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Eighty-first year

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Mukongo/Mrs. Liolocha.....	(Democratic Republic of the Congo)
<i>Members:</i>	Bahrain	Ms. Alalaiwat
	China	Mr. Sun Lei
	Colombia	Mrs. Zalabata Torres
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Greece.....	Mrs. Balta
	Latvia.....	Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes
	Liberia	Mr. Brown II
	Pakistan	Mr. Fatemi
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Russian Federation	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Somalia.....	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Foster
	United States of America	Ms. Bruce

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (spoke in French): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye to participate in this meeting.

I propose that the Council invite the observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following speakers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria; and Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director, Crisis Response Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Cordone.

Mr. Cordone: I am briefing the Council today from Damascus, where I am present throughout July, continuing my engagement with the Syrian Government, civil society, women leaders and regional and international partners. Despite the challenges underscored by security incidents, economic hardship and unresolved local tensions, the opportunities for the Syrian Arab Republic are real, if institutions are built that are inclusive, accountable and capable of delivering for all Syrians, building confidence across Syria's diverse communities. Sustained commitment from the international community, including the Council, will remain critical.

I am pleased to inform the Security Council that the Secretary-General will travel to Syria later this week at the invitation of the Government. The Secretary-General will meet President Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Al-Shaibani and other government officials, as well as civil society, women's organizations and diverse communities. Throughout his stay, he will reaffirm the United Nations commitment to supporting the Syrian Government and the Syrian people at this defining period in Syria's history. Further details have just been announced by the Secretary-General's spokesperson, and members will also hear more on this from Ambassador Olabi.

This month has seen important institutional developments. On 5 July, a Supreme Constitutional Court was appointed by President Al-Sharaa, composed of seven judges, including two women. Following President Al-Sharaa's naming, on 1 July, of 70 appointed members of the People's Assembly, I attended its inaugural session on 12 July. The formation of both institutions are milestones in the transitional process defined by the March 2025 constitutional declaration.

The 206 current members of the People's Assembly represent a range of backgrounds from across Syria, including professionals, business leaders, tribal representatives, former opposition figures and combatants, as well as survivors of detention and chemical weapons attacks. With the President including 15 women among his 70 appointees, the overall women's representation in Parliament increased to 22 members — more than 10 per cent.

The presidential appointments reflected efforts to broaden the participation and representation of Syria's religious, ethnic and social diversity. As I have noted in other briefings, concerns are nevertheless expressed to us regarding the limited representation of women across the transitional institutions established to date, as well as the question of whether all communities feel adequately included. Ensuring effective responses to questions of inclusion, participation and representation will continue to be essential for social peace and stability in Syria.

The Assembly is now tasked with adopting its rules of procedure before tackling a huge legislative agenda across a range of urgent and critical areas. As an interim parliament, it is also expected to play an important role preparing for two key milestones laid out in the constitutional declaration: a permanent Constitution and inclusive elections at the end of the transition. The consolidation of the legislative and judicial institutions as independent from the executive, reflecting the principle of separation of powers enshrined in the constitutional declaration, will be an important component of a credible, inclusive and sustainable transition. The professionalism and responsibility with which members of Parliament tackle their work will also be crucial factors in fostering public confidence in the emerging State institutions. As I have told the Speaker, whom I met the other day, we stand ready to support the Assembly in its work.

Recent domestic judicial proceedings, including continued hearings in the trial of Atef Najib, proceedings involving former Mufti Ahmad Badreddin Hassoun and others, and further arrests of former officials associated with the previous regime, demonstrate continued efforts to address crimes committed during the conflict. International accountability efforts have likewise advanced, including recent convictions before European courts.

Beyond criminal accountability, we look forward to further efforts to define a comprehensive Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transitional justice framework, including truth-seeking, reparations and institutional reform, that addresses violations committed by all perpetrators, ensures due process, recognizes the experiences of women and other survivors of sexual violence and contributes to restoring confidence in public institutions.

In the north-east, progress has continued on military and internal security integration, pursuant to the 29 January agreement. There was progress on judicial integration and the completion of the integration of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour — the first ministry to announce that. On the ground, additional displaced Kurdish families returned to Afrin.

Discussions continue over a range of issues, including command arrangements, the integration of the Women's Protection Units, governance and administrative appointments, and the management of natural resources. There continue to be different expectations regarding implementation on many of these aspects, but at the same time, the process continues, and we welcome that. No one expected it to be easy.

By contrast, a year since grave human rights violations in Suwayda', the political impasse remains as deep as ever. On the ground, there were clashes between general security forces and the National Guard in late June. While these did not escalate into a wider confrontation, the security environment continued to deteriorate. At least five people were reportedly killed in intra-Druze fighting, and kidnappings and retaliatory attacks continued. Organized crime and narcotics trafficking likewise remain a source of instability.

Accountability for the events of July 2025 remains essential to rebuilding trust. It was recently announced that 23 members of the general security forces and the Syrian army have been arrested, and the first public hearing in the Military Criminal

Court was held on 1 July. We encourage progress toward transparent and fair judicial proceedings and further implementation of the recommendations of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, consistent with the authorities' stated commitment to accountability and the rule of law.

Dialogue, rehabilitation and confidence-building measures such as those included in the September 2025 road map remain essential if trust is to be restored. As one immediate example, a practical solution still needs to be found that secures the right to education of Suwayda's students, and the United Nations continues to offer its good offices and support for implementation modalities on the ground. Governmental rehabilitation efforts are taking place in areas under the Government's control, as I witnessed last week. But ultimately, a political process is needed to resolve the underlying issues while upholding Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We commend the Syrian authorities for consistently reiterating their intention to avoid becoming a theatre for a wider regional conflict. Recent reports of the targeting of the Tanf base in Syrian territory underscore the importance of respecting Syrian sovereignty and preventing further escalation. The authorities also announced the interdiction of a cross-border weapons shipment originating from Iraq and reportedly intended for transfer to Lebanon, highlighting the continuing risk posed by illicit arms trafficking across Syria's borders.

Meanwhile, on the internal security situation, there were bomb attacks in Damascus near the Palace of Justice on 2 July and during French President Macron's visit on 7 July. Clearly, terrorist groups continue to seek to undermine the country's transition, especially at a time of growing international engagement with Syria. I reiterate my condemnation of these attacks and my condolences to the families of those killed, and send my wishes to the injured for their full recovery.

For their part, the Syrian authorities have reported further actions to counter Da'esh and other terrorist threats. Security operations resulted in numerous arrests and benefited from continued cooperation with regional and international partners. These efforts are welcome, while recent attacks in Raqqah and Damascus demonstrate that broad and sustained counter-terrorism efforts remain essential.

Finally, I remain deeply concerned by continued Israeli military activity in southern Syria. Incursions, shelling, drone overflights and restrictions on civilian movement continued across Qunaytirah and Dar'a. Particularly concerning were the events of 27 and 28 June, when members of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reportedly killed two individuals east of the ceasefire line before carrying out a ground incursion into Abdin village. The operation displaced civilians and was followed by the deployment of Syrian security forces after the IDF withdrew. More recently, residents of Hader publicly complained of repeated raids, restrictions on access to agricultural land and intimidation of civilians. And on 29 June, the IDF delayed the movement of a United Nations humanitarian assessment mission visiting several villages in rural Damascus governorate, including questioning and photographing mission members.

These developments have been accompanied by repeated public statements by senior Israeli officials indicating that Israeli forces intend to maintain positions beyond the 1974 ceasefire line. These actions violate Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, heighten regional tensions, impact civilians in their daily lives and risk undermining confidence at a critical moment in Syria's transition. We reiterate our call on Israel to end violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement and respect international law.

