

PRESS RELEASE

512/19

27/06/2019

Syria: Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU

The EU is deeply concerned by the situation in the north-west of Syria, namely in the provinces of Idlib and northern Hama. After more than eight years of conflict the Syrian population continues to suffer indiscriminate shelling, airstrikes, bombing and attacks. Military strikes by Syrian regime forces - supported by Russia - have destroyed IDP camps, schools and health facilities, which should be the very safest spaces. More than 230 civilians have lost their lives, more than 330,000 have fled in just six weeks, and three million more remain at risk.

The EU firmly calls on all sides to fully respect International Humanitarian Law. We strongly condemn the indiscriminate attacks on civilians, hospitals and schools, including the use of barrel bombs. The EU reaffirms its firm determination to hold accountable those who violate IHL.

The continued presence and activities of UN-listed terrorist groups in the area contribute to the suffering of civilians, and remain of grave concern. Yet fighting terrorist groups cannot justify violations of IHL.

The EU calls on all sides to restore an immediate cease fire and demands that all sides abide by it, ensuring the protection of and unhindered humanitarian assistance to the civilian population, and giving space for the start of a genuine Syrian political process.

The EU fully supports UN-led efforts towards a political settlement in line with UNSCR 2254, but there can be no hope of progress while violence continues. The EU reiterates that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Syria. Only a credible, negotiated political solution can end the Syria crisis.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, and Albania* and the EFTA countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

*North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

press@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press