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New York

President:	Mr. Bonnafont/Mrs. Ben Kraiem	(France)
Members:	Bahrain	Ms. Alalaiwat
	China	Mr. Fu Cong
	Colombia	Mr. Sánchez Niño
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Mr. Banza
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	Greece	Mr. Stamatekos
	Latvia	Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes
	Liberia	Mr. Brown II
	Pakistan	Mr. Jadoon
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	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 11.05 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 Israel, Oman, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria; Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. Yaser Tabbara, co-founder of the Syrian Forum.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Cordone, whom I welcome.

Mr. Cordone: During my latest stay in Syria, I saw further progress in institutional development, while Syrians continue to grapple with dire economic conditions and the country confronts internal and external security challenges. Above all, I had the opportunity to hear from local officials and civil society in different parts of the country about a strong commitment to building a Syria where everyone feels they belong, with representative institutions, a culture of accountability for both the past and the present and tangible improvements in people's lives, with sustained international support.

On 27 August, the People's Assembly announced the composition of the 26 standing committees established following last month's adoption of a comprehensive set of rules of procedure. Five of the 26 Committees are chaired by women. Syrian women interlocutors continue to seek further leadership roles in the Assembly and a commitment by all its members to meeting the diverse expectations of Syrian women and those of Syrians as a whole. Throughout this week, the People's Assembly has been holding an extraordinary session to adopt its budget and start consideration of a number of laws. Notable is the abrogation yesterday of the court on terrorism. Members of Parliament have also been hearing from the Minister of Education on challenges related to access to schools. These are notable initial steps in the Assembly's developing oversight role. Last week, I met with Speaker al-Awwak to discuss how my Office can best support the Assembly, including as it establishes its administrative structure and considers multiple offers of international assistance. And I agreed with the Speaker that these offers should be well coordinated and tailored to the needs of the Assembly.

Earlier this month, I also discussed with the Syrian authorities preparations for the holding of future parliamentary and presidential elections and possibly other elections, in line with the new constitution. We considered legal, political and operational challenges for future polls, drawing on lessons from the experience of establishing the People's Assembly. The heavy lifting needed for the implementation of these electoral plans within the remaining three and a half years of the transition must not be underestimated. But I am pleased with the developing cooperation with the Syrian authorities in this field too, including in exploring potential opportunities for United Nations electoral assistance. As for the drawing up of a new constitution, the inclusive, transparent and participatory nature of any process is essential if a

genuine social contract and shared vision of a future State is to be forged, and we will be ready to support a Syrian-led process in this regard.

Two days after the United States removed Syria from its list of State sponsors of terrorism last month, the first international Visa and Mastercard transactions were successfully conducted in Syria. This comes alongside deeper engagement by international financial institutions and growing interest from international business. Syria is also seeking to position itself as a regional corridor for energy and trade. These moves towards economic integration are notable, and I urge donor countries to facilitate investment and economic cooperation on the understanding that these should be equitable and accompanied by strong safeguards. Ultimately, ordinary Syrians will judge economic recovery through their daily lives in the form of jobs, affordable food and housing, functioning electricity and other basic services and the ability to return and rebuild their lives. Yet these opportunities stand in stark contrast to the economic pressures confronting ordinary Syrians. The sharp increases in fuel prices announced last weekend triggered demonstrations and roadblocks across several parts of the country. These protests reflect the immediate impact of higher energy costs but also wider concerns about whether economic recovery is translating into tangible improvements in people's lives, especially those of the poorest.

In the past weeks, I visited Aleppo, Tartus, Ladhiqiyah and Idlib, where I met the Governors and a wide range of civil society actors. Local officials illustrated encouraging developments in several areas, including steps to strengthen local governance and efforts to expand the participation of different components of Syrian society in State institutions. They welcomed close cooperation with the United Nations and urged more coordination in humanitarian and recovery programming. Civil society interlocutors stressed the need for further progress on transitional justice, for women's economic and political participation and for greater clarity on the vision for the transition. The message from many was clear: progress at the national level must translate into greater inclusion, security, services and economic opportunity at the local level. I look forward to further engagement across the country, with officials as well as with women and civil society. In this context, we are currently working with the Government, civil society and other United Nations entities on initiatives to address the proliferation of hate speech.

