

Concept note for the EU-hosted high-level meeting on the Syria crisis at UNGA73

**Wednesday 26 September 2018, 10.30-12.30
Conference Room 1, United Nations**

Following the 2017 and 2018 Brussels Conferences on '*Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region*' and building on the established practice of the last four years, the EU will host another Syria high-level side event at UNGA73.

Purpose

The Syrian conflict remains a major issue for regional stability in the Middle East. It has triggered the largest refugee crisis since World War II, generated massive displacements and a major humanitarian crisis affecting more than 13 million people, and put Syria's neighbours under considerable strain.

2018 has seen clear advances in the fight against Daesh due to the efforts of the Global Coalition. It also witnessed a string of territorial gains by the Syrian regime and its allies, often preceded by long sieges. The regime is already taking steps to prepare for the post-war phase, including on such complex issues as IDP and refugee returns and related legislations on housing, land and property rights and civil documentation. However, notwithstanding steps towards establishing a Constitutional Committee under UN auspices, there has been no breakthrough for a political settlement of the conflict that would address the root causes that led to the 2011 uprising. This continues to impede the prospects for a political transition, including efforts towards post-agreement reconstruction, and constitutes a risk to broader regional stability.

In this context, achieving lasting peace and stability in Syria, on the basis of UNSCR 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, remains of paramount importance. This event is yet another step to ensure that the international community stays committed to this essential objective and focused on the Syrian conflict and its humanitarian and resilience consequences, at national and regional level.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the high-level meeting will be to:

1. reaffirm international support to a political settlement of the Syrian conflict in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2254 and the Geneva Communiqué;
2. review the humanitarian situation inside Syria, particularly in the Idlib region, reaffirm the need for sustained, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need across the country, and address the need to respect and preserve the rights of all Syrians, including internally displaced people and refugees, especially when addressing protection issues and housing, land and property rights;
3. support efforts towards creating the conditions for safe, dignified and voluntary returns in line with international human rights and refugee law, and clarify how these conditions may be ensured;
4. reiterate international solidarity with refugee-hosting countries, particularly Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, including support to their recovery from the impact of the conflict;
5. take stock of the delivery of the pledges and commitments made during the 2018 Brussels Conference for Syria and the region (the next edition of the financial tracking report is to be made public by mid-September).

Format

The EU will be represented by Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission, and by Commissioner Christos Stylianides.

High-level UN participation will include UNSE Staffan de Mistura, USG for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock, UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

Invitations will be sent to the Foreign Ministers of all countries invited to Brussels I and II.

Participation

The event is by invitation only.

Special event tickets (1 + 3 per delegation) will be available on Monday 24 September afternoon (12.30pm till 5.30pm) at the EU Delegation reception (666 Third Avenue, 31st floor, NY 10017).

Principals + 1 (backseat) will be seated in the room with name plates. Additional accompanying staff will be invited to sit in unlabelled seats in the back (free seating).

A few civil society representatives will also be invited to attend.

Participants' contribution

The meeting will offer Ministers an opportunity to contribute on the five objectives.

Participants will be invited to deliver short statements (maximum 3 minutes) from the floor. Delegations wishing to deliver statements are requested to express their interest as early as possible to the EU Delegation to the United Nations:

delegation-new-york-political@eeas.europa.eu

Given the short duration of the high-level meeting it may not be possible to accommodate all requests to speak.

Interpretation will be available into and from English and Arabic.

Communication and follow-up

Available web and social media channels will be used to announce the event, using the hashtag of the Brussels Conference #SyriaConf18.

The Ministerial meeting will be followed by a press statement by High Representative/Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini giving a brief outline of the discussions.