



Joint Statement by Permanent Representatives of Brazil, Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho, and Switzerland, Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, co-penholders on the Syria humanitarian file

Security Council Stakeout
New York, 10 February 2023

The earthquake which struck southern Turkiye, directly affecting northern Syria, on Monday, 6 February, is a heartbreaking tragedy amidst Syria's humanitarian crisis. We convey the deepest sympathy and solidarity of our governments to all those affected by the earthquake and to their families. Our sincere respect is also due to all those who, despite the loss of colleagues or family members, continue to work tirelessly and under the most difficult circumstances to help those affected.

For years, the humanitarian situation in Syria has continued to deteriorate. The suffering caused by the protracted conflict has been exacerbated by food insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic, a critical economic situation, a water crisis, a cholera outbreak, harsh winter, energy shortages, to name just a few. As we respond to this emergency it is crucial to remember to also address the previously existing needs and to continue to respond to them as well.

And now, on top of an already very dire situation, the earthquake claimed thousands more lives, left more people without proper shelter, exposed to extreme weather, including snowfall. As rescue efforts continue, the number of people killed and injured keeps rising as well as the needs on the ground, which were already high. We urge all parties to facilitate access for relief efforts and allow for the assistance to reach all those in need. Rapid, unimpeded and sustainable access must be granted throughout Syria. All response modalities to reach people in need – cross-line, cross-border – are needed.

As co-penholders of the Syria humanitarian file, the needs of the Syrian people are at the forefront of our minds. We have been in touch with all stakeholders since the beginning of the week. Reaffirming the unanimous adoption of resolution 2672, all modalities of aid delivery are necessary to save lives and assist civilians across Syria. As we heard also from the Secretary-General yesterday, humanitarian needs must be put above politics.

We welcome the rehabilitation of the access to the Bab al-Hawa border crossing as well as yesterday's first UN aid convoy reaching north-west Syria with relief assistance. This offers a much needed glimmer of hope. We appreciate the decision of the Secretary-General to ask Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief, Martin Griffiths, to travel to areas affected by the earthquake this weekend. We believe that USG Griffiths' assessment will shed light over the effects of the disaster to the UN humanitarian operations, including those mandated by resolution 2672. In this regard, Switzerland and Brazil, as co-penholder, called for a meeting, at the earliest time feasible, that should serve as an opportunity for hearing directly from Mr. Griffiths on his visit to the region.