secretary-General's report are staggering. The World Food

Programme (WFP) delivered assistance to 5.4 million people across 14 governorates in April and to 5 million people in May. Those numbers speak for themselves. Brazil agrees with the Secretary-General that international humanitarian assistance for the Syrian people is still a moral imperative. We have seen efforts towards expanding cross-line deliveries and enhancing their predictability, effectiveness and scale. Security concerns, however, continue to be the most common explanation for delays and difficulties regarding the cross-line modality. All parties must fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law and ensure free and unimpeded humanitarian access that complies with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

In northern Syria the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate and especially affects those living in camps and informal settlements. It has certainly not improved since the adoption of resolution 2585 (2021). Since cross-line deliveries cannot yet match the scale and scope of the cross-border modality, which provides food, vaccines and other vital aid to 2.4 million people every month, the renewal of the authorization of closely monitored cross-border operations therefore seems indispensable. An unplanned failure to renew it would mean suddenly cutting off vital life-saving aid at a time when needs are at their highest.

Let me be clear, however, that Brazil's position has remained unchanged since this terrible conflict started in 2011. 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 — and I must emphasize that — can alleviate the immeasurable suffering that the conflict has inflicted. The Council must recognize, once and for all, that today it is facing a very serious problem. Despite the best efforts of the WFP and all United Nations agencies, as well as other humanitarian organizations, the resources are not unlimited, and as food and fuel prices soar worldwide, so do the costs of humanitarian operations. We need sustainable solutions to ongoing conflicts. We cannot afford to have more people in need of life-saving assistance.

In this scenario of acute economic crisis and escalating hunger, a thorough assessment of the potential deleterious consequences of unilateral sanctions on the civilian population is also essential. A ceasefire is urgently needed in Syria. The continued and growing presence of terrorist groups is of particular

concern, as are the continuous deliberate targeting of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, like hospitals and schools, and of humanitarian workers, and forced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and summary killings. Brazil once again calls on all parties to refrain from harming civilians and to comply with international humanitarian law.

I conclude on a positive note regarding early recovery. Initiatives in the areas of health, education and employment seem to finally be yielding calculable positive results. We hope to continue to hear good news about Syria — it is what the Syrian people deserve. Finally, we are grateful for the updates and for the support of the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths to the objective of early recovery.

**Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary General, Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Mr. Iyad Agha for their briefings. I also welcome the delegations of Syria, Iran and Türkiye to this meeting.

The opportunity to hear updates on the situation in Syria is particularly relevant in view of the upcoming expiration of the Bab Al-Hawa cross-border mechanism's authorization to operate. Mexico has stated on multiple occasions that the humanitarian needs of the Syrian population should be the guiding theme of our discussions on the issue in the Security Council, without any politicization. The latest report of the Secretary-General on the subject (S/2022/492) and this afternoon's briefings confirm the difficult circumstances that the majority of Syrians continue to endure.

We must be clear and direct: the volume and scope of cross-border operations by Bab Al-Hawa cannot be replaced at this time. Let us recall that, during the period covered by resolution 2585 (2021), approximately 800 trucks carrying humanitarian aid enter via the crossing per month, benefiting more than 2.4 million people. To give one example, that cross-border crossing is crucial to mitigate the effects of growing food needs. Simply put, 1.8 million people receive food and nutritional assistance that way. The upward trend in food insecurity is, without a doubt, extremely worrisome, especially given the consequences of malnutrition for children and women.

In the light of that reality, it is essential to maintain and increase humanitarian access. Reducing it would lead only to even more adverse and probably irreversible

consequences. We emphasize that humanitarian crossings between lines of conflict continue to advance in compliance with resolution 2585 (2021). The fifth convoy, completed last week, is proof of that. It is important, however, to continue consolidating that entry route, which is merely complementary to the cross-border crossing.

It is clear that Bab Al-Hawa remains a vital entry route for humanitarian aid and other supplies. For that reason, Mexico considers it essential that the authorization of the crossing be renewed for 12 months.

With regard to other components of resolution 2585 (2021), my country recognizes the increased focus that the humanitarian response has lent to enhancing early-recovery projects. We note that those projects have already benefited more than 319,000 people directly, and even more people indirectly, and we encourage their continued implementation. It is encouraging to see that, as part of such projects, the health, education and disarmament sectors are being prioritized.

