Joint Statement by High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Christos Stylianides on the recent attacks in Syria

Brussels, 3 October 2017

In the past two weeks, in Syria there has been the highest number of casualties in 2017, as a result of the heavy air attacks hitting civilians and civilian infrastructure, in particular hospitals and medical facilities, in Northern Syria. Since September 19, increased aerial bombardments across Idlib, Aleppo and Hama have left hundreds of civilians dead and many more injured. Amongst them children, women and also aid workers who are risking their lives to save those of others. This is a clear violation of international laws and conventions.

The EU recalls the strict obligation for all parties to the conflict to make the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure their primary responsibility, in line with International Humanitarian Law. The EU will work with the rest of the international community to guarantee that there will be no impunity for deliberate violations of International Humanitarian Law.

Moreover, we call upon all parties to the conflict to ensure that humanitarian organisations can conduct their operations unhindered. With hospitals and critical infrastructure in Northern Syria severely-damaged or even destroyed as result of the recent attacks, several humanitarian organizations have been forced to suspend their activities, further aggravating the human suffering.

As reaffirmed at the Syria event we organised in New York on the margins of the UN General Assembly, the EU continues to assist in finding a political solution to the conflict as the only viable way to end the suffering, as we remain committed to providing humanitarian assistance to all Syrian people in need, wherever they are and according to humanitarian principles. We expect de-escalation areas to be a step towards improving the situation on the ground, and creating the conditions for the success of the UN led intra-Syrian talks in Geneva.

STATEMENT/17/3666

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