On the north-east, we see important progress. Three days after Mazloum Abdi announced the dissolution of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and integration into the Syrian military, he was appointed as a Presidential Adviser. There have also been further steps on military, police and civilian administration integration in Hasakah. I am, however, concerned that a former SDF fighter was recently abducted and killed, triggering demonstrations in several Kurdish-majority towns and a stand-off between general security and some other security forces around a detention centre, which some detainees then set on fire. I note that several suspects have reportedly been arrested and that investigations are continuing. It is important that the abduction and killing are fully investigated and that those responsible are held accountable. I welcome the efforts of senior Government officials and Presidential Adviser Mazloum Abdi on restoring calm.

Returns also continue to take place. On 1 September, approximately 50 families displaced for more than a decade returned voluntarily from Ra's al-Ayn to Hasakah City in the first organized return convoy of its kind, a pilot initiative facilitated by the authorities to support and inform future return movements in north-eastern Syria. Discussions are continuing on the use of the Kurdish language. Attention continues to be paid to the future role of women who served in the Women's Protection Units. It will be important that women who played prominent roles in the political and social

life of north-eastern Syria can continue to participate meaningfully in the institutions of the new Syria.

The situation in Suwayda' remains deeply concerning. On 1 September, renewed clashes between internal security forces and the National Guard affiliated with Sheikh Hikmat Al-Hijri left several casualties. I also deplore the abduction and expulsion from Suwayda' on 4 September of Druze notable Atef Hneidi by armed men reportedly affiliated with the National Guard. He had publicly rejected statements associating the Druze community's future with Israel and expressed his support for Syria's unity. These and other forms of repression of freedom of expression cannot provide a path forward.

Following the presidential decree last month granting students from Suwayda' Governorate an exceptional examination, only around 150 of approximately 14,000 eligible students participated. The examination centres were in areas under Government control, specifically in some of the villages devastated during the events of July 2025, and students from within Suwayda' were prevented from reaching examination centres and faced other restrictions of movement. At this point, unless these children can sit for examinations in a safe, secure and supportive environment, without pressure or movement disruptions, other solutions should be considered to ensure that their right to education is upheld. My Office and United Nations agencies stand ready to help.

I wish to take this opportunity to stress that the issue of Suwayda' and the future of its Druze community must ultimately be resolved by Syrians themselves, within a united Syria and without disruptive foreign interference. I look forward to renewed efforts to reinvigorate the September 2025 road map, promoting the restoration of State authority while addressing the real trust deficit that followed the events of July 2025 and continued grievances within the community in Suwayda'. A phased but determined process could be initiated to address detainees and missing persons and support gradual sustainable returns, among confidence-building measures to build trust between the State and the Druze community and promote reconciliation between the Druze and Bedouin communities. My Office and the rest of the United Nations in Syria are ready to cooperate in exploring these dimensions and provide operational support, while supporting mediation efforts aimed at reaching broader political and security agreements.

The Israeli presence and military activity in southern Syria have continued, in violation of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces, with near-daily incursions, temporary checkpoints, searches of homes and artillery fire, particularly in Qunaytirah and western Dar'a. Two Syrians who were taken to Israel and held there were returned home, but others remain in Israeli custody. On 9 September, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu visited Israeli forces on Jabal al-Shaykh/Mount Hermon, reiterating that Israel would not permit hostile forces to establish themselves along its border. I have taken very clear note of the statement by the Syrian Permanent Representative and 43 Member States last week in response to this other violation of Syrian sovereignty.