In conclusion, Mexico calls on all members of the Council to put the humanitarian needs of the population — which has already found itself in increasingly extreme situations after 11 years of conflict — first in the upcoming negotiations. The least we can do is to preserve the consensus that was achieved last year with resolution 2585 (2021). As the Secretary-General has said, that constitutes a moral and humanitarian imperative.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his important briefing, which affirmed the need to deliver aid through all available means throughout Syria. I also thank Mr. Martin Griffiths for his extensive briefing and Mr. Iyad Agha for his statement.

Eight years ago, in response to the grave humanitarian repercussions of the Syrian crisis, the Security Council adopted the cross-border aid delivery mechanism as an exceptional measure. The unanimous adoption of resolution 2139 (2014) reflects the moral responsibility of separating humanitarian duty from political considerations, thereby ensuring the delivery of aid to those in need in Syria.

Although the purpose of the mechanism is still relevant and urgent, it should be noted that it is an exceptional and temporary measure. It should not

be considered as a long-term solution, especially in the light of the changing conditions on the ground, including the increase in the number of people in need. Today more than 14 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance, as compared to 10 million people in 2014. Therefore, humanitarian plans must be consistent with the requirements of the current phase of the crisis, namely, an increase in the number of cross-line convoys in conjunction with additional support for early recovery projects.

Furthermore, in the context of the current situation in northern Syria and the ongoing escalation on the Turkish-Syrian border, we demand that the cross-border aid delivery mechanism not be used to achieve political interests. Its misuse will undermine its credibility as a purely humanitarian mechanism. It should not be used as a tool to interfere in Syria's affairs.

In that regard, we stress the importance of the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing by United Nations humanitarian agencies and their partners on the ground. We also highlight the need to provide protection for humanitarian workers, especially after the targeting and killing of a humanitarian worker in the Al-Bab area last week.

As for the cross-line delivery of aid, the United Arab Emirates welcomes the recent passage of the fifth convoy into north-west Syria. In that context, we reiterate the need to increase the number of cross-line humanitarian operations so that it becomes closer to that of operations passing through the cross-border mechanism. The United Arab Emirates appreciates United Nations efforts in that regard, and we call on all parties to allow those convoys to urgently pass through smoothly and without hindrance to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief to those in need. The parties on the ground should not be able to control the passage of aid or use it as a bargaining chip.

Last year, the members of the Council spoke with one voice and unanimously adopted resolution 2585 (2021), through which they noted, for the first time, the importance of supporting and implementing early-recovery projects in Syria. The adoption of the resolution reflected the need for urgent relief on the ground. Accordingly, we must now consider how to intensify early-recovery efforts by rehabilitating and rebuilding the infrastructure of basic services that was destroyed. In addition, international programmes for

food security, water, electricity, health and education should be promoted as key parts of early-recovery efforts, which have become essential in the light of the global food and health crises.

With regard to the recent damage incurred at Damascus International Airport and its subsequent closure, we stress the importance of protecting civilian infrastructure in order to ensure the continuity of humanitarian operations in the area.

In conclusion, we stress the need for the continued delivery of humanitarian and relief assistance to all Syrian regions without hindrance, based on humanitarian principles and without politicization so as to alleviate the suffering of the brotherly Syrian people.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I also welcome the Secretary-General to this meeting and thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his briefing. I listened attentively to the briefing delivered by the civil society representative.

The mandate of resolution 2585 (2021), on humanitarian assistance to Syria, will expire in July. Last year, the resolution played a part in easing the humanitarian situation in Syria. However, it has not been fully and effectively implemented. The Council should conduct a comprehensive analysis and adopt an integrated approach in order to overcome the obstacles to humanitarian relief in a targeted manner and should make more reasonable and effective arrangements for the next stage of humanitarian relief.

First, we must fully respect the sovereignty of Syria and the ownership of the Syrian Government and ensure the effective functioning of cross-line delivery. Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is a universally recognized basic norm of international relations, as well as a fundamental principle of international humanitarian assistance. Cross-line delivery should be the primary avenue for humanitarian assistance to Syria. However, last year, despite the explicit requirements of resolution 2585 (2021), there was limited input in that regard, with only five successful cross-line deliveries and the delivery of 70 truckloads of supplies to north-western Syria. The litany of obstacles we heard today should not be a reason to abandon further efforts. The Council must make specific demands to increase the efficiency and scale of cross-line delivery, promote capacity-building for parties to ensure safe passage and support the efforts of international humanitarian agencies.

