

Syria: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell

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The ongoing renewed fighting in and around Idlib represents a serious threat to international peace and security. It is causing an untold human suffering among the population, and having a grave impact on the region and beyond. The European Union needs to redouble efforts to address this terrible human crisis with all the means at its disposal.

I am therefore calling for an extraordinary meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council next week to discuss the unfolding situation, in particular at the request of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece.

Over the past days, I have been in contact with key actors. I have called for an immediate de-escalation and for a lasting ceasefire, deplored the loss of lives, and offered EU support to mitigate the consequences of the crisis.

There is only a political solution to this crisis.

Everybody, especially the Syrian regime, needs to urgently re-engage in a political process under the auspices of the United Nations.

We also have to continue mobilising resources to reduce the suffering of the civilian population to provide shelter, food and medicine. And EU member states also continue to do their part. Humanitarian access needs to be ensured, including to the most remote areas, where the most vulnerable people are. I underlined this in all my contacts over the past days.

At the same time, we continue to follow closely the migration situation at our external borders. The EU - Turkey Statement needs to be upheld. The EU is engaged in supporting Greece and Bulgaria in addressing the unfolding situation.

The extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council next week will be an opportunity to focus on the latest developments and to continue our joint work on all fronts. We need to ensure that our collective action has the highest possible impact if we want to effectively address the crisis and to contribute to paving the way for a political solution.