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Statement by a Federal Foreign Office spokesperson on the agreement on a cross- border mechanism for Syria in the UN Security Council on 12 July 2022

12.07.2022 - Press release 

The agreement reached in the UN Security Council today to extend the cross-border mechanism was overdue. International support with humanitarian assistance is vital to the survival of millions of people in Syria. By blocking a better solution, Russia has ruthlessly imposed its own power interests on the backs of the suffering population. Despite the fact that this six-month extension is a minimal compromise, humanitarian assistance can now continue to be delivered from Turkey to northwestern Syria by the UN on the basis of the agreement reached today.

This is the very least we can do as supplies for and the lives of two and a half million people, the vast majority of whom are women and children, depend on this to a large extent. Their need can at least be alleviated somewhat in this way, and the German Government will continue to help ensure that this happens. Last year, Germany provided more than 700 million euro for humanitarian measures in the context of the Syrian conflict, of which more than 100 million euro went to northwestern Syria. At this year's Brussels donor conference for Syria and neighbouring countries, Germany made the highest bilateral pledge of 1.05 billion euro. This means that Germany will continue to support the UN's humanitarian assistance plans.

Background information

Today, after extremely difficult negotiations, the UN Security Council agreed to keep the Bab al-Hawa border crossing from Turkey to northwestern Syria open. Russia had previously vetoed a draft resolution that 13 Security Council members had supported, with China abstaining. The agreement provides for the crossing to remain open for at least six more months (until 10 January 2023), and, in principle, allows for an extension for another six months (until 10 July 2023) – subject to further approval by the UN Security Council. The mandate of the previous resolution had previously expired and the suffering population would thus have been largely cut off from further humanitarian assistance provided by the UN. While NGOs are also delivering humanitarian assistance, the role of the UN in providing supplies is of paramount importance. Seventy per cent of the food currently being delivered to northwestern Syria is provided by the UN World Food Programme.

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