China would like to stress that the key infrastructure needed for cross-line delivery must be fully protected. We note with concern that the Permanent Representative of Syria sent a letter to the President of the Security Council on 13 June, condemning the 10 June Israeli attack on Damascus International Airport, which is a vital hub for humanitarian supplies for cross-line delivery. China urges the countries concerned to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, strictly abide by international humanitarian law and stop all attacks on humanitarian infrastructure.

Secondly, we must vigorously promote early-recovery projects and nurture economic development in the country. In resolution 2585 (2021), the Security Council urged all parties concerned to support early-recovery projects. Regrettably, some countries have always used early-recovery projects as a political bargaining chip and are reluctant to fund them, resulting in the unsatisfactory implementation of projects. Humanitarian relief should not be politicized. China urges the donors concerned to uphold the humanitarian spirit, serve the welfare of all Syrian people, give priority to funding early-recovery projects without preconditions and promote the early implementation of more projects. The Council must make concrete efforts to that end.

Thirdly, we must actively engage in dialogue and consultation for the proper arrangement of cross-border humanitarian aid delivery. China has always maintained that the cross-border mechanism is only an extraordinary arrangement made under specific circumstances. The Council should assess the effectiveness and applicability of the mechanism in a timely manner in the light of the developments on the ground and make adjustments accordingly. Cross-border humanitarian operations in north-western Syria must be carried out in strict compliance with the Council's resolutions, and the neutrality and transparency of the assistance must be ensured. A clear timeline should be set for the termination of cross-border delivery, and the transition to the cross-line approach promoted accordingly. China hopes that, through dialogue and consultation, the members of the Council will find a viable solution for after the expiration of resolution 2585 (2021).

Fourthly, we must immediately and fully lift the unilateral sanctions and create a favourable external environment for economic recovery in Syria. It is estimated that the unilateral sanctions imposed by certain countries over the years have cost at least tens

of billions of dollars in economic losses to Syria. That has greatly weakened the Syrian Government's ability to raise resources and rebuild, runs counter to the efforts of the Council and the international community to improve humanitarian access and access to resources in Syria and has become the biggest obstacle to the improvement of the humanitarian situation in the country. Today we heard from many Member States that they care about human rights in Syria and the humanitarian situation in the country. Maintaining and adding unilateral sanctions while expressing concerns for the welfare of the Syrian people is self-defeating. China urges the countries concerned to immediately and fully lift the unilateral sanctions imposed against Syria, and the relevant Council resolutions must set out clear requirements in that regard.

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. Iyad Agha for their briefings.

After 11 years of conflict, humanitarian needs are at an all-time high. In the north-west, the number of people in need of assistance has reached 4.1 million, an increase of more than 20 per cent since last year. More than 70 per cent of the population is food insecure, further exacerbated by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

Each month, the cross-border mechanism delivers nearly 800 truckloads of life-saving aid. Progress on cross-line access must, of course, continue. But even if cross-line convoys were deployed regularly, they would not be a substitute for cross-border operations.

The numbers speak for themselves and were cited many times today — the cross-border mechanism is delivering aid to more than 2.4 million people each month, while the five cross-line convoys deployed since August have each delivered aid to less than 50,000 people. Eighty per cent of food aid in the north-west is delivered by cross-border convoys.

In the north-east, 2.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, 16 per cent more than last year. Cross-line convoys, subject to the goodwill and arbitrariness of the Syrian regime, have never been able to compensate for the closure of the Al-Yarubiyah crossing. We all know the impact that had on the response to medical needs, especially in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

A renewal of the cross-border mechanism for a minimum of 12 months is therefore essential — as requested by the Secretary-General, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. At a time when humanitarian needs have increased, both in the north-west and north-east, this mechanism has never been more crucial.

I call on all members of the Council to show unity and responsibility and to make decisions based on purely humanitarian considerations. As we were reminded today, we have a moral duty to save lives, to counter the risk of famine, to meet medical needs and to facilitate vaccination campaigns, including against COVID-19.

I would also like to note that all parties, in particular the Syrian regime, must guarantee full humanitarian access to all those in need of assistance. Respect for international humanitarian law is binding on all.

In the absence of a political solution, there is absolutely no reason to normalize relations with the Syrian regime and move towards reconstruction. Without a political solution, the French and European positions on reconstruction and the lifting of sanctions will remain unchanged. Reconstruction can begin only when a political process that is in keeping with resolution 2254 (2015) is firmly under way.

