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Statement

By

**H.E. Inga Rhonda King
Permanent Representative**

The Situation in the Middle East (Syria –Political)

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Madam President and I thank Special Envoy Pedersen and Ms. Rouba Mhaissen for their briefings.

It bears repeating that there is no military solution to the conflict in Syria. The only solution is through a Syrian-owned and Syrian-led credible, balanced and inclusive political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. We reiterate that the political and humanitarian situations are inextricably linked, as without a political solution to the conflict the humanitarian crisis will worsen, and the suffering of the Syrian people will continue.

For this reason, we continue to support the unwavering efforts of the Special Envoy to facilitate the wider political process, of which the Constitutional Committee remains an integral component. We welcome the announcement of the convening of a sixth session of the Committee in October and we encourage all parties to work together in a spirit of mutual respect and compromise to make much needed progress.

The full participation of women in the political process must be guaranteed to ensure a sustainable and equitable peace for all Syrians. We laud the work of the Women's Advisory Board and take note of its meeting currently being held in Finland. We are certain that the discussions will be constructive and meaningful.

We remain concerned by the sporadic violence across the country. There is a close link between a nationwide ceasefire and the parallel political process, and the perpetuation of hostilities denies an environment conducive to the achievement of the goals and objectives contained in Resolution 2254. As such, we strongly urge parties to the conflict to exercise maximum restraint, to de-escalate and to fully abide by their obligations under international law for the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Further, we welcome all international diplomatic efforts to reduce hostilities and cement a ceasefire, particularly in Daraa al-Balad.

Security Council designated terrorist entities continue to pose a grave threat to Syria's people, sovereignty and its territorial integrity. A collaborative and targeted approach, that is strictly within the confines of international law, is therefore required.

There exists a well-established link between justice and peace and it has long been recognized that neither one is able to thrive in isolation of the other. We therefore reiterate that accountability for atrocities committed since the commencement of the war ought to remain a high priority.

Ten years of war have eroded the social fabric of the country. It is therefore important to make concrete steps on critical issues, such as those of detainees, abductees and missing persons. Action on these matters of concern will serve as expressions of goodwill, cultivate trust and promote reconciliation within Syria.

Practical steps must be taken by the international community to address the plight of the Syrian people. As such, the adverse impact of unilateral coercive measures on the civilian population should not be ignored and we appeal for them to be immediately lifted. Also, conditions must be cultivated for the safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons. This, naturally, must include the reconstruction of homes, schools, medical facilities and other essential infrastructure which have been decimated. We once more encourage the international community to contribute to Syria's rebuilding. Further, the continued presence of unauthorized foreign forces on Syria's sovereign territory should be given due attention and their withdrawal must be prioritized.

Madam President,

With socio-economic conditions rapidly deteriorating in the country, a political solution is needed now more than ever. This Council has a responsibility to engage pragmatically to adequately support the political process, which is the only viable path to return peace and stability back to Syria.

I thank you.