



**PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



**Security Council Briefing
on the situation in the Middle East (Syria)
25 April 2025**

Greece's Statement delivered
by H.E. Ambassador Evangelos Sekeris
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Thank you, Mr. President.

I would also like to thank our briefers, Special Envoy Pedersen and ASG Msuya for their detailed briefings and committed work on this file.

Mr. President,

Several months since the seismic change that took place in last December, Syria still strives to find its footing.

A demanding political transition is currently unfolding, against the backdrop of precarious economic and security conditions.

We are ready to offer our support to Syria's transition and ensure that the Syrian people will see peace and prosperity once more after 14 years of bloodshed and deprivation.

In this context, I would like to highlight the following three points:

First. The political transition in Syria needs to be fully inclusive and Syrian-led and -owned, as justice and accountability remain critical.

Acknowledging the presence of the Syrian Foreign Minister Mr. Shaibani here with us today, let me reiterate that Greece stands in full support with the Syrian people. We are committed to continue engaging positively with Syria and assisting towards a brighter, more prosperous future for the benefit of the whole region. The Greek Foreign Minister was one of the first EU Ministers to visit Damascus in February and offer a concrete signal of support in this regard. At the same time, we expect from Syrian decision makers to opt for political inclusiveness, fully protecting and integrating all components of the Syrian society. This includes Christians, Alawites, Druze and Kurds. It also entails an active participation of women in the process. It is of paramount importance to avoid relapse into sectarian and inter-community violence.

Against this backdrop, we took note of the formation of the transitional government in Damascus. While it does indeed include one representative per society component, much is left to be desired, as it does not fully take into account the demographic data. We consider that there is

still space for improvement, especially in terms of the participation of women and the representation of all components of the Syrian society, also in key cabinet positions.

Likewise, the Constitutional Declaration as a framework for a multi-ethnic multi-religious society, is a significant first step, but state-building principles, such as the separation of powers and the introduction of checks and balances, are indispensable for the viability of institutions and the legitimacy of the administration.

Progress along the political transition track has not been met with universal acceptance from all communities. Their concerns and aspirations can be better expressed through the National Dialogue, which we urge the Authorities to keep alive in the ensuing political transition. We also encourage the deeper involvement of civil society components. As Special Envoy Pedersen noted: “the need for repairing deep sectarian fractures and mistrust is huge, and comprehensive work is required”.

Similarly, the agreement between the SDF and Damascus, on March 10th, is valuable, committing the parties to engaging non-violently. We welcome the recognition of key Kurdish needs that it implies, as well as the seeming stabilization of Northern Syria that it entails. We are closely monitoring next steps and implementation, considering the inclusion and integration of the Kurdish population in Syria to be essential for its stable future. We urge all regional actors to refrain from violence and inciting escalation in this regard.

Mr. President,

Recent political transition developments were overshadowed by the appalling violence in the coastal region in early March, involving the death of more than a thousand innocent civilians, mostly Alawites and Christians. The violence was rightfully and strongly condemned by this Council, on 14 March, clearly highlighting the urgency for full accountability and transitional justice. The swift decision of the caretaker Authorities to establish an Investigative Committee to hold the perpetrators accountable is seen as a positive move by the international community. We are now eager to welcome the publication of the transparent and impartial investigation process, encouraged by the positive meeting of the Committee with USG DiCarlo in Syria during her recent visit. In the same spirit, we invite the transitional government to allow the Independent International Commission of Inquiry to investigate all violations, and look forward to the presentation of the 11th Report of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) at the General Assembly on April 29th, encouraged by the Foreign Minister Shaibani’s scheduled participation in the said discussion.

Likewise, we were encouraged by the extensive discussion held between the Syrian transitional President and Special Envoy Pedersen on April 6th, fully supporting a more substantive and frequent engagement between Syria and the UN.

Second. Syria’s economic conditions are precarious, while international support is critically needed. I wish to reiterate Greece’s full solidarity with all Syrian people. Recognizing the harsh humanitarian conditions, as described by ASG Msuya during her sobering briefing, we pledged our support for Syria’s recovery at the recent Brussels Conference, contributing to the EU’s commitment of some 2.5 billion Euros.

With our consent and constructive engagement, the EU was swift in suspending certain restrictive measures as part of a gradual, conditional and reversible approach, and will continue

to examine possible further suspensions on the basis of close monitoring of the situation on the ground. This approach is adopted in solidarity with all Syrian people, as we attempt to ensure that expectations are met in terms of an inclusive political transition, accountability, as well as full adherence to International Law; including -let me stress- the International Law of the Sea.

In this context, we must also not lose sight of the right of all Syrians to return home and help rebuild their country.

Third and last point. The security situation requires our collective vigilance.

As often described by briefers to this Council, the threat of radical groups re-emerging in Syria is ever-present, as foreign fighters still operate within the country.

As advocated by Special Envoy Pedersen and other Council members, an effective approach to comprehensive Security Sector Reform, as well as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration is sorely needed. This is an area in which the UN is well-placed to contribute significantly, enjoying the required experience and expertise. We thus invite Syria to positively engage with the UN towards this goal.

We also believe that it is significant for regional stability to ensure the viability and security of camps holding ISIS fighters and their relatives in Northeast Syria.

We equally welcome as important for regional stability that Syria intends to positively engage with regional partners, such as Lebanon, and we hope that dialogue on bilateral issues, such as border delimitation, will begin.

Last but not least, we would be remiss not to reiterate our full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, which must be fully respected by all, upholding relevant international agreements and UNSC Resolutions.

Mr. President,

In concluding, let me stress that, as Syria stands at a crossroads, we must remain cautious of the dangers and challenges that lie ahead. We believe Syria's future can be bright and prosperous at the end of an inclusive political transition, involving transitional justice and accountability, as well as the improvement of the country's economic and security conditions. The Syrian people can count on Greece to be on their side along this path.

Thank you.