We see continued efforts by the Syrian authorities to advance economic recovery. Syria and France have just concluded a broad package of cooperation agreements covering transport, logistics, infrastructure and investments. Syria and Lebanon launched a review of their bilateral trade framework with a view to expanding economic ties, while Syria and Iraq are discussing cooperation to rehabilitate the Kirkuk-Baniyas oil pipeline, an important regional energy corridor. Moreover, United States of America President Trump's announcement of the lifting of the designation of Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism is a significant step forward. These developments are encouraging and reflect growing international confidence in Syria's recovery. Their success, however, will ultimately be measured by whether they translate into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary Syrians, who continue to grapple with high prices, unemployment, deteriorating purchasing power and uneven access to essential services.

The establishment of the People's Assembly has renewed discussion regarding women's participation in Syria's public institutions. During my engagements, women from across Syria consistently emphasized that representation must be accompanied by meaningful participation in decision-making. They stressed the importance of ensuring women's full involvement, not only in legislative institutions but also in transitional justice, constitutional development, local governance and economic recovery. These perspectives remain essential to building institutions that enjoy broad public confidence. Today I am engaged in discussions with the members of the Women's Advisory Board over substantive issues, as well as future modalities to expand and strengthen our engagement with Syrian women in full respect of Syria's sovereignty.

We have likewise continued our dialogue with Syrian civil society organizations, who continue to emphasize the importance of protecting civic space, strengthening consultation mechanisms and advancing accountability for all victims of the conflict.

The past month has demonstrated both the opportunities and the fragility of Syria's transition. Important institutional milestones have been reached. But ultimately, the success of this transition will not be judged solely by the institutions that are created, but by how they function. Building confidence will require an effective and balanced system of governance with meaningful participation by women and all components of Syrian society, continuing progress on accountability and transitional justice, and tangible improvements in the daily lives of Syrians.

As the Secretary-General will underscore when he visits Syria, the United Nations remains fully committed to supporting a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition. My Office will continue working with all Syrians, regional partners and members of the Council to help consolidate recent progress and support a sovereign, united, stable and inclusive Syria. We remain committed to doing so, including by being ready to relocate our Geneva office to Damascus to enable effective collaboration.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Cordone for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Wosornu.

Ms. Wosornu: The Syrian Arab Republic stands at a pivotal moment. After years of conflict, displacement and economic collapse, there is now a real opportunity to help Syrians move from dependence on emergency assistance towards recovery and self-reliance. This opportunity is closely linked to the Government's efforts to advance national recovery priorities and restore the conditions that enable Syrians to rebuild their lives, livelihoods and communities.

We have seen important signs of change. Since December 2024, some 1.7 million refugees and 1.9 million internally displaced people have returned to their communities. These figures are significant, even as 5.5 million people remain displaced within Syria and another 6 million Syrian refugees remain abroad. They reflect the determination of Syrians to rebuild their lives and invest in their country's future. But returns are not the finish line — they are the starting point. Every family that returns needs safety, services and a reason to stay home.

Humanitarian needs are vast. An estimated 15.6 million people — nearly two thirds of the population — still require humanitarian assistance. Across the country, millions of people struggle to find enough food, access safe water and healthcare, send their children to school or earn a steady income. For many families, daily life continues to be defined by difficult choices and uncertainty.

The crisis is changing, but it is far from over. Today, poverty and economic hardship are driving vulnerability as much as the legacy of conflict. Families cannot afford basic goods. Jobs are scarce. Communities receiving large numbers of returnees are under pressure. Many have already suffered years of conflict and economic decline. They are now trying to absorb families while coping with damaged infrastructure and limited services. Supporting these communities is essential, not only for social cohesion but also for ensuring that returns are sustainable. For those seeking to return home, the main barriers are not only safety and security. They include housing, land and property rights, civil documentation, rubble removal, employment and access to basic services, such as clean water, electricity, schools, housing and healthcare. Recovery is not measured by how many people return. It is measured by whether they can stay, rebuild and thrive.

Women and girls face, as members have heard, acute risks and challenges. Access to reproductive healthcare, maternal services, psychosocial support and protection services are absolutely essential. For example, in Aleppo, the United Nations and our partners helped a woman who had been displaced several times to obtain new civil documentation. With these documents in hand, she was able to enrol her children in school and access essential services. We need many more such examples.

For many families, protection is what makes recovery possible. As Syria moves towards recovery, these needs become more important, not less. They underpin resilience and social stability. We remain deeply concerned by developments in southern Syria. The Special Envoy has highlighted, and let me reinforce, that repeated incursions, insecurity and movement restrictions are affecting civilians and complicating humanitarian operations. These conditions undermine livelihoods, restrict access to basic services and increase protection risks. They also undermine confidence in Syria's recovery. As we noted last month, around 80 per cent of the population in the south require some form of assistance. Humanitarian access must be safe, sustained and unimpeded. Civilians must be protected, full stop. More broadly, Syria continues to be vulnerable to regional instability. Any escalation in the wider region could quickly trigger new humanitarian needs, including displacement, economic disruption, supply-chain shocks and additional constraints on humanitarian operations.

My asks of the Council are straightforward.

First, there should be sustained and predictable humanitarian funding to ensure the sustainability of what has already been achieved. The opportunity for Syria to succeed is real, but opportunity without investment is only potential. Humanitarian organizations are delivering. Communities are returning. Recovery is under way. But funding is not keeping pace with the scale of need or the ambition of the moment.

Halfway through the year — and with great gratitude to our donors — the humanitarian appeal is just one-third funded. We have received \$815 million of the \$2.1 billion requested. Funding gaps mean less food, fewer health services and fewer much-needed protection programmes for women and children, among many others. The impact of underfunding is already visible. Since May, the World Food Programme has reduced emergency assistance by half. The target was to provide food to 1.3 million people. Today, the total is 650,000. At least 20 partners providing emergency assistance have had to suspend some activities fully or partly. These cuts are increasing pressure and tensions between communities. If support is not restored, they could also undermine wider stability. This is a moment to invest — not to step back. The cost of inaction today will mean greater needs tomorrow.

Secondly, investing in the foundations of recovery means supporting livelihoods, basic services and housing. This also means supporting demining and local infrastructure. In addition, it means aligning support with Syria's nationally led recovery priorities and with the aspirations expressed by the people of Syria themselves. Syria needs a bridge between relief and recovery. These are not competing priorities. Humanitarian action without recovery risks prolonging dependency. Recovery without humanitarian support risks leaving the most vulnerable behind. We must do both, and we must do both with the Council's support. As the Government has noted, the goal is to build back better. A coordinated approach to recovery can help support that goal and create the conditions for voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable returns. What Syrians are asking for is not just assistance. I have seen it. I have been there. Syrians are asking for the chance to shape their future.

Thirdly, we must prevent further instability, ensure stability, protect civilians and preserve humanitarian access. The Syrian people have endured years of crisis. They deserve relief from hardship and a credible path towards a more stable and prosperous future. They need the support to match their extraordinary resilience. Humanitarians remain committed to supporting them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Wosornu for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Fatemi (Pakistan): I thank Deputy Special Envoy Claudio Cordone and Director of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Edem Wosornu for their briefings. We also welcome the participation of the representatives of Syria and Türkiye and the observer of Palestine.

After years of devastating conflict, the Syrian people now have an opportunity to turn the page. We commend the new leadership, which has demonstrated determination in steering the nation towards stability, rebuilding national institutions and laying the foundations for a prosperous future. The international community should back this process by respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, facilitating economic recovery and supporting a Syrian-owned and Syrian-led political transition. The convening of the new People's Assembly on 12 July marks a vital step in Syria's political transition. Representative and functioning institutions are essential to consolidating the State and reflecting the aspirations of the Syrian people. The lifting of sanctions is a major step towards Syria's economic recovery and reintegration. These measures must now translate into tangible improvements for the Syrian people.

