

Upholding our shared responsibility to help the people of Syria

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Thank you, Mr Secretary. And can I also thank everyone who has briefed the Council today in the most powerful and heartfelt terms.

It's been ten years since the protestors from across Syria gathered peacefully to call for a better government and for democracy.

The brutality and, frankly, the devastating nature of the conflict which was then unleashed on them has created a humanitarian catastrophe.

We've seen more than half a million people have been killed, tens of thousands have been detained and tortured, and more than 11 million have been displaced. Truly barbaric on a scale that is unprecedented.

Ultimately, we will need a UN-led, inclusive and sustainable political solution to end this conflict, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

We are committed to supporting the United Nations' diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully, and to support UN Special Envoy Pedersen in his vital work towards securing some kind of UN political track, which is the only way we will deliver a lasting and enduring settlement to the conflict.

At the same time, right now, there are an estimated 13 million people in need in Syria.

Lives and livelihoods continue to be lost.

Syrians continue to lack the most basic access to food supplies that all of us take for granted.

For the humanitarian response to keep pace with the increase in those needs, the volume and the frequency of aid being delivered via Damascus to northern Syria must be ramped up, including to those areas outside of regime control.

But this, alone, won't be enough.

The regime and the Russian Federation claim that the loss of three border crossings is not important.

They claim that all humanitarian needs can be met via Damascus.

And yet the overwhelming evidence and advice of experts demonstrates that that is simply not the case.

Cross-border access is absolutely vital to delivering life-saving aid that 2.4 million people need each month in North West Syria.

This Council has heard repeatedly since June 2020 that "cross-line" assistance via Damascus is just not delivering at the scale or the frequency that is needed to meet humanitarian needs, including basic health needs.

This is compounded by disruptions in delivery due to blocked access, bureaucracy, and, as we saw just last week, military operations.

Let me be clear: this is totally unacceptable and it is responsible for making the humanitarian crisis even worse.

Bearing in mind the context of the growing catastrophe that is unfolding before our eyes, the rationale for renewing the cross-border mandate in July is clearer and more vital than ever before.

For the survival of many, many innocent Syrian people, UN Security Council Resolution 2533 has to be renewed.

We have a shared responsibility in this Council to do all in our power to help the people of Syria.

They must not be forgotten and they really cannot be left alone to face yet another wave of brutal violence.

Thank you, Mr Secretary. Thank you, Mr President.

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