

Joint Statement Brazil and Switzerland Security Council before the Adoption on Syria, 11 July 2023

Good morning,

As co-penholders on the Syrian humanitarian file, Brazil and Switzerland will - in a few minutes - ask the Security Council to adopt a resolution renewing the cross-border humanitarian aid operation into Syria, at the Bab al-Hawa border crossing, for a period of 9 months.

The conflict in Syria led to one of the biggest humanitarian crises in the world. The devastating earthquakes in February have further exacerbated the situation for the civilian population. In the northwestern part of the country, more than 4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. About four out of five of them are women and children.

As penholders, we approached this process with the clear objective of seeking the best possible outcome for the people of Syria who are in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance, many of them even more so since the earthquakes.

In the run-up to today's meeting, we also carefully listened to those responsible for the UN's humanitarian efforts. We listened to the Secretary-General. We listened to the leaders of major organizations, among them the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Food Program, and also Non-governmental organizations, such as Médecins sans frontières. They all requested the same: an extension of at least 12 months so that humanitarian organizations can continue to reach people in need effectively and without delay.

We heard the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffith, last Friday, loud and clear repeating exactly this.

Therefore, we have advocated for a duration of twelve months, which ties in with the reality on the ground. This was supported by the vast majority, yet not all Council members. As penholders, we have committed to an inclusive and transparent process.

We engaged in good faith with all Council members, Syria and other partners in the region, and spared no efforts to accommodate legitimate and realistic concerns. Our proposed text reflects issues raised by Council members and the country concerned, such as humanitarian funding, humanitarian mine action, cross-line deliveries to all parts of Syria, and the creation of conditions for safe, voluntary, informed and dignified returns.

In order to reach life-saving consensus, we amended our proposal to a compromise solution with a 9 months extension, in order to allow the Council to show unity and coherence on this issue and to fulfil its responsibility towards the Syrian people.

Today's proposal on a duration of 9 months extends the mandate beyond the coming winter - a major concern of the UN and their humanitarian partners. It will also allow the humanitarian actors to better plan their operations than with a prolongation over a mere 6 months. And it also will avert the ordeal of uncertainty and anxiety over the continuation of the mechanism - a critical lifeline for millions of people. The humanitarian assistance will continue to reach those in need in North West Syria, by all modalities, cross-border and cross-line. This

solution is urgently needed, as the authorization for the cross border operation has already expired at midnight last night and created uncertainty for millions of people on whether they will continue to receive much needed lifesaving humanitarian aid.

Brazil and Switzerland would like to sincerely thank all Council members for their engagement. We would also like to acknowledge the critical role played by the ten elected members throughout this process. We all have one focus: the humanitarian imperative.

Failure to approve this proposal means denying the Syrian people the help and hope they so desperately need.

Thank you.