



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 Deputy Special Envoy, Najat Rochdi, and OCHA Director, Ramesh Rajasingham, for their insightful briefings. I would also like to welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as Oman's and Türkiye's.

Mr. President,

I wish to highlight three points today.

First, turning the page on long-term and widespread internal division will require a fully inclusive political transition.

Taking note of Syria's President speech at the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, a truly historic moment for the country, the values of solidarity and co-existence must be used as a compass to uproot sectarianism.

It is clear that all Syrians, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, deserve a chance to peace and the right of equal representation.

In this context, we regret the low rate for women, as well as for ethnic and religious communities' representatives in the recent parliamentary elections. We also deplore the postponement of the vote in the Druze-dominated Sweida and the Kurdish-controlled governorates.

It is beyond doubt that the path towards a nation-wide reconciliation presupposes that all voices will be heard and taken into account; Muslims, Alawites, Christians, Druze, and Kurds must be fairly represented.

As my Prime Minister underlined at the UN General Assembly, the future of the country must be built on the full political representation for all religious and ethnic communities.

We expect that the Syrian Authorities will take bolder steps to that direction and will safeguard that all citizens will be able to live without fear.

Hence, we expect that the remaining 1/3 of the parliamentary seats will compensate for the under-represented components of society.

Second, breaking the shackles of violence is a prerequisite for restoring stability across the country.

Extremist elements are still present in Syria – as we unfortunately witnessed during the terrorist attacks against Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches in summer and the horrific violence in Sweida and the coastal region.

Similarly, echoing the remarks of Ms. Rochdi, we remain deeply concerned over the systematic attacks and kidnappings targeting women. Civilians must be protected at all times. Those responsible for criminal acts must be brought to justice.

The roadmap agreed by Syria, Jordan and the US on restoring stability in Sweida, as well as 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 on. We urge the Syrian Authorities to do so.

Furthermore, we welcome with hope the recent ceasefire between the Syrian forces and the SDF. The full implementation of the March agreement will help stitch together the country after years of fragmentation while ensuring safety and inclusivity for everyone.

At the same time, the situation in the North East of the country should not be used as a pretext for foreign interference.

Putting an end to violence is a prerequisite for Syria's reconstruction, as well as to the safe and voluntary return of refugees.

Which brings me to my **third** point. Bold economic reforms will be needed as the country navigates through severe financial restraints and immense humanitarian needs.

With 16.5 million people in urgent need of support, the international community should scale up its efforts and participate in rebuilding Syria.

The EU has already stepped in by lifting sanctions on a gradual and reversible basis, while also introducing new listings under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, targeting those responsible for serious human rights abuses.

Bilaterally, Greece has already expressed its readiness to stand by the Syrians and actively contribute to the reconstruction of the country. We are looking into further financial support to cover the humanitarian needs, as well as capacity building. This

commitment was also repeated by the Greek Prime Minister during his recent meeting with President Al Sharaa.

Mr. President,

While positive developments have recently unfolded in Gaza, it is high time to place peace at the epicentre of the wider region.

It is time for Syria to turn the page and commit to serious and honest engagement with its neighbours and international partners.

This was also underlined during the trilateral meeting between Greece, Cyprus and Syria on the margins of the General Assembly.

In this vein, the revitalized dialogue between Syria and Lebanon constitutes, beyond question, a step in the right direction and is mostly welcome.

In conclusion, Greece fully supports Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. A strong and prosperous country, worthy of the proud Syrian people, where the rule of International Law is respected and where the rights of all people are protected without exceptions.

I thank you.