The security situation remains fragile. Recent terrorist incidents underscore the continuing threat posed by Da'esh, foreign terrorist fighters and other terrorist groups. Pakistan reaffirms the need for sustained and coordinated counter-terrorism efforts, consistent with international law, to prevent any resurgence and to safeguard the gains achieved. Concurrently, the pursuit of transitional justice through a credible process

grounded in truth, accountability and reconciliation will be essential to addressing the past and forging lasting national cohesion. Sustained international support also remains critical for addressing the continuing humanitarian situation in Syria, commensurate with the needs outlined by the briefers.

The illegal occupation of Syrian territory, including the Golan Heights, is a violation of international law and undermines efforts for progress and stability. We condemn Israel's ongoing violations of Syria's sovereignty. Resolutions 338 (1973) and 497 (1981) and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces must be fully implemented. It is important that Syria is not drawn into a wider regional turmoil that could undermine its stability, reconstruction, economic recovery and the well-being of its people.

After years of hardship, the Syrian people deserve the opportunity to live in peace, security and dignity. Pakistan will remain steadfast in its solidarity with the Syrian people and continue to support all efforts that advance an inclusive political process, national reconciliation and a peaceful, stable and prosperous Syria.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): Let me also thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Director Wosornu for their briefings.

The Syrian People's Assembly convening for the first time on 12 July marks an important step in Syria's transition. The 210-member chamber is now largely complete. We welcome this important step in the transition towards institution-building. We note that the last third of the Parliament, appointed by President Al-Sharaa on 1 July, makes the People's Assembly more representative than was hitherto the case. The People's Assembly will be key in responding to the aspirations of all segments of the Syrian population throughout the Syrian-led political transition. In addition, international support for the transition process in all its aspects remains crucial. This is a part of the reason why we are organizing a dedicated Arria formula meeting later today to focus on transitional justice and missing persons in Syria.

As the attacks in Damascus on 4 July and the subsequent bombings on 7 July have reminded us, Syria is still faced with a significant threat from terrorism that risks unravelling the security situation if not properly addressed. We commend Syria for its strengthened efforts in combating terrorism and call for continued efforts to address terrorism comprehensively as a member of the Global Coalition against Da'esh. Continued international engagement and support will also be crucial for dismantling Da'esh in Syria.

Turning to the situation in the region, we recognize the efforts by Syria to avoid direct involvement in the broader conflict. We also welcome the deepening of bilateral relations between Syria and Lebanon, including the 2 July agreement establishing a joint higher committee, and continued coordination on border security, smuggling and trade. The continued Israeli presence in southern Syria, however, risks undermining and destabilizing the Syrian authorities. We reiterate that Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity must be respected.

Lastly, the humanitarian situation and future prospects for the Syrian population require our continued attention. Ninety per cent of Syria's population still live under the poverty line. An estimated 15.6 million people require humanitarian assistance, and over 5.5 million remain internally displaced. As we heard, refugees and the internally displaced continuously seek to return to their areas of origin to build a new future for their families and their country. To support hope and these aspirations, protection efforts must be sustained, and early recovery interventions must be prioritized, something for which Denmark is providing increasing support. One such example is the United Nations Joint Programme to Strengthen Urban and Rural Resilience, to which Denmark is the largest donor. It helps to create jobs, re-establish critical infrastructure, rebuild healthcare and secure consistent water supply in Aleppo. The 2026 humanitarian needs and response plan for Syria requires \$3.2 billion but is currently only one third funded, as we heard from Director Wosornu. More

needs to be done to meet critical needs in addition to establishing social cohesion and reversing risks of a potential rise in tensions.

In closing, Denmark remains committed to supporting a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transition. Building a new future on the ashes of nearly 14 years of devastating war will not be easy, but the Syrian people have the skill, the creativity and the determination to achieve it. It is our responsibility, as this Council and as the international community, to stand with them in this effort.

Ms. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Claudio Cordone, and Director of the Crisis Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Edem Wosornu, for their briefings on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Russian Federation has consistently and unwaveringly advocated for the earliest possible stabilization of the situation in friendly Syria. We note the progress made by Damascus in gradually restoring the country's territorial integrity and consolidating its State institutions. We are convinced that among fundamentally important elements of Syria's State-building process are due regard to the interests of all ethnic and religious groups in Syrian society and the launch of a truly inclusive political process based on the key provisions of resolution 2254 (2015). This is what we deem essential for ensuring the stability and viability of the future political system of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In this context, we support the commitment of the Syrian authorities to ensuring and protecting the rights of Syrians, regardless of their national or religious affiliation. We see this approach reflected in practical measures being taken by Damascus to reintegrate the north-eastern region of the country. A striking case in point is the inclusion of important provisions enshrining protections for, and the rights of, the Kurdish minority in the agreements between Damascus and the Syrian Democratic Forces and in the decree of the President of the Syrian Arab Republic of 16 January 2026. It is our hope that the enforcement thereof, together with further efforts to ensure the effective and smooth operation of State institutions, will normalize the situation in the Trans-Euphrates region for the long term.

At the same time, it must be noted that despite the effective efforts of the current authorities, Syria and its people continue to confront numerous problems and challenges, which are being fuelled by both external and internal factors, foremost among them Israel's unrelenting aggressive policy. The Israel Defense Forces are maintaining their presence in the occupied Syrian territories and continue to carry out raids deep into the country. We point out that any such actions by the Israeli military violate Syria's sovereignty and the rules of international law. West Jerusalem's use of force only exacerbates tensions and jeopardizes efforts to ensure stability in the south of the country. A return to compliance with the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria would help to normalize the situation. We once again call on West Jerusalem to resume compliance with its bilateral obligations and the requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly given the Syrian authorities' stated willingness to engage in dialogue with a view to resolving differences.

The terrorist threat, including from foreign fighters, also persists. The series of terrorist attacks that swept across Syria in recent weeks, including the bombings in Damascus, further attest to this. We extend our condolences to the families and loved ones of those killed and wish the injured a speedy recovery. We note the statements by the country's authorities regarding the arrest of Da'esh-affiliated terrorists involved in these crimes. We trust that the Syrian leadership and the competent national authorities will continue to resolutely combat terrorist attacks and ensure that the fighters' acts do not go unpunished. We underscore the need for the international

community to step up efforts to counter persistent terrorist activity in the Middle East and beyond, including that emanating from foreign terrorist fighters.

More than 15.5 million people — almost two thirds of the country's population — still need some form of assistance. The situation is compounded by the rising cost of living. Over the past year, the cost of a basic food basket rose by almost 20 per cent. Despite the expected increase in wheat production, food insecurity is forecast to remain at crisis levels in the north-east and north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic. Of particular concern is southern Syria, where the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that approximately 80 per cent of the population is in need of assistance. Against this backdrop, as we have already noted, Israel's ongoing military activity is undermining the livelihoods of local inhabitants and is hampering humanitarian access.

At the same time, the return of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons continues. We welcome Syrians' aspiration to return to their homeland but, we emphasize, their return must be voluntary and safe. In the areas receiving refugees, there is an acute shortage of housing, basic infrastructure and jobs, and access to healthcare and education remains limited. The policy of certain European States to offer Syrian refugees financial incentives to return before the necessary conditions for their sustainable reintegration have been established is therefore questionable.

We note that a number of external restrictions affecting Syria are under review, with the United States Administration planning to remove it from the list of State sponsors of terrorism. At the same time, we consistently advocate for the full lifting of all unilateral restrictive measures, which are undermining efforts to stabilize the humanitarian situation, while hindering economic recovery and deterring investment, condemning the country to long-term dependence on external aid. Against this backdrop, the chronic underfunding of the humanitarian response is a cause for serious concern. By midyear, the humanitarian response plan for Syria had been funded to just 27.5 per cent. This state of affairs has already resulted in a two-fold reduction in food aid and has forced humanitarian organizations to scale back medical care. At the same time, as has been noted, the population continues to be in need.

