Council of the European Union — Press release

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on Syria and the situation in Aleppo

2016-08-18

The EU strongly condemns the escalation of violence in Aleppo, the continuous bombardments and the sieges that have put the lives of hundreds of thousands of Syrians in further danger and is hindering the efforts of the international community both to provide humanitarian aid and to support a political solution to the conflict. Recalling that the Syrian authorities have the primary responsibility for the protection of its people, the EU strongly condemns all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure and the excessive and disproportionate attacks by the Syrian regime. The EU believes that a Syrian led political transition, as supported by the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), endorsed unanimously by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and agreed in talks convened by the United Nations, is the only way of putting an end to more than five years of conflict in Syria. The EU will continue to do all in its power to ensure the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué and relevant UNSC Resolutions. There is no military solution to the war and the ongoing escalation of violence has seriously put at risk the success of this process. The EU supports the ISSG co-chairs and the UN Special Representative in their efforts to create the conditions for restarting intra-Syrian talks in Geneva as soon as possible. The EU stands ready to fully and actively support these negotiations in close coordination with Staffan de Mistura and the two ISSG Co-chairs. Therefore, the EU and its Member States call for: - an immediate halt to the fighting in Aleppo to allow medical evacuations, deliveries of aid and repairing of essential water and electricity infrastructure. Humanitarian operations in Aleppo must serve a humanitarian purpose and fully comply with international humanitarian principles and standards. They cannot be part of any military strategy; - all parties to the conflict to restore the cessation of hostilities, ensure the lifting of all sieges and allow sustained, countrywide humanitarian access to those in need; - all international actors to abide by the commitments of the ISSG meeting of 17 May 2016. There will be no peace in Syria without a genuine political transition which is inclusive and representative of all Syrians. Once this transition has begun, the EU and its Member States will be in a position to provide immediate support to Syria's reconstruction and also to help the return of refugees and the internally displaced to their communities. The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this Declaration.

*The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Source: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/08/17-declaration-mogherini-on-syria-and-aleppo (EU Web Archive capture 20170115142705)