States calling for reconstruction in Syria should perhaps start by increasing their contributions to the humanitarian response. I note that nearly 96 per cent of the humanitarian funding announced for 2022 at the Brussels VI Conference comes from the European Union and its member States, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway and Japan.

Finally, France will continue its relentless fight against impunity for crimes committed in Syria. Those responsible must be held accountable for their actions.

**Mr. Raguttahalli** (India): I join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his remarks and presence earlier in the meeting. I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his detailed briefing. I also thank Mr. Iyad Agha for his insights and welcome the presence of the representatives of Syria, Türkiye and Iran in today's meeting.

The humanitarian situation in Syria, as evident from today's briefing, continues to worsen by the day. The number of people needing humanitarian assistance has now crossed 14 million, with essential

food items and fuel in short supply. Food insecurity has reached historic highs, and an estimated 60 per cent of the population is food insecure, according to United Nations figures.

Moving decisively forward on the political track in Syria therefore remains an urgent imperative if we are to alleviate the suffering of its people. In addition, all parties, particularly external players, need to display their commitment, in tangible terms, to a Syrian-led and-owned, United Nations-facilitated political process in line with resolution 2254 (2015). The initiatives of the countries of the region in normalizing relations with Syria can also help address the humanitarian situation. Conversely, recent steps, such as the launch of a military operation in north-east Syria and similar actions, can destabilize an already fragile situation.

We also need to avoid linking humanitarian and development assistance to progress in the political process. Such a position will only exacerbate humanitarian suffering. There is an urgent need to scale up assistance and to ensure that humanitarian agencies receive the necessary funding. The international community needs to constructively look at promoting projects that will bring about much-needed jobs and economic opportunities for the Syrian people. In the face of falling production of food staples and issues related to water shortage, particularly in the Euphrates River basin, it is important that we address the collective concerns of the Syrian people with the utmost seriousness.

We also believe that a nationwide comprehensive ceasefire is in the larger interests of the Syrian people. While cross-border operations are predictable and important, they cannot continue to exist in perpetuity. We also take note of ongoing efforts, including the fifth cross-line convoy to north-western Syria a few days ago, and reiterate that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and United Nations agencies need to intensify efforts to enhance cross-line operations.

India has repeatedly warned of the looming threat posed by the resurgence of terrorist groups in Syria. We cannot discuss the humanitarian situation if we ignore the impact of terrorist groups on civilian lives. India has consistently highlighted how external players have contributed to the growth of terrorist groups in Syria. The continuing neglect of that issue by the international community would cause irreparable damage to our

collective fight against terrorism. The growing activities of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh are also contributing to the worsening humanitarian situation.

The situation of internally displaced persons camps housing women and children continues to be serious. Grave concerns remain about the conditions in the camps, where several criminal activities, including murders, have been reported in 2022.

We are concerned that humanitarian assistance to Syria in 2021 was less than in the previous year. There is therefore an urgent need to scale up that assistance. In that regard, we request that OCHA comprehensively harmonize the data related to early-recovery and resilience projects by the end of this month so that Council can have a holistic view of the situation well before the expiry of the cross-border authorization.

In conclusion, India has continued to extend development assistance and human resource development support to Syria through grants and lines of credit for development projects, the provision of medicine and food, artificial limb fitment camps, a next-generation information technology centre and capacity-building training programmes. Since the beginning of the conflict, India has always stood by the Syrian people and will continue to do so.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Albania.

I would like to thank Secretary-General Guterres and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for their presence today. As we have highlighted every month here, the humanitarian situation in Syria is of the utmost importance for the people of Syria, for the millions in need and for the future of the country. The clear messages that we heard from them only reinforces that imperative. I also thank Mr. Agha for his detailed yet sobering information and concrete recommendations.

Today is World Refugee Day. It is a reminder to honour refugees around the globe. Millions of people in Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Ethiopia and elsewhere who have been forced to flee their homes by conflict, violence and human rights violations will have little to celebrate.

A record high of 100 million people is currently displaced globally. That means that 1 in every 78 people on Earth has been forcibly uprooted. Forty-two per cent of them are children, whose innocence has been

smashed by the brutality of conflict and whose dreams are denied by the uncertainty of their future.