We underline, yet again, that for the crisis to be overcome, it is essential to ensure that humanitarian programmes are sufficiently funded, while stepping up support for early recovery in coordination with the Syrian authorities, without politicization. In this regard, we welcome Damascus statement of national recovery priorities in respect of international cooperation on reconstruction, which was presented last week in New York on the sidelines of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

In our view, Council members and the international community have a responsibility to create the conditions that will allow the Syrian authorities to pursue their efforts to bring peace and prosperity to the Syrian people. A situation in which the country's territory becomes an arena for geopolitical rivalry and the settling of scores among various external actors must be averted. We believe that all States — in the region and beyond — must act responsibly and refrain from taking any steps that could trigger a further round of escalation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Ms. Bruce (United States of America): I thank today's briefers for their comprehensive and informative briefings.

The Syrian Arab Republic continues to make progress on political, humanitarian and security priorities. Recognizing this progress, President Trump, on 8 July, informed Congress of his Administration's intent to rescind the designation of Syria as a State sponsor of terrorism by the United States. The lifting of United States restrictions on Syria will continue to unlock international trade and investment

opportunities, contributing to the rebuilding of Syria. A stable, unified Syria at peace with itself and its neighbours will enhance peace and security for the Syrian people and for those in the region and beyond.

These developments are an important reminder of how far Syria has come in such a short time. It is, in fact, remarkable. Syria was the first country to be placed on the United States list of State sponsors of terrorism back in 1979, owing to the then dictator Hafez Al-Assad's support for multiple terrorist organizations. Syria remained on that list for decades on account of the regime's support for terrorist groups in Lebanon and Iraq. Bashar Al-Assad then enlisted some of those same organizations, notably Hizbullah, in his brutal war on the Syrian people, killing thousands and displacing many more. It is therefore remarkable that today, the Syrian Government is a regional leader in the campaign against both Da'esh and Hizbullah.

We must not, however, lose sight of the work that remains. Da'esh is still a significant threat to Syria and the region. The United States strongly condemns the Da'esh attack in Damascus on 7 July, during the visit of President Macron of France, and the attack on 2 July. We commend the Syrian Government's rapid response to these atrocities and hope that those responsible will be held to account. We also express our condolences to those who were wounded and killed in these cowardly attacks. The United States will continue working with Syria to disrupt and dismantle ISIS networks, helping keep Syria stable and Americans safe.

We reiterate our call for the international community to support the Syrian Government's ability to fight terrorism.

The United States also condemns the Iranian regime's attack on southern Syria last week. Once again, Iran claimed to be attacking United States forces when, in fact, it struck a sovereign nation. Just days before and a few miles away, Iran reportedly tried to smuggle dozens of drones and missile components through Syria and into Lebanon to re-arm Hizbullah. This is how the regime in Tehran treats its neighbours — not with respect, but as mere tools in its campaign of destabilization and terrorism.

We congratulate the Syrian Government for intercepting this shipment intended for Lebanese Hizbullah. This is further confirmation that the Syrian Government will not allow Lebanese Hizbullah or any other group to use its sovereign territory to attack Israel.

Finally, the United States welcomes the swearing-in of the Syrian People's Assembly on 12 July. We hope the Assembly will give all Syrians a chance to meaningfully contribute to the political life of the nation. We encourage the Assembly to act quickly on the many legal reforms that are needed to hasten Syria's transition, including to revamp the justice system, enhance accountability, enable reconstruction and enable foreign investment.

Mrs. Zalabata Torres (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Claudio Cordone, and Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of the Crisis Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings. I would also like to welcome the delegations present here with us today.

Colombia recognizes the efforts of the Syrian interim Government to consolidate inclusive institutions, which are essential for progress towards a sustainable peace. In line with resolution 2254 (2015), my country reiterates its support for a Syrian-led political process, facilitated by the United Nations, which reflects the country's diversity and strengthens trust between the different sectors. Within this framework, Colombia once again reaffirms its support for the

sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Respect for international law is an essential prerequisite for regional stability. The continued military activities and presence of armed forces on Syrian territory, beyond the agreed arrangements, is a source of ongoing concern; Colombia therefore reiterates its call to avoid any action that undermines Syrian sovereignty or contributes to the prolongation of tensions. The occupation cannot be normalized or become an accepted fact. Furthermore, my delegation condemns the recent terrorist attacks in Damascus and any other action that jeopardizes the country's stability and security.

With regard to recent developments, Colombia notes with concern the situation in Suwayda. In this regard, we encourage redoubled efforts to implement the road map agreed in 2025. At the same time, my country recognizes the progress made in the north-east of the country under the agreement between the Syrian Government and the Syrian Democratic Forces. The measures aimed at the gradual integration of security structures and the return of displaced populations are positive signs.

In the area of transitional justice, it is essential to move towards credible, impartial and inclusive mechanisms for truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition. My country welcomes Syria's efforts to develop legislation on transitional justice. This mechanism must address abuses committed by all actors, while fully recognizing the experiences of women, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

In conclusion, Colombia reiterates the need to ensure sustained, predictable and unimpeded humanitarian assistance, and to support the Syrian transition through investment in early recovery, reconstruction and institutional strengthening, always in accordance with humanitarian principles.

My country urges Syria to continue its efforts on all fronts, so that reconciliation, development and human dignity may form the basis of lasting stability.

Ms. Pavluta-Deslandes (Latvia): I thank the Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Claudio Cordone, and the Director of the Crisis Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Edem Wosornu, for their briefings.

Latvia welcomes the convening of the first session of the People's Assembly of Syria on 12 July and the inaugural meeting of Syria's Supreme Constitutional Court on 19 July, which mark a historic milestone in the country's political transition. The members of both newly established institutions have the important responsibility of helping rebuild the country with the rule of law, justice and accountability at its core. We look forward to their work in consolidating Syria's unity and demonstrating inclusive governance, respecting the rights and dignity of all Syrians. This also requires filling the seats in the People's Assembly allocated to representatives from Suwayda as soon as possible.

We welcome the increased representation of women in parliament following the presidential nominations, as well as the appointment of women to the Supreme Constitutional Court. We call for continued progress towards the meaningful participation of women in all decision-making processes in Syria.

Building on the framework established by Syria and responding to its nationally defined priorities, the United Nations can play an important supporting

role in advancing the country's political transition, reconstruction and long-term development.

Latvia strongly condemns the recent terrorist attacks in Damascus and extends its sincere condolences to the families of the victims, while wishing a speedy recovery to all those injured. We stand in solidarity with the Syrian people and deplore these violent attacks, which underscore the continued need for the Syrian armed forces to combat terrorism and strengthen security across the country.

At the same time, we acknowledge the political commitment and significant progress achieved by Syria's transitional Government over the past year and a half and welcome the announcement by the United States of the removal of Syria from the list of State sponsors of terrorism. This important step will further facilitate the country's financial and economic recovery.

We also welcome the decision to reinstate Syria's rights and privileges within the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It constitutes a recognition of the determination and continued efforts of the Syrian authorities and institutions to eliminate the remnants of the Al-Assad regime's chemical weapons programme.

Sustainable peace and stability, both within Syria and across the region, are essential for fostering economic development, attracting investment and enabling regional cooperation. In this regard, the recent strike conducted by Iran on eastern Syria is highly alarming. The people of Syria must not be dragged into yet another conflict. Amid the reignited turmoil in the wider Middle East, we encourage Syria's transitional Government to pursue its pragmatic engagement to promote regional stability while capitalizing on new opportunities arising from Syria's regional integration.

