

Remarks by Federica Mogherini and by António Guterres upon arrival to the Brussels Conference "Supporting the Future of Syria and the region"

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It is a pleasure for me to welcome to the Secretary General of the United Nations [António Guterres]. We are co-chairing today with the United Nations and other governments this conference. This, I think, symbolizes the strength of the partnership between the United Nations and the European Union. The European Union is a strong - possibly the strongest - supporter of the UN system and the presence of the Secretary General herein Brussels today is for us a very clear sign and commitment in partnership and working together, especially in these hours, especially in these days, when you see where the forces for good, being it on humanitarian, or being on political solutions are. So, Mr Secretary General, welcome. It is not a happy day for the international community but it is a day when the multilateral approach is more needed than ever and our common work it is.

António Guterres, UN Secretary General

Thank you very much. The horrific events of yesterday demonstrate that war crimes are ongoing on in Syria and that international humanitarian law remains being violated frequently. The UN Security Council will meet today. We have been asking for accountability in relation to the crimes that have been committed and I am confident that the UN Security Council will live up to its responsibilities.

At the same time, these events only prove how important these conferences are and how important it is to bring together international unity to be able to put pressure on the parties of the conflict, and on the countries that have influence in the parties of the conflict, to put aside their differences and understand that there is a fundamental need to put an end to this horrific war, to make sure that in Astana a real ceasefire is implemented and monitored, to make sure that in Geneva peace talks have substance and move forward for a political solution and at the same time let's not forget the need for the international community to assume their responsibilities.

This has been the most important initiative of the European Union in relation to this, in order for effective humanitarian aid to be provided to the Syrians. Syrians are far suffering horribly inside Syria and the Syrian refugees go on with very, very terrible situations and, at the same time, for the international community to express a much more effective solidarity to host communities, building their resilience and to the refugee hosting countries that need budget supports, structural support in their investments in relation to water, sanitation, education, health. These countries are bringing their people to create a global public good supporting Syrian refugees and they have not had until now not enough solidarity for the international community. So I hope that this conference will

be a very clear signal of the commitment of the international community to the Syrian people and the commitment also to those countries around Syria that have been so generous with Syrian refugees.

How can you make sure that the donors will promise and give [the funds] afterwards?

As a matter of fact, most of the money that has been pledged in the successive Syrian conferences has been effectively delivered. The problem is that is not enough in relation to the dramatic needs that we are facing.

Do you hold the regime [of Bashar al-Assad] responsible for the chemical attack?

I think we need a very clear investigation to remove our doubts and we need to have accountability based on the results of that investigation.

Is this a sort of test for the UN Security Council?

It is a very important meeting for the UN Security Council, I am sure.

But is it a test of its responsibilities?

I do not think we need to classify if it is a test or not. Everything we do is a test to a certain extent. This is a moment of truth. I hope this moment will be able to mobilise the capacity of all those who have responsibilities in this situation. Thank you very much.