European External Action Service (EEAS)

Syria: Statement by the High Representative on the 12th anniversary of the beginning of the conflict

2023-03-16 · EEAS Press Team

This week marks the 12th anniversary since peaceful protests began throughout Syria and were brutally repressed by the Assad regime, provoking a conflict which continues to this day. Huge human rights abuses and grave violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict continue to be perpetrated, in particular by the Syrian regime and its allies. The conflict claimed well over 400 000 lives and deprived millions of Syrians of their homes. Syrian refugees constitute the largest displacement crisis in the world with 6.6 million registered refugees. Another 6.8 million people are displaced within Syria.

The earthquakes that struck the Southeast of Türkiye and the North of Syria in February had a devastating impact and further exacerbated the suffering caused by the existing conflict across Syria. A country at peace would have been much better prepared to face this tragic event, and equipped to address its consequences. To help alleviate the suffering of those affected by this earthquake the EU is hosting a dedicated donors conference next Monday in Brussels.

The international community must redouble its efforts to reach a durable and comprehensive political solution for Syria. The European Union remains fully committed to this goal; and will continue to support the efforts of UN Special Envoy Pedersen in the search for a way forward that respects the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian state.

Until the regime engages meaningfully in a political solution to the conflict in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, the European Union will remain opposed to normalisation with the Syrian regime.

The EU continues to stand with its partners in the Global Coalition to defeat Da’esh/ISIS as the Coalition seeks to stabilise the north east of Syria in order to ensure its enduring defeat.

Syria remains a priority for the European Union. This is why on 15th June, the European Union will organize already the 7th Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the region, with the participation of governments, international organisations, and Syrian civil society. The Conference will continue to allow the international community to renew its political commitment vis-à-vis the Syrian people, will provide an opportunity for new financial pledges to be made, and will provide Syrians themselves with an opportunity to have their voice heard.

The EU and its Member States remain the largest provider of international aid and deliver humanitarian, stabilisation, and resilience assistance inside Syria and in neighbouring countries. At last year’s Brussels conference the EU and its Member States pledged €2.6 billion for Syria and the region, for 2022 alone.

Source: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/syria-statement-high-representative-12th-anniversary-beginning-conflict_en