We once again acknowledge Syria's restraint and readiness to participate in the ongoing mediation efforts aimed at achieving mutually acceptable security arrangements with Israel. We call on Israel to engage constructively, abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions and respect the terms of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces in the Syrian Golan.

We reiterate our unwavering commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. At a time when sustained efforts are essential to advance peace and stability in the Middle East, the strengthening of good-neighbourly relations between Syria and Lebanon is a welcome and encouraging development, demonstrating the value of cooperation grounded in shared interests.

During decades of authoritarian rule, oppression and violent conflict, the people of Syria have endured immense atrocities and economic devastation. The scars run deep in every Syrian family. The fate and whereabouts of tens of thousands of forcibly disappeared and missing persons remain unknown. We encourage the Syrian transitional Government and the relevant national bodies to continue their constructive engagement with the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Only the joint and coordinated efforts of all relevant actors, including affected families and Syrian civil society, can ensure an effective search process based on a comprehensive and survivor-centred approach that fosters reconciliation.

Transparency and accountability for the brutal crimes perpetrated by the Al-Assad regime against its own people play an integral role in Syria's transitional justice process. Meanwhile, allies of the Al-Assad regime should stop using Syrian territory to destabilize the Middle East and the wider region.

Finally, Latvia remains committed to supporting Syria on its path towards an inclusive political transition, recovery and transitional justice.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone and Director Wosornu for their briefings. I welcome the Permanent Representative of Syria and the representatives of Türkiye and Palestine to today's meeting.

Recently, the situation in the Middle East has escalated once again and ceasefire arrangements have suffered setbacks, introducing new complicating factors into efforts to resolve regional flashpoints. As an important country in the region, Syria's early and full restoration of peace and stability would help to de-escalate the situation across the region. It would serve the common interests of all countries in the region and meet the widespread expectations of the international community.

I wish to make three points.

First, an inclusive political transition is an important cornerstone for the restoration of peace and stability in Syria. The establishment of a national legislature is an important step in this political transition. China notes that the Interim People's Assembly of Syria recently held its first meeting. We support the Syrian transitional Government and all Syrian parties in proceeding from the fundamental interests of the Syrian people as a whole, strengthening internal unity, properly resolving differences and jointly advancing an inclusive political transition. A Syrian-led and Syrian-owned process represents the greatest common denominator within the international community in addressing the Syrian issue and should continue to be upheld. The presence of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria within the country would enable the United Nations to play its role more effectively. We hope that the Syrian transitional Government will provide support in that regard.

Secondly, combating terrorism in all its forms is a key prerequisite for the restoration of peace and stability in Syria. Terrorism is a common enemy of all humankind. Counter-terrorism is an international obligation that every country must fulfil. Several terrorist attacks have recently occurred in Aleppo, Raqqah and elsewhere, while a series of explosions has taken place in Damascus. Those incidents demonstrate that terrorism remains a major threat to Syria's national reconstruction. China condemns those terrorist attacks and expresses its condolences to the victims and their families. The continued activities of foreign terrorist fighters entrenched in Syria run seriously counter to the Syrian people's ardent aspirations for stability and development and warrant close attention. The Syrian transitional Government should demonstrate firm resolve in combating terrorism, take effective measures and resolutely combat all international terrorist organizations designated by the Security Council, including the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement.

Thirdly, focusing on development is the fundamental means of restoring peace and stability in Syria. For some time, the joint efforts of the Syrian transitional Government, United Nations humanitarian agencies and other parties have brought about some improvement in the humanitarian situation in Syria. China appreciates those efforts.

We support the Syrian transitional Government in making development a priority of governance, formulating sound domestic and foreign policies, properly addressing the security concerns of foreign investors, unleashing development

potential, promoting economic recovery, continuously improving people's livelihoods and embarking on a path of sustainable development suited to the country's national conditions.

China supports Syria in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. The Golan Heights is occupied Syrian territory, as recognized by the international community. Security Council resolutions concerning the Golan Heights should be implemented. Israel should immediately cease all military operations in Syria and withdraw from Syrian territory as soon as possible. Civilians and civilian facilities must not be made the targets of attack.

China attaches great importance to developing China-Syria relations. It stands ready to work with the international community, play a constructive role in helping Syria achieve security, stability and development at an early date and jointly shape a better tomorrow.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and my own country, Somalia.

We thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone and Director Wosornu for their comprehensive and informative briefings. We also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Syria in today's meeting.

The A3 notes that Syria is at a defining moment in its transition. While recent months have brought renewed momentum, in particular through the Syrian leadership's commendable efforts to advance political reform, stabilization and economic recovery, we believe that sustained international engagement remains indispensable. Such engagement is essential not only to safeguard the progress achieved thus far but also to lay the groundwork for a stable and prosperous future for Syria.

In this regard, allow me to highlight the following points.

First, the A3 welcomes the inaugural session of Syria's newly constituted People's Assembly. This development marks a significant milestone and a step towards rebuilding trust and fostering inclusive governance in Syria. We urge all Syrians to maintain an open and constructive dialogue and reaffirm the vital role of the Special Envoy in facilitating a Syrian-owned and Syrian-led political process.

Secondly, as we have heard, the humanitarian situation remains a cause for grave concern. Millions of people continue to depend on humanitarian aid, while displacement, economic hardship and limited access to essential services persist throughout the country. We stress the importance of scaling up humanitarian assistance and encourage ongoing international efforts to support Syria's economic reintegration. This is crucial to early recovery initiatives that can directly improve the well-being of ordinary Syrians. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved without tangible economic progress that benefits all Syrians.

Thirdly, the A3 condemns continued military incursions into Syrian territory, notably in recent months in the south-west, in Dar'a and Qunaytirah. These actions constitute violations of Syria's sovereignty and risk undermining efforts towards recovery and reconciliation. We reaffirm that the occupied Syrian Golan remains part of Syria, as recognized in resolution 497 (1981). We call for full respect for Syria's sovereignty and strict adherence to all relevant Security Council resolutions and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces.

Fourthly, terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to Syria and the wider region. The A3 unequivocally condemns the terrorist attacks carried out by the

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Damascus on 2 and 7 July, and we extend our heartfelt condolences and solidarity to the families and loved ones of the victims. We encourage continued efforts to counter terrorism in accordance with international law, while also addressing the conditions conducive to violent extremist ideology. Ongoing international cooperation and capacity-building are essential to preventing any resurgence of terrorist groups and ensuring regional peace and security.

In conclusion, the A3 reaffirms its unwavering support for Syria's sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity. We encourage sustained and unified regional and international support that places the interests and aspirations of the Syrian people at the centre of all engagements.

Mrs. Balta (Greece) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Deputy Special Envoy Claudio Cordone and Ms. Edem Wosornu of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their valuable briefings.

At a time of continuing tensions throughout the Middle East, preserving stability in Syria is more important than ever. A peaceful, sovereign and stable Syria is in the interests of its people and contributes to the security of the entire eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. Greece fully supports a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition that is genuinely inclusive, credible and sustainable.

With that in mind, allow me to highlight the following points.

The new People's Assembly could mark an important step in the country's political transition and aims to represent all Syrians. It is essential that this political institution reflect the diversity of Syrian society and enjoy broad legitimacy. We have taken note of the appointment of approximately 70 members to the People's Assembly by the Syrian President, which we had been awaiting in the hope that such appointments would help to redress imbalances in political representation, in particular the underrepresentation of women and ethnic and religious groups. The participation of all Syrians, including women and members of all ethnic and religious communities, in shaping their country's future is essential if Syria is to become a country of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence in the region.

In this context, we also look forward to further progress on the constitutional track, which will be essential to establishing accountable institutions, strengthening public trust and ensuring the rule of law. We take note of the President's appointment of the members of the Constitutional Court, two of whom are women, as mentioned by the Deputy Special Envoy. This represents an important step in the institutional transition process.