The Syrian crisis has entered its twelfth year. As we heard today, hostilities continue in various parts of the country, with unparalleled suffering and huge and increasing humanitarian needs.

Figures are depressing, if not frightening — and they are all in millions. Some 14.6 million Syrians are dependent on humanitarian aid, including 4.1 million people living in the north-west, where 70 per cent of the population is food insecure. More than 90 per cent of Syrians live below the poverty line, and 5.5 million people, primarily mothers and children, need nutrition assistance. Women and girls continue to be the subjects of international humanitarian law and human rights violations, including killing, arbitrary deprivation of liberty and gender-based violence. All that many Syrian children have ever known is war. A generation of Syrian children has been born and raised in camps that have been their only home. A staggering two thirds of the population is facing food shortages during the current year. That means that more parents are faced with the heartbreaking choice of skipping meals or sending their children to work. More girls are forced into early marriage to provide income for food. One out of two Syrian children is out of school and vulnerable to child labour, early or forced marriage, trafficking or recruitment by armed actors.

In two weeks, on 10 July, the Council will vote on reauthorization the cross-border operation at the only remaining border crossing point for humanitarian aid into Syria, Bab Al-Hawa. For millions of Syrians in need of life-saving assistance, there is no other alternative. Exacerbated food insecurity makes it even more complex and harder to reach everyone. We know already that, even in the current situation, all the needs are, unfortunately, not met.

How many times, including today, by the Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Mr. Agha, on behalf of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the North-West Syria Non-Governmental Organization Forum, respectively, have we been told in this Chamber the same key message, namely, that the cross-border operation cannot be replaced by crossline operations? Crossline aid is a complement to, not a substitute for, cross-border assistance. Crossline operations cannot replace the size or the scope of the massive cross-border operation. It was said, but it still

needs to be repeated, that the cross-border operation is among the most closely monitored operations in the world, so we know where aid is going and whom it is serving. Therefore, pending the renewal of its authorization, the only cross-border point is a ticking-clock lifeline for million, tantamount to a decision for life or death by starvation for the many who depend on it. This is why we call on the Council to reauthorize the provisions of the cross-border resolution (resolution 2585 (2021)), in order to keep the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing in north-west Syria open.

Humanitarian needs and actions should not be politicized. They cannot be a weapon or an extension of the conflict. We call upon the Syrian Government to ensure the delivery of aid and the allocation of health services so that United Nations agencies, as well as humanitarian organizations and local actors, can work unhindered in their efforts to reach people in need.

The protection of civilians, international humanitarian law and human rights law must be ensured by parties to the conflict. We condemn attacks against humanitarian workers and support all efforts by United Nations agencies and their partners in their work throughout Syria. Let us not forget that impunity for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law will not be tolerated and that accountability is central to achieving sustainable peace.

In conclusion, I will echo what Mr. Agha underlined: there are millions of reasons to renew authorization of the cross-border for people in need, and here are no reasons for not renewing. The role of the Security Council — our duty and responsibility — is to help people, save lives and assist those in need — not to engage in any sort of calculations. The Council should side with hope and life, not with death sentences for the poor, the needy, girls and children, or those who have no one else to whom to turn. The theme of day — “whoever, wherever, whenever” — could hardly better fit with the centrality of the humanitarian action in Syrian. The Council should be able, again, to stand united on that.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I would again like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line

with the Security Council’s commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

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

**Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We welcome the participation of the Secretary-General in today’s meeting.

The Syrian Government is enhancing its efforts aimed at restoring security and stability and is taking all measures necessary to overcome the repercussions of the crisis through national reconciliation and settlements at the local level, as well as by repairing infrastructure and affected service facilities with a view to improving the livelihoods of Syrians and to facilitate the voluntary, safe and dignified return of refugees. However, acts of terrorism, aggression and destruction continue against my country in the form of acts of aggression by the Turkish regime, direct aggression by Israeli occupation forces or attacks by various terrorist organizations.

The Israeli attack on Damascus International Airport launched on 10 June caused extensive damage to the runways, technical fixtures and the terminal, forcing the airport’s activities to come to a complete halt. This is a matter that entails grave political, humanitarian, military, and economic repercussions that will be suffered by all Syrians and the countries of the region, including those that depend on Damascus airport to deliver United Nations humanitarian aid through operations that also have been completely halted. In a statement on 13 June, the United Nations resident coordinator in Syria stressed that United Nations humanitarian trips by air have facilitated the movement of 2,143 humanitarian workers and life-saving supplies. Those trips also supported and delivered essential aid to more than 2 million Syrians in the Aleppo, Al-Hasakah, Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates. All those trips came to a complete standstill after the Israeli aggression against the civil airport facility.