The Secretary-General has been very clear: violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity must cease, and the 1974 Agreement must be respected. Security concerns cannot be addressed in any sustainable way through unilateral military action or an open-ended military presence. Diplomacy must prevail. I welcome in this regard the mediation efforts led by the United States, aimed at reaching an understanding among Syria and its neighbours that reduces tensions and promotes sustainable security arrangements. These must respect Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity and comply fully with international law.

I welcome the General Assembly's unanimous adoption on 31 August of a Syrian-sponsored resolution establishing 19 December as the International Day of Recognition for Women Searchers of Missing Persons (General Assembly resolution 80/301). It is an important recognition of Syrian women, who have spent years seeking truth and accountability. Their experience is also a reminder that Syrian women have been among key political, civic and social actors in this transition and must be able to participate fully in shaping its future. I also welcome Syria's cooperation with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which has verified the destruction of materiel related to chemical weapons in Syria, and with the International Atomic Energy Agency, whose Board of Governors declared on 9 September that Syria is no longer in non-compliance with its nuclear non-proliferation obligations.

As attention turns to this General Assembly period, we can reinforce a simple message. Syria has made important advances, and these should be recognized and supported. At the same time, progress should create momentum for the next steps, addressing the significant challenges that persist. For the Syrian authorities, this requires strengthening accountable institutions, widening participation, protecting civic space and advancing transitional justice. For international partners, it entails sustained political and practical support for recovery, reconstruction and safe, dignified and voluntary returns. And for our part, this requires my Office consolidating in Damascus to fit the growing cooperation with the Government and engagement with Syrian society to better implement our mandate of supporting the Syrian-led political transition. The United Nations as a whole remains committed to developing its partnership with Syria.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Fletcher.

Mr. Fletcher: I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, and as ever, I thank my colleague for his work.

My briefings tend to feature many numbers, but here is the most important one: since December 2024, more than 2 million internally displaced Syrians and 1.8 million refugees have gone home voluntarily. This historic wave of return — the highest in Syria in decades — is a profound sign of hope. Improved security, eased sanctions and resilient communities are driving this recovery. Through 300 partners, we have reached over 2.5 million people monthly, this year, with humanitarian support, reopening key routes into Hasakah and flights to Dayr al-Zawr in August. However, four major obstacles threaten this progress: continued displacement, localized insecurity, regional escalation and landmines.

First, 5.5 million people inside Syria have not yet gone home, nearly 800,000 of them are still in camps — over 75 per cent of whom are women and children. Currently, only 18 per cent of Syrians outside the country say that they plan to return home in the coming year. Without homes, schools or clean water, today's returnees risk becoming tomorrow's displaced. Therefore, we must continue to support the Government's "no tents and no camps" initiative to achieve the safe return of all those who choose to go home.

The second challenge is that localized insecurity risk choking recovery. Attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in the east and north-east, sporadic violence, rebuilding challenges and bureaucratic hurdles threaten lasting peace. True stability is not possible until every community — most crucially Syria's women — is fully integrated into the nation's political and economic fabric.

The third challenge is the mounting risks beyond Syria's borders. The escalation of tensions across the region means maritime chokepoints, disrupted supply chains, reduced humanitarian access and even greater economic pressure on Syrian families. Alongside the weeks of disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, we now face blockages in Bab al-Mandab. For Syrians, I fear that this means increased fuel prices, freight charges, insurance premiums and procurement lead times, as well as disruptions to imports from Asia and the Gulf and to shipping through Tartus and Ladhiqiyah.

Higher diesel costs, up by 40 per cent only this week, will hit agricultural production, water pumping, electricity generation, bakeries and heating as winter approaches, with disproportionate consequences for displaced people and other vulnerable households. For families already struggling, higher fuel and transport costs will increase the prices of food, medicines and other essential goods. The cost of what we call the minimum expenditure basket has increased by 33 per cent since June 2025, while electricity tariffs have increased in some places by several hundred per cent. And those price increases have, of course, driven up the cost of our humanitarian response.