Beyond political institutions, lasting peace requires accountability, justice and reconciliation. Later today, we will participate in the Arria-formula meeting on transitional justice and missing persons in Syria. Shedding light on the fate of missing persons remains a humanitarian obligation. This is equally crucial for reconciliation and for rebuilding trust among the various components of Syrian society. The issue will be examined in greater depth during the General Assembly's annual debate with the head of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, to be held later this week.

In this context, allow me to emphasize that the United Nations and its relevant mechanisms, such as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, have invaluable expertise. We encourage full cooperation between those mechanisms and the Syrian authorities.

(*spoke in English*)

In the meantime, the security situation remains fragile. We deplore the recent attacks in Damascus earlier this month. It is imperative to address the threat of terrorism, prevent renewed violence, protect civilians and ensure accountability for perpetrators of criminal acts.

A year after serious sectarian violence in Suwayda' and the terrorist bombing of the Mar Elias Orthodox Church in Damascus, developments in southern and north-eastern Syria continue to require our collective vigilance. All Syrians, irrespective of ethnicity or religion, must enjoy equal protection under the law and equal citizenship and must feel safe. In this context, the agreement between the Syrian Democratic Forces and Damascus should be fully implemented towards strengthening national cohesion.

The aforementioned transpires against the backdrop of a dire humanitarian situation, which continues to require sustained international engagement in order to move towards reconstruction and development, especially given the heartbreaking deaths of Syrian children due to unexploded ordnance, which render international cooperation on demining essential.

The beginning of the process for Syria's removal from the list of State sponsors of terrorism will hopefully open up additional prospects for reconstruction. The United Nations has an indispensable role to play in accompanying Syria throughout this process, a role that will be facilitated by the timely relocation of the Office of the Special Envoy to Damascus.

In conclusion, Greece remains steadfast in its commitment to a peaceful, stable and inclusive Syria and intends to be a partner of Syria in its efforts.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Deputy Special Envoy Claudio Cordone and Ms. Edem Wosornu of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their briefings and the valuable information they shared with us regarding their respective areas of work, and we appreciate their efforts in carrying out their duties. We also warmly welcome the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye and the Observer State of Palestine, who honour us with their presence today. We also welcome the participation of Mr. Syed Tariq Fatemi, Minister of State of Pakistan.

Recent progress in the political process represents an important opportunity for Syria to continue moving towards a more inclusive transition and stronger institutions. In that context, the establishment of the new People's Assembly marks a promising start to a new institutional phase for the country. We trust that this body will help advance the reforms necessary for the transition and foster a political process that reflects the aspirations of all sectors of Syrian society. The inclusion of professionals, academics and community leaders, together with representation from different governorates, is a positive step towards that objective. We welcome the participation of 15 women among the 70 new members of the Assembly appointed by the President. This reaffirms the importance of ensuring the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in decision-making forums.

This progress must be accompanied by concrete efforts in transitional justice, accountability, searching for disappeared persons and strengthening the rule of law. Only in this way will it be possible to consolidate the people's trust in the transition process and move towards sustainable peace.

On the security front, we strongly condemn the terrorist attacks perpetrated in Damascus so far this month, including those that occurred during the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron. The terrorist attacks, which left at least 11 people dead and 57 injured, show that terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to the stability

of the country and to the efforts of the Syrian authorities in this transitional phase. We express our condolences to the families of the victims and our solidarity with the injured. No terrorist act should undermine the political process or hinder efforts to consolidate a new era of stability, reconciliation and peace in Syria.

We also continue to monitor with concern the developments in southern Syria. The persistence of pockets of violence demonstrates that the stability remains fragile and highlights the need to avoid actions that deepen tensions or compromise the progress made. Panama reaffirms the importance of fully respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria and the relevant resolutions of this Council.

Despite the progress made in the political sphere and the fact that some economic indicators show initial signs of recovery, the humanitarian situation remains deeply worrying. The United Nations estimates that a high percentage of the Syrian population continues to need humanitarian assistance, while millions face difficulties in accessing food, clean water, health services, education and other essential services. In this context, the support of the United Nations system, the Office of the Special Envoy and humanitarian agencies remain indispensable in responding to the most urgent needs of the Syrian population and supporting the country's recovery efforts. The constructive decisions taken recently by some international actors regarding the revision of their sanctions policies and the steps towards greater openness and normalization of relations with Syria are welcome, as they are helping to generate more favourable conditions for economic recovery, strengthened livelihoods and the well-being of the Syrian people.

Panama reiterates its willingness to accompany efforts aimed at building a Syria in peace, in which dialogue, inclusion, national reconciliation and respect for the rule of law lay the foundations for a sustainable recovery and a future of stability, dignity and prosperity for all Syrians.

Ms. Foster (United Kingdom): I thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone and Director Wosornu for their briefings and additionally welcome the participation of the representatives of Syria and Türkiye and the observer of Palestine in this meeting.

I will make three points.

First, the United Kingdom welcomes the inaugural meeting of the Syrian People's Assembly on 12 July. This is an important step towards establishing Syria's new political settlement. The United Kingdom stands ready to support efforts to strengthen Syria's institutions and to help long-term peace, stability and security. We look forward to working with the Assembly as it seeks to build an inclusive, prosperous future for all Syrians.

Secondly, Syria's security situation remains fragile. There is a real risk that wider regional conflict could undermine the country's long-overdue recovery. We urge all parties to de-escalate and to focus on rebuilding regional stability. We condemn the egregious Iranian-claimed attacks against Syria last week. We also call on Israel to set out a timeline for its withdrawal from areas in southern Syria, and we urge the Israeli Government to return to negotiations with the Syrian Government. This is in all parties' interests. We also condemn the recent terrorist attacks in Damascus and offer our deepest condolences to those affected. There can be no justification for such violence. The United Kingdom will continue to work closely with the Syrian Government to support its counter-terrorism efforts, and we remain an active member of the Global Coalition against Da'esh.

This month marks one year since the violence in the southern province of Suwayda', in which many innocent lives were lost and tens of thousands of people were displaced. We continue to support efforts to find a negotiated solution for Suwayda', one that upholds Syria's sovereignty and unity, while addressing accountability, social cohesion, access to essential services and humanitarian assistance.

Finally, we welcome the landmark decision by the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to restore Syria's rights and privileges. This recognizes the leadership and commitment of the Syrian Government in locating and destroying the stockpile of chemical weapons left by the Al-Assad regime.

Syria has made important progress in its efforts to build peace and security for its people and in its commitment to playing a positive and constructive role in its neighbourhood. This Council should continue to support Syria in these efforts and to help forge a safer and more prosperous future.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to begin by thanking the Deputy Special Envoy, Claudio Cordone, and the Director at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Edem Wosornu, for their briefings. I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Syria in this meeting.

As Mr. Cordone mentioned, Syria is engaged in a political transition that is decisive for its future. To ensure the success of this transition, Syria will need the full support and trust of the international community. That was the objective of the historic visit paid by the President of the French Republic to Damascus on 6 and 7 July, which sent a message of support for the Syrian transition, building on France's long-standing support for the Syrian people.

In the light of this visit, I would like to emphasize three points.

First, the country's political reconstruction has reached a new milestone with the inaugural session of the People's Assembly. The Syrian Parliament, the composition of which marks a step forward in representing the various components of Syrian society, will be tasked with essential responsibilities for the country's reconstruction and institutional development, including drafting a Constitution. We insist on the essential role of women in Syrian political life and welcome the measures undertaken recently by the Syrian authorities in this regard. The Parliament will also be called on to legislate on transitional justice, a key process for national reconciliation and Syria's long-term stability. The fight against impunity is a necessary condition for civil peace. All crimes must be brought to justice, including those committed since the fall of the regime.

