

Statement by the Federal Foreign Office on the situation in Syria

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22.02.2018 - Press release 

A Federal Foreign Office Spokesperson issued the following statement today (22 February) on the situation in Syria:

It is almost impossible to understand that the members of the United Nations Security Council did not reach an agreement today. An agreement would have given those suffering in Syria, particularly the hundreds of thousands of besieged civilians in eastern Ghouta, at least a brief respite from the never-ending air raids and brutal violence.

Once again, whether it concerns the use of chemical weapons or humanitarian issues, Russia is protecting Assad's regime, even when the most serious human rights abuses are involved. However, there is still some hope that an agreement can be reached after all. We call on the decision-makers in Moscow to agree to a temporary ceasefire.

Upholding fundamental principles of international humanitarian law is not something to be negotiated. These principles are a fundamental achievement of the civilised world. It is of the utmost importance that humanitarian access be facilitated. That goes for Syria as a whole and particularly for eastern Ghouta in view of the terrible situation there. We thus call on all parties to end the fighting, be it in Ghouta or Afrin.

Our stance on Afrin is also clear. We recognise that Turkey has legitimate security interests. It is equally clear that we are gravely concerned about the obvious risk of escalation. That is why we repeatedly make clear in our talks with Turkey that its security interests must be balanced and reflect requirements. However, the entire situation in and around Afrin primarily shows that we are facing an extremely complex political problem and therefore urgently need to return to a political process.

That applies to the negotiations in Geneva. And with regard to the role of international stakeholders in particular, it means that all powers, especially the Astana Process guarantors, must behave constructively. We will not stop urging this."

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