

Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the escalation in Northwest Syria

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The recent military escalation in Northwest Syria, with air attacks and artillery shelling targeting schools and hospitals, including with the use of barrel bombs, is an unacceptable violation of international law. Far too many lives have been lost, far too much suffering has been inflicted to the Syrian people.

More than 150,000 civilians have been newly displaced and many have died. As always, women and children are disproportionately affected by this escalation.

We mourn the victims and wish a speedy recovery to the many wounded. We support the call for justice that comes from Syrians. We will never stop insisting on accountability for the perpetrators. We will keep on working to bring relief to the Syrian people.

The European Union recalls that Russia and Turkey, as the guarantors of the Sochi agreement, have an obligation to ensure its implementation. The lives of three million civilians are at stake. The parties to the conflict have an obligation under international law that humanitarian assistance must reach all populations in need.

Any further escalation of violence also risks having a negative impact on the work of the UN Special Envoy to resume intra-Syrian talks in Geneva. We reiterate that only a political solution based on intra-Syrian negotiations and in line with the 2012 Geneva Communique and UNSCR 2254 can promote a sustainable peace in Syria.

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