The fourth challenge is that mines are making recovery efforts a lethal gamble. Since December 2024, explosive ordnance has killed 880 people — including 269 children — and maimed 1,616 more, nearly 40 per cent of whom are children. Mines block the fields, orchards and grazing lands that families need to feed themselves. You cannot rebuild an economy over a minefield. So, it is right that the Syrian Government has made the "no mines" initiative a centrepiece of its planning, backed by the humanitarian community.

I have three asks of the Council, all in pursuit of the effort to help Syrians to return, rebuild and move beyond crisis and beyond the need for Security Council discussion.

First, we must invest in the transition out of humanitarian need and towards reconstruction and growth. We should be making a collective push, alongside the Syrian authorities, to move through this transition in the coming year. But while humanitarian organizations continue to deliver, resources fall dramatically short of what is needed. Agencies are being forced to reduce, delay or stop activities just when families with the most severe needs need help to make the journey from displacement to recovery. Food assistance for the most vulnerable is being halved.

Our hyperprioritized appeal may be currently funded at 57 per cent, but key sectors lag behind. Our food and education plans are only funded at 26 per cent. Therefore, I thank all the donors who are stepping up to fund the appeal, including the United States of America with $297 million, the European Commission with $221 million, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with $46 million, Japan with $42 million, Germany with $40 million and many more. All those figures are publicly available. And I thank the donors for doing so in line with the humanitarian reset. As at the end of August, the Syria Humanitarian Fund had received $325 million, more than twice last year's figure. As winter approaches and the regional situation remains unstable, funding will be vital as a bulwark against losing the advances that Syria has fought so hard to achieve. If we fail to invest today, the costs will be higher tomorrow in renewed displacement, deteriorating services and lost opportunities to consolidate stability and the transition towards reconstruction and development in Syria.

My second ask is to remove the obstacles standing between recovery and development. We must work with the Syrian authorities to clear the mines, remove the rubble, continue the progress in unblocking administrative delays and fund livelihoods.

Thirdly, we must invest the political capital needed to keep Syria out of regional conflict. We must redouble diplomatic efforts in support of Syria's territorial integrity. We must take every measure so that the Syrian people are not subjected to further conflict, displacement and chaos.

Syrians have endured enough. They are making progress that has defied many who have predicted, or wished, that it was impossible. Let us also meet this moment.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Tabbara.

Mr. Tabbara: I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Council on behalf of Syrian civil society.

Syria today stands simultaneously at a moment of extraordinary possibility and of difficulty. After years of conflict, repression, displacement and institutional erosion, Syrians are attempting not simply to rebuild a country, but also to redefine the relationship between the State and its citizens.

Today, I would like to focus on three dualities that will significantly shape the success of Syria's transition.

The first is the perceived duality between sovereignty and international cooperation. Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity must be respected without qualification. Syrians have paid an enormous price for external interference, fragmentation and the erosion of national sovereignty. But sovereignty should not be confused with isolation. A Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transition cannot mean that Syria must undertake every aspect of that transition alone. Our country urgently requires knowledge, expertise, investment, technology and technical assistance. This applies particularly to transitional justice and the search for missing persons, but also to judicial reform, public administration, security sector governance, economic reform and institution-building. National ownership should therefore answer the question of who decides, not who provides. Effective sovereignty requires capable institutions. Where decades of authoritarianism and years of conflict have weakened those institutions, international technical assistance can strengthen, rather than diminish, sovereignty.

At the same time, international cooperation cannot reproduce externally designed programmes detached from Syrian realities. This principle is particularly important for transitional justice. Justice must be Syrian-led, responsive to victims and families, and meaningfully include Syrian women. But Syria should also make full use of the considerable experience, evidence and institutional knowledge accumulated internationally during the past 15 years, including by Syrian civil society.

