

Video Statement by Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on the occasion of the Conference “Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region”

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30.03.2021 - Speech 

A decade has passed since 15 schoolchildren sprayed the slogan of the Arab Spring on a wall in the town of Dara'a: “The people demand the fall of the regime.”

Assad's secret police arrested and tortured these children.

Since then, a decade of death and destruction was brought upon the people of Syria by the regime and its international supporters – crushing their hopes for change.

The question before us today is: what can we do to restore hope in a better future for Syria?

First of all, we must not accept the status quo.

- Over the past ten years, half of the Syrian population has had to flee.
- 90 percent live in poverty.
- And 2.4 million children cannot go to school.

That situation will never be sustainable. Assad and his international supporters must finally understand this.

Sham elections in a ruined country cannot replace a real political process. Only a genuine commitment to international diplomacy and to the political process outlined in Resolution 2254 will lead to a sustainable solution.

We are willing to offer the “good steps for good steps” that Geir Pedersen recently called for.

But let me be clear: there will be no reconstruction without a meaningful political process.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Justice can also restore hope.

Of course, the recent handing down of a jail sentence by a German Court against a former member of the Syrian secret police won't heal the wounds of the past. But it is a start. And a victory for all Syrians who have been suffering all these years.

And, lastly, hope can grow from international solidarity. We have heard from Mark Lowcock how desperate the humanitarian situation is.

- Maintaining cross-border access for humanitarian assistance is therefore essential. The lives of almost 3 million people in northwest Syria depend on it.
- Host countries in the region deserve more than just our gratitude. They need our fullest support.
- And, of course, proper funding is crucial. Today, Germany is therefore making its largest pledge in the last four years: 1.738 billion euro.

Ladies and gentlemen,
The Syrian tragedy must not last another ten years.

Ending it begins by restoring hope.

It begins with our commitments – here, today.

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Keywords

[Syrian Arab Republic](#) →

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