



Security Council Meeting on the Situation in the Middle East (Syria)

Thursday 22 January 2026

Greece's Statement delivered
by Ambassador Aglaia Balta,
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations

Thank you, Mr. President.

I thank Assistant Secretary General Mr. Khiari and OCHA Director Ms. Wosornu for their briefings and I welcome the presence of the Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in the meeting.

As the new year has dawned upon us, let us acknowledge the progress that Syria achieved in 2025, but also the challenges it still faces. It has made progress toward recovery, greater stability and improved coordination with the UN, while marking tangible gains in humanitarian access. Challenges, however, remain; especially related to inclusivity and safeguarding the security and rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnic and religious background.

We recognize, welcome and support the efforts of the Syrian transitional government to stabilize and unite the country and its people, under extremely difficult circumstances. Simultaneously, we should not forget that 2025 was marked by violence against Alawites, Druze and Christians. The violence in the coastal region and Suwayda over the past year weighs heavily on our minds as we follow developments in the Kurd-majority Northeastern Syria.

Which brings me to my **first** point:

The clashes in Northeastern Syria underscore the continued fragility of the transition, leading to thousands fleeing and dozens dead. The ceasefire agreement between the Syrian government and the SDF should be fully and immediately implemented by all sides. We hope that the truce recently announced will indeed translate into a permanent ceasefire.

In this context, the Presidential decree formally recognizing Kurdish identity as part of Syria's national fabric is welcome. The recognition of the Kurdish language and the restoration of citizenship to all Kurdish Syrians constitutes tangible progress. The protection of Kurds must be ensured and their political rights safeguarded in a united

Syria. The clashes, however, highlighted the risks still present; particularly when tensions are exacerbated by external actors pursuing national agendas and threatening the use of force.

We call on all actors to act with restraint and avoid escalation that could destabilize the country and exacerbate ethnic tensions. And we should always be mindful of the adverse consequences that these developments may have in the fight against ISIS. The security of the DAESH/ ISIS detainee camps must be fully safeguarded and should not be used as a bargaining chip by any side. Should prisoners be released, a serious security threat would emerge. Overall, Security Sector Reform and countering terrorism and extremism are prerequisites for stability.

Second: only a fully inclusive and Syrian-owned political transition can secure lasting peace and stability. Such a transition must ensure the meaningful participation of all Syrians, including women, youth, and representatives of all communities; be it Muslim, Alawite, Kurd, Christian or Druze. The protection of all Syrians, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, or belief, is indispensable. All Syrians must feel safe. Besides, Syria's wealth lies in its diverse social fabric—which must be preserved. Safeguarding pluralism, equal citizenship, and the rule of law is a prerequisite for national reconciliation and sustainable recovery.

Finally, the humanitarian situation and the need for transitional justice need to be addressed. As highlighted in recent briefings, tens of thousands are still unable to return safely to Aleppo and the surrounding Northeast region. It is necessary to protect civilians at all circumstances and ensure that displaced persons safely return to their homes. At the same time, accountability and transitional justice are essential to break cycles of violence, restore trust, and lay the foundations for reconciliation and reconstruction. The recent visit of the EU leadership in Syria, where 620 million euros were pledged for its reconstruction, is demonstrative of our collective commitment to Syria's recovery.

In closing, Mr. President, Greece expresses its strong support for renewed and constructive engagement between the Syrian Arab Republic and the UN. We look forward to the prompt establishment of the Office of the Special Envoy in Damascus and the designation of its leadership. As demonstrated by the recent visit of the Security Council to Syria, its renewed relationship with the UN offers clear mutual benefits. Greece is actively supporting efforts that advance stability, inclusivity, and a peaceful future for all Syrians.

I thank you.