Nevertheless, certain Western delegations continue to obfuscate this Israeli aggression and its repercussions on humanitarian action. They do not even allow the Security Council to condemn such an action as an egregious violation of international law and international humanitarian law, including the legal obligation to protect civilian facilities.

I would like to remind Council members that this Israeli aggression is not the first against the Damascus International Airport or other functional civil and commercial facilities, including seaports and airports, which have jeopardized civil air and sea transportation and navigation, without regard for the impact that has on the lives and safety of innocent civilians. Previously, I had brought to the Council's attention the Israeli aggression launched against the port of Latakia on 17 December 2021, which caused staggering damage to material and equipment owned by the United Nations in Syria.

In clear coordination with this Israeli aggression, we now hear escalating threats and statements from the President of the Turkish regime about his determination to launch a military action against our territories in the north with the objective of establishing a so-called safe zone. Those statements unequivocally prove the aggressive policies of the Erdoğan regime, which are a continuation of his other subversive practices aimed at destabilizing Syria by way of supporting terrorism, displacing people and causing demographic change, in addition to Turkification that constitutes ethnic cleansing by his illegitimate forces together with terrorist agents sponsored by him which are deployed to certain geographical zones.

Moreover, terrorist groups continue to commit crimes against Syrians, the most recent of which was the attack by Da'esh terrorist organization against a civilian bus on the Raqqa-Homs road this morning, which claimed the lives of 11 military martyrs, two civilians and injuring others. This terrorist act coincided with reports of 30 agents of Da'esh escaping from one of the detention centres controlled by Qasad separatist militias and supervised by the United States occupation forces.

We have listened to Under-Secretary-General Griffiths' briefing, and we fully recognize the challenges that he and his team are facing in providing support to Syrians, in collaboration with the Syrian Government. These challenges stem from the obstacles put in place by Western countries and donors that have chosen to politicize humanitarian action against my country. Those countries have directly and indirectly refused to implement resolution 2585 (2021), which was unanimously adopted by the Security Council one year ago (see S/PV.8817), in which Council members agreed to take serious and tangible steps to enhance humanitarian delivery from within the Syrian territories

and to increase early-recovery projects pertaining to essential services.

Today, as the resolution is about to expire, the members of the Security Council are once again discussing the renewal thereof. Some of them have been launching fake media campaigns calling for that renewal, notwithstanding the fact that they have been trying for many months to cause it to fail. A realistic glance at the results of its implementation proves that the resolution has not realized any of its objectives. In that regard, I would like to highlight a number of points related to its implementation.

First, the concerns and the staggering defects of the cross-border mechanism have not been addressed, especially as it violates the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria, in addition to the absence of transparency in its tasks, its cooperation with unknown parties and the fact that it turns a blind eye to the fact that humanitarian aid ends up in the hands of the terrorist groups that control the Idlib area and use it to finance their activities and gain allegiances.

Secondly, humanitarian delivery operations are very selective, as Western countries have reneged on their commitments to enhance delivery from within and continue to focus on the cross-border mechanism. That was manifest in the significant disparity between the number of cross-border convoys and that of cross-line convoys. For more than 5,000 trucks of the cross-border mechanism throughout the last 11 months, we witnessed the crossing of only five cross-line convoys, including 70 trucks — 5,000 cross-border trucks as opposed to only 70 cross-line trucks.

That approach is evidence of the misinformation propagated by Western countries pertaining to the resolution, as they are fighting its implementation on the ground. Meanwhile, those countries have turned a blind eye to the obstacles placed by the Turkish regime, its terrorist agents and Western allies as regards the implementation of the resolution. In fact, the Turkish regime and its terrorist agents are the only beneficiaries of the continued mechanism.

Thirdly, the so-called donors' community did not support the implementation of resolution 2585 (2021), as the donors took steps that run counter to the resolution and spared no effort in fighting the principle of early recovery and resilience, and linked the same to politicized conditions, in clear violation of the guidelines concerning humanitarian and developmental action.