Secondly, the State's authority over the entire Syrian territory is essential to guaranteeing the security of Syrians and contributing to regional stability. The fight against terrorism remains a priority. The recent terrorist attacks in Damascus show that the threat posed by Da'esh has not disappeared. We express our condolences and compassion to the families and loved ones of the victims of these attacks and our wishes for a speedy recovery to the wounded. As announced by the President of the Republic in Damascus, France stands ready to carry out counter-terrorism operations alongside the Syrian authorities and in the framework of the international counter-Da'esh coalition. More broadly, we welcome the sense of responsibility demonstrated by the Syrian authorities amid the regional escalation, and the new relationship of equals currently being built with Lebanon. We reiterate our support for Syria's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty, and we call on Israel to cease its incursions and begin its withdrawal from all occupied territories.

Lastly, the economic recovery of the country is imperative to giving back all Syrians hope for a better life. That requires reconstruction and investment. France stands with Syria to kick-start confidence so as to attract investors. That was why a number of French companies were alongside the President of the Republic in discussions with the Syrian side. Concurrently, efforts must continue to achieve a reliable banking system that meets international standards, particularly as pertains to countering corruption. The needs in terms of education, healthcare and energy infrastructure are colossal. To fund development projects in Syria, France will return more than €50 million from the seizure of assets misappropriated by the Al-Assad family.

It is incumbent on the entire international community and the United Nations to support this path towards a united, stable and prosperous Syria. The Secretary-General's next visit thus holds particular significance.

Ms. Alalawat (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, and Ms. Edem Wosornu, Director of Operations and Advocacy, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their comprehensive briefings on the latest developments in Syria. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, the State of Palestine and the Republic of Türkiye in this meeting.

I would like to address the following points at today's meeting.

First, the Kingdom of Bahrain commends the progress accomplished in building State institutions in the Syrian Arab Republic, as reflected in the holding of elections and the convening of the inaugural session of the People's Assembly. We appreciate the representation of women in the Assembly, which enhances national participation in State institutions. The Kingdom also welcomes the United States announcement regarding the process of delisting the Syrian Arab Republic as a State sponsor of terrorism. We view this as a positive step that supports reconstruction and economic recovery efforts and the reintegration of Syria into the international community.

Secondly, the Kingdom of Bahrain condemns the heinous terrorist attacks targeting civilians in the Syrian capital, Damascus and wishes the injured a swift recovery. The Kingdom affirms its solidarity with the Syrian Arab Republic in every measure that it takes to preserve its security and stability and supports national efforts to dismantle terrorist cells and strengthen the capabilities of State institutions to tackle terrorist organizations. Bahrain underscores the importance of continued international cooperation in combating all forms of terrorism and in strengthening cooperation in combating drug trafficking.

Thirdly, the Kingdom of Bahrain expresses its appreciation for the efforts of the Syrian Government and the National Committee for Transitional Justice to move the transitional justice process forward so as to support national reconciliation and consolidate peaceful coexistence. We also value the efforts of the Syrian National Commission for Missing Persons to address this humanitarian issue and encourage the pursuit of efforts to coordinate with the relevant United Nations mechanisms and frameworks, including the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic so as to enhance the complementarity of efforts and contribute to justice, fairness and reconciliation.

Fourthly, the Kingdom of Bahrain commends the role played by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and welcomes resolution 2824 (2026), which renewed its mandate for a further six months. We further underscore the need for Israel to withdraw from Syrian territories, to refrain from any actions that violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic or undermine its

security and stability and to abide fully by the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement and the relevant international resolutions.

Lastly, the Kingdom of Bahrain calls for the humanitarian response in the Syrian Arab Republic to continue, for early recovery and reconstruction efforts to be supported and for operations to clear mines and explosive remnants of war to be stepped up. Such measures will help to protect civilians and to foster conditions conducive to the safe and dignified return of displaced persons and refugees.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Olabi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Madam President, for your excellent stewardship of the Council's proceedings this month. I also renew my appreciation for the briefers' support for Syria and the Syrian people. I wish to salute His Excellency Mr. Syed Tariq Fatemi and thank him for attending today's meeting; his presence is much appreciated and certainly not taken for granted. Naturally, I likewise thank all Security Council members for their sustained support for the new Syria.

I will begin by highlighting two striking paradoxes. For many years, the Council would meet to discuss the situation in a Syria that lay beneath the rubble. Today, however, Syria is dispatching a civil defence team to Venezuela to participate in search-and-rescue operations for those trapped under debris. The second paradox lies in the fact that Syria, once the theatre of conflicts, is now resuming its role as a bridge between the world's continents. This was exemplified just days ago in Washington, where two memorandums of understanding were signed — one with Iraq, the other with a consortium of international companies — with a view to restoring the Kirkuk-Baniyas oil pipeline. This move reinforces Syria's role as a regional energy hub and a bridge for cooperation and prosperity.

The new People's Assembly has held its inaugural session, bringing together Syrian men and women from a variety of governorates, backgrounds and areas of expertise. Among them were defectors from the defunct regime who survived its prisons, tribal figures, local leaders, residents of the country, returnees from displacement and exile, persons with disabilities, working women, widows, holders of advanced degrees and professionals. Furthermore, the Supreme Constitutional Court has been constituted. Its seven members include two women. The fundamental pillars of institution-building for the transitional phase have thus been established.

Syria is forging ahead on the path of transitional justice. Today, I am delighted to welcome to the Security Council Chamber the women who have carried the banner of the families of victims and the missing and who have joined us today. They are no longer on the sidelines; they are now at the very heart of the Security Council. I also welcome the Chair of the National Commission for Missing Persons and the Chair of the National Commission for Transitional Justice, who have come to New York to represent Syria's commitment to truth, accountability and justice for victims through enhanced cooperation with the international community.

I must also pay tribute to the Syrian victims who lost their lives during the distressing events that unfolded in our beloved Suwayda' this time last year. I assure the families of all victims, Druze and Bedouin alike, that the process of holding those responsible for these violations accountable is under way. Suwayda' is at the heart of Syria, and safeguarding the dignity of its people throughout all its diverse communities is a non-negotiable national duty, which includes ensuring the return of displaced persons to their homes and safeguarding their children's right to education.

When it comes to its neighbours, the new Syria has chosen a clear path that eschews war and crises. It is in this spirit that the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates recently visited Lebanon, where he had extensive meetings with the holders of the “three presidencies” and various Lebanese political leaders. This visit sent a clear message: Syria stands with the State of Lebanon and its people. In a related context, units from the Ministry of Interior have thwarted an attempt to smuggle a large shipment of sophisticated weapons near the Syrian-Iraqi border. Preliminary investigations have revealed that this shipment was intended to transit Syrian territory en route to Lebanon. Syria once again affirms that it will not be a corridor for illegal weapons, an arena for settling regional scores, or a launching pad to threaten the security of States and peoples of the region. And because illicit arms entail illicit financing, Syria is confronting both. Today in Damascus, the Commission on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, launched consultations aimed at drafting a new national strategy to combat money-laundering, terrorist financing and weapons financing, with the participation of the relevant national authorities and the Central Bank of Syria, in line with international standards.

Just as Syria has returned to the region and the world, the world is now returning to us. Damascus has welcomed and received French President Emmanuel Macron on the first visit to Syria by a head of a European Union member State. In a reflection of President Macron’s courage, he decided to continue his visit despite attempts to disrupt it. In an embodiment of France’s confidence in the new Syria, the visit, which lasted two days, went beyond mere protocol. It was a bridge between the past and the future. President Macron was accompanied by a delegation that included major companies, and the visit included discussions and agreements on various economic and investment sectors. In addition, Syrian antiquities were returned to their rightful home to be installed in Syrian museums.

