



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council briefing on
the situation in the Middle East (Syria)
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Greece's Statement delivered
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Thank you, Mr. President, and let me thank Special Envoy Pedersen and USG Tom Fletcher for their insightful briefings. I thank Ms Chourbaji for highlighting the importance of women's participation in Syria's recovery. I also acknowledge the presence of the new Syrian Ambassador, Mr. Ibrahim Olabi. Mr. Olabi, we welcome you to the Council as you strive for a new Syria at the UN.

Mr. President,

I want to highlight three points today.

First, the vision of a new Syria will only be realized once a truly inclusive political transition has been achieved. Syria is a country of tremendous wealth. A wealth that lies in its ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. After years of suffering, all Syrians deserve a country in which they feel protected, safe and included.

In this context, we took careful note of the announcement of the selection of two thirds of the country's legislative council by regional electoral committees. New legislative structures need to ensure democratic legitimacy and a fair representation for all. We regret the security conditions that led to the suspension of the electoral process in the Druze-dominated Sweida and the Kurdish-controlled governorates.

We expect the political transition to include all Syrians; Muslims, Christians, Druze, Kurds, and -importantly- women. It is clear that only if all religious and ethnic groups feel safe and politically represented can Syria move forward in its path for reconciliation, social cohesion and economic development.

It is encouraging, in this regard, that Syria's transitional President met with the Patriarch of Antioch last month. The leader of a community which has suffered a lot. Especially in the Mar Elias Church terrorist attack this summer.

Which brings me to my **second** point. Syria's volatile security landscape must be properly addressed – especially as the terrorist threat persists.

Perpetrators of violence, regardless of affiliation, must be brought to justice, in line with international norms. We welcome the roadmap agreed by Syria, Jordan and the US on restoring stability in Sweida, expecting full accountability.

Similarly, the Report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on violations committed against civilians in Coastal and Western Central Syria earlier this year must be followed-up. We urge the interim Authorities to do so.

Equally, we hope that genuine progress on the implementation of the March agreement between Damascus and the SDF will be made possible in the context of wider efforts to assure safety and inclusivity for all Syrians.

All regional actors must respect international law, refraining from incitement, threat or the use of force, as well as malign influence or interference.

Third, Syria needs to rebound, as its economy is currently in disarray and humanitarian needs remain urgent. Aware of the challenges on the ground, the EU was swift in lifting sanctions, in line with a gradual and reversible approach. It also introduced new listings under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, targeting those responsible for serious human rights abuses.

Syria needs to be rebuilt for the refugees to return home. Involving the diverse and wealthy Syrian diaspora to this end is necessary. In this sense, we reaffirm Syria's unity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, urging all to respect it fully.

Mr. President,

With the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly now upon us, Syria stands at a crossroads. We look forward to the address of Syria's transitional President next week – certainly a significant milestone in the country's history. We will remain hopeful but also vigilant, especially about a new Syria, which is inclusive for all and free from foreign interference.

Greece stands at the side of the Syrian people and the UN along this path.

Thank you.