The second duality is between loyalty and trust, on the one hand, and qualification, on the other. Every Government emerging from conflict naturally seeks officials whom it trusts. Syria's recent history makes this understandable. But trust cannot become the principal qualification for public service. If Syria is to rebuild functioning institutions, competence, integrity and merit must increasingly determine who serves in positions of leadership in public office.

Allow me one very human example. For many Syrians, it is genuinely heartening to see a Syrian human-rights lawyer occupying the seat of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic — Ambassador Ibrahim Olabi. But that example should lead us to a broader question: How many highly qualified Syrian experts could contribute to rebuilding the country if the correct recruitment mechanisms existed? And what institutions are we creating to ensure that the most capable Syrians can compete fairly for the positions in which they can serve their

nation? This is not merely an administrative question. It is fundamentally a political one.

Merit-based institutions require transparency, an inclusive political environment, an empowered civil society, freedom of expression and access to information. Citizens must have confidence that professional competence and public integrity, rather than political, familial or personal proximity, offer a genuine path into public service. Civil society should therefore not be treated merely as a beneficiary of the transition, nor consulted merely after major decisions are taken. It should be recognized as a partner in governance, oversight and institution-building.

The third duality is between economic recovery and the conditions necessary to make that recovery sustainable and credible. There is no serious path towards stability in Syria without economic recovery. Millions of Syrians require employment. Infrastructure requires rehabilitation and investment. Syrian businesses need access to international financial markets and normalized banking relationships. The international community has an important responsibility here, and a commitment to formal sanctions relief alone is not enough. Over-compliance by private institutions continues to create economic barriers, even for lawful transactions. Governments lifting sanctions should therefore provide clear guidance to financial and private institutions to facilitate legitimate economic engagement with Syria.

But responsibility runs in both directions. Syria cannot ask international investors to accept risks and uncertainty that Syrians themselves would not accept. As economic reintegration progresses, the responsibility of the Syrian authorities to provide clarity, predictability and transparency also increases. Syria needs a clearer economic vision. What role will the private sector play? How will public assets be managed? What rules will govern foreign investment? How will economic justice be upheld? Public procurement deserves particular attention. Government contracts and infrastructure projects should increasingly be governed by transparent procedures, competitive tenders and meaningful mechanisms of oversight and appeal. These are not conditions imposed from abroad. These are safeguards for Syrian public funds and protections for Syrian citizens.

Across these three dualities, there is one common principle. The answer is not choosing one side and rejecting the other. Syria should not choose between sovereignty and cooperation. It should pursue sovereign cooperation. It should not choose between trust and qualification. It should build institutions in which credible qualification earns trust. And it should not choose between rapid economic recovery and transparency. Transparency is precisely what will make economic recovery just and durable.

I therefore conclude with the following concrete appeals.

I ask the Syrian authorities to protect national ownership while facilitating access to international expertise, establish merit-based and transparent pathways into public service, guarantee meaningful space for civil society and fundamental freedoms, articulate a clear economic strategy, and strengthen transparent procurement and accountability mechanisms.

I ask the international community to consider convening a dedicated international donors' conference for the rebuilding of Syria, provide technical assistance centred on knowledge transfer and national capacity-building, support Syrian-led justice and institutional reform, address banking over-compliance, and mobilize responsible investment and development support.

To both sides, I would suggest one final principle: do not measure success by how much authority is retained by the State, nor by how much assistance is delivered

by the international community; measure it by how much capability, accountability and opportunity are ultimately transferred to the Syrian people. This is where sovereignty acquires meaning. This is where national ownership becomes concrete. And this is where Syria's transition becomes one not merely diverging from the nation's past, but leading towards a functioning, inclusive and prosperous State.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Tabbara for his statement and, more broadly, our briefers for their briefings and proposals.

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

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Mr. Tabbara for their briefings.