In Ankara, His Excellency President Ahmad Al-Sharaa met with the President of the United States, Donald Trump, and was given a letter confirming that the United States Congress would be instructed to initiate procedures to remove Syria from the list of State sponsors of terrorism. This is a historic decision that removes one of the last barriers left over from the former regime between Syria and the world for decades.

The world is not just returning to Syria through political and economic delegations. People themselves have returned. I am referring not simply to returnees and refugees but also to tourists. The Ministry of Tourism announced today that during the first half of this year, the country received 3.5 million visitors, while the number of foreign tourists increased by 448 per cent. These are not simply tourism figures. They are signs of confidence in a country that is reclaiming its place on the map of the world.

The picture today is clearer than ever. Syria sends rescue teams while Israel sends occupying troops. Syria seizes smuggled weapons while Israel crosses borders with weapons. Syria extinguishes fires while Israel lights them. As members heard, Syria is working on welcoming the United Nations while Israel is obstructing its humanitarian convoys. While Syria is working to protect its people and to strengthen security and stability in the region, Netanyahu places his narrow electoral calculations above the region’s security. He misleads his people and deludes them into believing that more wars will bring them safety. He is pushing his people from one battle to another, with no end in sight. Syria has chosen diplomacy and restraint. It has chosen to move forward with the much-appreciated American initiative. It remains aware that dialogue does not mean accepting occupation and diplomacy does not mean relinquishing rights.

In closing, some months ago, we had the pleasure of hosting the Council in Damascus in a visit that represented a turning point in Syria's relationship with the Council. Today Damascus looks forward to welcoming the Secretary-General, in a visit that will be far more than a protocol stop but rather will bear live witness to the historic transformation forged by the determination and sacrifice of Syrian men and women. For a long time, Syria has appeared before the Council as an intractable crisis. Today it returns to the Council as a success story. The Secretary-General is most welcome in Damascus. We welcome him in a Syria that has regained its voice, its stature and its future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mr. Ekren (Türkiye): We thank the briefers for their comprehensive presentations. We welcome the recent announcements regarding Secretary-General's visit to Syria and thank His Excellency Secretary-General Guterres for his strong commitment.

Syria has maintained positive momentum towards greater stability. Since the Council's last meeting under this agenda item (see S/PV.10178), there have been several encouraging developments.

First and foremost, we warmly welcome the convening of the People's Assembly in Syria on 12 July. Bringing together the various segments of Syrian society, the Assembly will make a valuable contribution in establishing stability, security and prosperity through inclusive governance. It will also enable the adoption of the legislation the country needs to accelerate its reconstruction process. The election of a woman member of parliament as one of the two deputy speakers of the People's Assembly is another positive step for the future of women's political participation in representation in Syria. During the recent visit of President Al-Sharaa to Ankara, which coincided with the NATO summit, President Trump announced his intention to rescind Syria's designation as a State sponsor of terrorism. Once realized, this step will contribute greatly to international efforts in support of Syria's reconstruction and recovery. A further significant development was the reinstatement of Syria's suspended rights and privileges under the Chemical Weapons Convention. This clearly demonstrates the success of Syria's national efforts, undertaken in cooperation with the international community, on the chemical weapons file.

These positive steps, however, continue to be exposed to significant risks. The terrorist attacks that took place in Damascus on 2 and 7 July were clear attempts to undermine the progress achieved towards durable stability and social cohesion. We are confident that the Syrian people will give the most effective response to such provocations by preserving their unity and solidarity. These latest attacks also underscore that the threat emanating from Da'esh must be monitored closely and continuously. Support to reinforce Syria's counter-terrorism capacity should therefore continue.

At the same time, the situation in the South remains a source of grave concern. Israel's continued attacks directly targeting civilian life, including the recent raids in western Dar'a, in which two children were wounded, constitute a clear violation of international law and the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The international community should fulfil its responsibilities in bringing an end to these attacks that hinder both the progress Syria has achieved since December 2024 and the stability of the entire region. The swift and uninterrupted conclusion of the integration of the north-east should likewise remain high on the national agenda.

The international community must step up its support for Syria's recovery and reconstruction, including through sustained and predictable financing. These efforts

require close coordination with the Syrian authorities and the United Nations. The rehabilitation of critical infrastructure remains among the most urgent priorities. While humanitarian assistance must continue to reach those in need, it should increasingly be complemented by early recovery and development support. Türkiye continues to contribute actively to sectors in which targeted investments can generate significant multiplier effects.

In conclusion, Türkiye remains firmly committed to supporting Syria's unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity, stability and prosperity, and we will continue to work with all partners towards this end.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mrs. Abushawesh (State of Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting on the political and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. I also thank the briefers.

I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

The Arab Group reiterates its support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and for the efforts of the Syrian State to exercise control over its entire territory. The Group calls on the international community to support the efforts of the Syrian Government to maintain the stability of Syria, which is of great importance and represents a key pillar for maintaining the security and stability of the region.

The Arab Group welcomes the decision of His Excellency the President of the United States of America, Mr. Donald Trump, to begin the official process to remove Syria from the list of State sponsors of terrorism, to which Syria was added decades ago owing to the activities of the former regime. This underscores the importance of this step in accelerating the achievement of economic recovery. In this regard, the Arab Group calls on all States to keep pace with the reforms undertaken by the Syrian Government and the major economic transformations by reinforcing their investments and helping to build a new, prosperous and safe Syria. In this context, we reaffirm the importance of the role of the United Nations and call for its efforts to be strengthened and for it to play a greater role in the development field in Syria, as part of the Syrian Government's vision of its national priorities.

The Arab Group condemns in the strongest terms the heinous terrorist acts that have recently targeted Syria and calls on the international community to support the efforts of the Syrian Government in combating the terrorist organization Da'esh and terrorism in all its forms in a way that helps to achieve peace and stability in the region and eliminate the threat of terrorism.

The Arab Group commends the positive development in Syria's relations with various countries in the region and the world, stresses the importance of concerted international efforts to provide real and tangible support to the Syrian Government in this delicate transitional phase and underscores the pivotal role of the United Nations in this regard. The Arab Group calls on the international community, the United Nations and its specialized agencies to provide various forms of support to and cooperate with the Syrian Government in all matters to help to achieve economic recovery and reconstruction and to support its efforts to create a safe environment and provide the necessary elements for the voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of Syrian refugees. In this regard, the Arab Group deeply appreciates the pivotal role played by refugee-hosting States, and we call on the international community to strengthen and expand the support provided to those States, as they should not, and cannot, be left to shoulder this heavy humanitarian and economic burden alone.

Given the grave humanitarian impact of the 14-year war in Syria, particularly the widespread proliferation of mines and explosive remnants of war, the Arab Group calls on the United Nations and the international community to make concerted efforts and enhance

the support provided to the Syrian Government in this vital area in a way that contributes to the protection of civilians, the creation of a safe environment for the recovery and return of the population and the improvement of the living conditions of the Syrian people.

The Arab Group condemns in the strongest terms all repeated Israeli incursions into, and attacks on, the territories of the Syrian Arab Republic, as they constitute a flagrant violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, a grave violation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and a threat to Syria's security and stability as well as to peace and security in the region. The Arab Group highlights the need to compel Israel to fully comply with the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and calls for an end to its repeated violations, an immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the Syrian territories into which it has recently infiltrated and from the entire occupied Syrian Golan and an immediate end to its illegal settlement activities.

In conclusion, the Arab Group reiterates its firm support for the brotherly Syrian people at this important juncture in its history and in its march towards building a future of security, stability and prosperity based on justice, equality and the rule of law and guaranteeing the rights and dignity of all Syrians.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.