



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



Security Council Briefing on Syria 18 March 2026

Greece's Statement delivered
by H.E. Ambassador Aglaia Balta
Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations, New York

Thank you Mr. President, and let me welcome your participation, Ambassador Barrack.

I wish to thank our briefers, Assistant Secretary General Msuya and Deputy Special Envoy Cordone for their thorough remarks, and reiterate our support for the prompt establishment of the Office of the Special Envoy in Damascus.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the presence of Ms. Yusra Mardini, a proud Syrian woman and thank her for sharing her compelling vision for her country with us.

Let me start Mr. President, by saluting the restraint demonstrated by the Syrian leadership in navigating the current regional context.

Following Hezbollah's triggering of another round of escalation between Israel and Lebanon, Syria experiences the shockwaves of increased volatility in its immediate neighbourhood. Syria's stability and prosperity is key for the stability of the broader region. Greece will stand by Syria and spare no effort to help it navigate this challenging period and pursue the path of institutional and economic reforms and economic recovery.

On this note, I wish to stress the following points today:

Syria must pursue a fully inclusive, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition, while ensuring the protection and meaningful participation of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religion. The international community expects that all Syrians, be them Muslim, Alawite, Kurd, Christian or Druze, will meaningfully participate in their country's political affairs, governance and administration and feel protected, and fully part of this country. This is important for Syria's long-term stability and prosperity.

While progress has been made, this past year also saw major incidents of violence against civilians as highlighted in the recently published Commission of Inquiry Report. We mourn the victims of this indiscriminate violence, not forgetting those who died at the Greek-Orthodox Mar-Elias Church terrorist attack. These incidents are demonstrative of the work that lies ahead in terms of transitional justice and reconciliation. Work that can only be undertaken in cooperation with international institutions, such as the "Triple IM (International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism) or the Independent Institution on Missing Persons.

We welcome, in this context, the release of the final report on the July 2025 violence in Sweida and the referral of all suspects to justice. We expect justice to be delivered according to international standards, as a prerequisite for reconciliation. Work on transitional justice and other fields needs to be undertaken in collaboration with the UN, as the Deputy Special Envoy's recent visit highlighted.

Mr. President,

As this is CSW week, and as Ms. Mardini has demonstrated today the meaningful and equal participation of women in the Syrian political transition and security apparatus is critical and vital.

There is still work that lies ahead,

- in drafting the Constitution and ensuring the appropriate checks and balances;
- in filling the remaining parliamentary seats, in a way which will hopefully compensate for underrepresented components of the Syrian society;
- and in fully implementing the agreement with the SDF, among others.

Kurds should be fully integrated into Syrian society in a manner that provides them with a sense of protection and security and with their political and cultural rights safeguarded.

In this regard, we welcome once again the Presidential decree formally recognizing Kurdish identity and incentivizing inclusivity as a very positive step and we look forward to its full implementation.

Similarly, a structured, institutional manner for incorporating the input of Syrian civil society, is required.

Mr. President,

Syria is part of a volatile region whose instability must not push it over the brink. In a tragic twist of events, for many fleeing Lebanon, Syria now seems to be a safe haven. Albeit, the fact is also indicative of the progress made; a progress which remains vulnerable.

As Assistant Secretary-General Msuya described, humanitarian needs are stark for millions of Syrians. International support is thus sorely needed especially in the North-East, where some 120 thousand people remain displaced. Greece vows to do its utmost to support the Syrian people and stand by their side.

In addition, the danger of extremism and terrorism, nourished by instability and despair, looms large. The security of the remaining DAESH/ISIS detention centres and camps must be fully safeguarded and counterterrorism efforts must be carried out in conjunction with reforms in the security sector. It is important to have more information on the situation on the ground, following reports of escapes or liberations of detainees. On this occasion, we would like once again to acknowledge Iraq's decision to receive detainees in its territory.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

The will to turn the page is there. We must collectively support this, openly calling for course-correction when necessary, while taking stock of positive developments so far. The UN is a uniquely-placed advocate and partner in this journey, which has our full support.

I thank you.