In the light of the foregoing, my country holds the United States, Britain and France fully responsible for the failure of the implementation of the main pillars of resolution 2585 (2021), and we stress the need to not be fooled by the misinformation campaigns launched by those countries that claim that the renewal of the resolution is absolutely necessary. Pressuring United Nations humanitarian agencies into issuing statements that they know to be fake is totally unacceptable.

In conclusion, my country reiterates our request that the economic terrorism policies and the collective punishment embodied in the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States of America and the European Union on the Syrian people should stop, as that is an obstacle to improve the humanitarian situation. Those who stand in solidarity with the Syrian people should not impose on them such economic and inhumane sanctions or demonstrate animosity towards them.

Syria calls on the Security Council and the Secretary-General to uphold their responsibilities and put an end to the acts of aggression against the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and to the illegitimate foreign military presence on its territories, as well as to the sponsorship of terrorist organizations, separatist militias and the pillaging of the national assets of the country. It is unacceptable for the Security Council to stay silent vis-à-vis all those violations of the Charter of the United Nations.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Mr. Takht Ravanchi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank the briefers for their statements.

The 11-year conflict and the aggression, occupation and terrorism have brought about enormous hardships for the Syrian people. The situation has been aggravated by the unilateral sanctions, which have stymied the implementation of resolution 2585 (2021), which calls for the provision of basic services and the implementation of early-recovery and reconstruction projects, thus impeding Syria's reconstruction efforts and hampering humanitarian aid delivery in a variety of ways, even delaying the return of refugees and displaced persons.

Furthermore, the Syrian Government's ability to achieve economic and social stability as well as improve the living conditions of the Syrian people has been

undermined by those illegal measures. According to a United Nations report, 14.6 million people will require humanitarian aid in 2022, up 1.2 million from 2021.

Basic services such as water, electricity and health care are becoming increasingly scarce. In the light of the dire situation in Syria, the provision of humanitarian aid is essential, and political circumstances should not be allowed to prevent humanitarian aid from reaching the people in need. That must, however, be done with full respect for Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity.

The Astana format guarantors, during their recent meeting earlier this month, expressed deep concern about the humanitarian situation in Syria, emphasizing the need to remove impediments and increase humanitarian assistance to all Syrians across the country without discrimination, politics or preconditions. They also condemned unilateral sanctions that violate international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations, including any discriminatory measures such as waivers for specific regions that could lead to the country's collapse by helping separatist agendas.

We believe that in order to support the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Syria and achieve progress in the political settlement process, the international community and the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies must increase their assistance to the entirety of Syria through early-recovery and resilience projects such as the restoration of basic infrastructure assets, including water and power supply facilities, schools and hospitals.

In that context, we support the Syrian Government's full cooperation with the United Nations and the numerous humanitarian organizations involved in cross-line aid delivery in Syria as a safe and legal method.

We also emphasize the importance of the cross-border aid delivery mechanism; however, we reiterate our consistent position that that mechanism should be considered as an exceptional and temporary measure imposed by specific circumstances and that humanitarian aid to those in need must be delivered in cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government and from within Syrian territory. That will help prevent aid from being diverted to terrorist groups.

We emphasize the need to facilitate the safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees and

internally displaced persons to their places of origin in Syria while respecting their right to return.

We commend the recent declaration of amnesty for all Syrian nationals convicted of crimes committed before 30 April 2022. That decision, which covers all Syrians both at home and abroad, demonstrates the constructive approach of the Syrian Government.

We salute the Working Group on the Release of Detainees/Abductees, the Handover of Bodies and the Identification of Missing Persons for the successful and effective operation involving the mutual release of detainees on 13 June. With the support of the Astana guarantors, the Syrian sides have demonstrated their determination to build mutual confidence.

We highlight the significant role of the Constitutional Committee in facilitating the political settlement of the Syrian conflict. In that light, we applaud the Special Envoy's efforts in facilitating the eighth round of the Syrian Constitutional Committee and the announcement that the next session will be held from July 25 to 29.

The Israeli regime continues to violate Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while the Security Council continues to be mute in that regard. We strongly condemn Israel's prolonged occupation of the Syrian Golan, as well as its numerous breaches of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the most recent attacks that targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure, in particular terrorist attacks against Damascus International Airport.

Those Israeli malign and terrorist acts violate international law, international humanitarian law and Syria's sovereignty and jeopardize regional stability and security. We recognize Syria's legitimate right to defend itself in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We call on the Security Council to abandon its double standards and condemn the repeated Israeli acts of aggression unequivocally and hold the lawless regime accountable for its acts of aggression and malicious activities.

