

Remarks by High Representative Mogherini at the EU hosted high-level event on Syria in the margins of the 72nd UN General Assembly

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Dear friends,

let me start by thanking all of you for taking the time in a very busy and important week here in New York and for joining us in this meeting. We thought that this was the right time to reconvene, in this moment, to see together how we can help the Syrian people to get out of one of the darkest pages of history.

The war in Syria is not over yet. The people of Syria are still suffering. And every day the social and economic fabric of Syria suffers new damage. And as the war in Syria continues, the recovery would be much, much slower, and reconciliation more difficult and more painful. Millions of refugees are eager to go back to their country, to their communities and to their normal lives. Also for them, and also for the incredible solidarity and resilience shown by their host communities in neighbouring countries, Syria has to find its way out of war, rise from its ashes and start anew.

At the Brussels conference last April, we collectively pledged almost 10 billion dollars in two years, in an incredible demonstration of unity and solidarity from the international community. Money for Syrians - men, women, children - inside the country and in the region. We now need to move from pledging to delivering. And we, the European Union, we are delivering. Commissioner Stylianides will tell you more about that.

We need to closely monitor this delivering during these coming weeks and months, because pledging conferences need then to translate the commitments into real actions on the ground. But to ensure that this work is consistently carried out, we are going to host, as the European Union, a second Brussels conference next spring. In this way, we will launch a Brussels process that will put our convening power at the service of the Syrian people - all of them. Those that are still inside the country and those that are in the region.

And we will offer, to all of us, all the international community, the opportunity to come together and unite, as we have done last April in Brussels. And affirm and confirm both our financial commitments and our political will. Because our commitment is not just about money - even if money is important.

Since our last meeting in Brussels, the situation on the ground has improved. Da'esh has been driven out from its strongholds, thanks to the sacrifice of many. The Astana process has helped, reducing violence and defining de-escalation zones. For many Syrians, this makes the difference between life and death. But all this progress can only become permanent and sustainable, if it is shored-up by a political solution to the conflict. And this is why the conference this year is not only about humanitarian support, but it's also about our support of the political process in Geneva.

There can be no long-lasting peace, nor a long-lasting defeat of terrorism in Syria, without an inclusive agreement, negotiated in Geneva, under UN auspices and under the wise leadership of my friend [United Nations and Special Envoy to [Syria \(link is external\)](#)] Staffan de Mistura. Recent history, including in the region, tells us that local reconciliation agreements are key elements of any solution, of any conflict, but do not hold, and cannot hold, in the lack of a broad political agreement.

In the case of Syria an agreement that guarantees that the country remains one, united, and is the place where all Syrians feel at home - safe and respected in their differences. A partition of Syria would lead to more unrest. It is not what the Syrians want for their country. It is not, definitely not what the region needs. With the progress made in Astana and on the ground, it is now time for the parties in Geneva to start serious work. All of us in this room, as different and diverse as we are, we can play a very important role in accompanying them in this difficult mediation under Staffan's wise leadership.

In the meantime, our humanitarian support will continue and possibly expand. We are, as European Union, willing and ready to bring our help also to the de-escalation zones and to the liberated areas, making sure that the aid will actually reach the people in need. The Syrians living in these areas don't only need food and medicines - they do. But they also want to go back to their lives.

For this reason, we in the European Union are now looking into means of support that go beyond the classical humanitarian aid. We have great expertise in de-mining. We could work on early recovery, providing basic services and health facilities, helping life start again - where it can start again.

Let us be clear. We will only go from this early recovery to reconstruction once a credible and inclusive political agreement has been reached in Geneva. We will be prepared when the day of peace finally comes, because we believe it can come. We could use the perspective of reconstruction also as a powerful tool to facilitate reconciliation and to encourage a political agreement. It's a dividend of peace.

As Europeans, we know the power of peace can make different parties make courageous steps. This is why our work is so important - today and next spring in Brussels. We can together, under the UN leadership, close together one of the darkest chapters in our modern history.

I thank you very much once again, and I will pass now the floor to Staffan de Mistura.

Link:

<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?sitelang=en&ref=I143902>

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