

Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini after her phone call with UNSE for Syria, Staffan de Mistura

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The conflict in Syria has already caused unspeakable sufferings to millions of people forced to live under siege or to leave their country; these days we risk a new escalation in Idlib that has to be avoided, or those who have decided it or allowed it will be held responsible in front of their peoples and of history.

A military offensive in Idlib would put at risk the lives of more than three million civilians living in the region and result in a new humanitarian catastrophe. Any use of chemical weapons could have devastating human and humanitarian consequences. Moreover, a full-scale military operation in Idlib province would escalate an already dangerous conflict in a volatile region.

Idlib is the last remaining de-escalation zone in Syria that the Astana guarantors committed to safeguard. The European Union calls on the Astana guarantors to follow through on their commitment and protect civilians as a matter of priority. All necessary measures to protect civilian lives as well as unhindered, safe and sustainable humanitarian access need to be ensured.

As European Union, we continue to support the efforts of the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura, with whom I spoke again today on the phone, with a view of an inclusive credible and sustainable political solution in Syria. Only a political process can bring to a solution to the conflict that respects the freedom and the dignity of all Syrian people in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2254 and the Geneva Communiqué.

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