Iran continues to support the Government and the people of Syria in their efforts to restore the unity and territorial integrity of their country.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

**Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Türkiye):** I thank the Secretary-General for his remarks. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and Mr. Iyad Agha for their briefings.

The worst man-made humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War continues unfolding in Syria, and today needs are at their highest level since the beginning of the conflict 11 years ago. Let me remind the Security Council of the picture we are looking at: 4.4 million people live in north-west Syria; 4.1 million of them are in need of humanitarian aid; 2.8 million are internally displaced persons, 80 per cent of whom are children, elderly persons and women living in overcrowded camps, with most of them having been displaced multiple times.

Through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing alone, the United Nations cross-border mechanism delivers aid to the most vulnerable 2.4 million people in the area, with an average of 800 trucks a month. Since July 2014, more than 47,000 truckloads of aid have been delivered via the Bab Al-Hawa crossing point. More than 2 million doses of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines, as well as more than 221,000 childhood vaccines, have been delivered to north-west Syria through the United Nations cross-border mechanism.

As we have said before in this Chamber, there is no hidden agenda at issue here. The aim is nothing other than to save lives. We simply cannot turn a blind eye to the millions of Syrians squeezed in north-west Syria, most of whom are living in desperate conditions. We cannot abandon them to their fate. They are in need of cross-border humanitarian aid, and the best way to deliver it is through the United Nations cross-border operations.

We are talking about one of the most sophisticated, scrutinized and transparent humanitarian assistance systems ever put in place by the international community — one that includes multiple layers of checks to ensure the highest possible degree of transparency and the United Nations full control of the entire operation humanitarian. The humanitarian nature of the cross-border assistance is consistently inspected by the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic at the trans-shipment hub in Hatay province.

The Secretary-General's reports have confirmed time and again that there have been no incidents of non-humanitarian items being found among those

consignments. A halt in the delivery of United Nations food assistance, critical medical supplies and other life-saving aid would threaten the lives of the millions of people who rely on us to keep them alive. As the Secretary-General recently emphasized, the extension of the cross-border mandate is a moral and humanitarian imperative. It must be guided solely by humanitarian considerations and should not be politicized.

We would like to remind all Council members that, in the absence of the Monitoring Mechanism, humanitarian operations will only become less transparent, accountable and effective. Make no mistake: the Mechanism is a reflection of the international community's commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria. The question therefore is: Can anyone who respects human life and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations afford to disrupt such a vital system?

Türkiye constructively facilitates cross-line humanitarian deliveries and will continue to do so. Further progress on cross-line access, including to Ras Al-Ayn, also requires increased engagement from the United Nations country office in Damascus, the Russian Federation and the regime.

Türkiye is providing temporary protection to close to 4 million Syrians with access to health care, including COVID-19 vaccines, education, the labour market and social assistance and services. In the past 11 years, more than 750,000 Syrian babies have been born in Türkiye. Together with around 330,000 international protection applicants and status holders of other nationalities, Türkiye has hosted the largest number of asylum seekers and refugees in the world since 2014 — bringing the total to more than 4 million refugees under Türkiye's pro tempore protection, which

is a statistic that exceeds the total population of many United Nations Member States. We will continue to do our utmost to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the brave and resilient Syrian people. Yet on this World Refugee Day, let me reiterate that the scale and magnitude of Türkiye's efforts in the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis, including the refugee aspect, calls for greater international solidarity and burden-sharing. That is a moral and legal responsibility that rests with the international community, including the members of the Council.

The world entrusted the permanent members of the Security Council to protect the people whom we have pledged to serve, including the millions of Syrians whose lives depend on us. They want to see a united Council able to make the right decisions and uphold its moral obligations. The Council must heed those calls and the joint appeal made by the heads of the relevant United Nations agencies last week. We urge Council members to do what is right and preserve the indispensable United Nations cross-border mechanism.

As to the hallucinatory statement made earlier by the representative of the criminal Syrian regime, I will repeat that I do not consider him as my legitimate counterpart. His presence here is an affront to the millions of Syrians who have suffered countless crimes at the hands of the regime. Therefore, I will not dignify his delusional accusations with a response.

**The President:** There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I will now adjourn the meeting so that the Council can continue its discussion on the subject in closed consultations.

*The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.*