With the high-level week of the General Assembly approaching, we recall President Al-Sharaa's address to the General Assembly in 2025, in which he spoke of a new chapter of peace, prosperity and development for Syria (see A/80/PV.6). One year later, Syria has made remarkable progress in rebuilding institutions and laying the foundations for economic recovery and a peaceful, prosperous future. Foreign Minister Løkke Rasmussen saw this first-hand when he visited Syria two weeks ago and reopened the Danish Embassy in Damascus. However, emerging from the devastation of civil war, widespread atrocity crimes and decades of oppression is not without challenges, and much remains to be done.

At the outset, we reiterate Denmark's full support for Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We call on Israel to withdraw from Syrian territory and to comply fully with its obligations under the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces. The continued Israeli presence in southern Syria poses an increased risk of regional destabilization. We reaffirm our support for a diplomatic solution to address the security of southern Syria and express our concern about reports that the Syrian-Israeli talks have stalled. At this fragile time for the region, we call for their swift resumption.

Despite the serious security challenges, the political transition continues to take shape. To ensure a lasting peace, the political transition must follow international standards, a clear and transparent road map and sound institutional checks and balances. The full participation of women, minorities, youth and civil society in general remains essential.

We welcome initiatives such as the women's police academy and encourage continued security sector reform to build public trust. We also welcome the historic and unanimous decision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after 15 years to close the file on the previous regime's nuclear non-compliance, now that Syria's nuclear material and facilities are under safeguards. We commend Syria for this achievement and encourage Syria to continue its cooperation with the IAEA, including by bringing into force an additional protocol. This complements the progress Syria has made in addressing outstanding issues related to the former regime's chemical weapons programme and Syria's collaboration with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

We have also followed the important trials of senior former regime figures. Accountability for crimes committed against the Syrian people is essential, and all proceedings must be transparent, allow for appeal and meet international fair-trial standards. Transitional justice has to be impartial and respect the rights of all victims and survivors.

Finally, the humanitarian situation remains alarming, with more than 15 million Syrians in need of assistance. Access remains limited to healthcare, food, clean water,

education and livelihoods, and as we have heard, rising fuel prices only exacerbate these problems. As we have also heard, there is a need to scale up funding not only for the humanitarian response but also for recovery and reconstruction, in order to ensure investment in recovery and in giving the Syrian people the future they aspire to and deserve. This is also why the Danish Foreign Minister, during his visit to Damascus last month, pledged $76 million in official development assistance to Syria, in addition to large-scale humanitarian support, and stressed that Denmark plans to increase its support to reconstruction from 2027.

In closing, Denmark will continue to support Syria, including through the Security Council, as it writes this new, brighter chapter of its history.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings. We also listened attentively to Mr. Tabbara.

Russia is genuinely interested in stabilizing the military, political and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic as soon as possible. We note both positive trends and serious challenges to the normalization of the situation in Syria.

We support the steady steps being taken by Damascus to unite the country, as well as the commitment expressed by the new authorities to safeguard the rights of all citizens, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation. The interests of all sectors of Syrian society must be taken into account in the state-building process. Otherwise, no model for the country's future political order will be stable or viable.

In that context, we note with satisfaction the progress made in implementing the January agreements on reintegrating the area beyond the Euphrates into the legal framework of the Syrian State. We hope that the comprehensive implementation of those agreements will lead to the long-term normalization of the situation in the north-east of the country.

We regard the commencement of the work of the People's Assembly as yet another significant step in the efforts of the Syrian authorities to strengthen domestic stability and national reconciliation. We wish the parliamentarians every success as they undertake the important and difficult task of drafting a new constitution and other foundational legislative instruments.

Turning to the socioeconomic situation in Syria, we are concerned by reports of large-scale protests that erupted in recent days amid the worsening fuel crisis. The needs of the Syrian people remain considerable: two thirds of the country's population require humanitarian assistance.

Nevertheless, we also note positive changes in the Syrian economy, above all in the agricultural sector. Wheat production may reach 2.7 million tons this year. That is particularly important amid volatility in global food markets, including against the backdrop of Ukraine's reckless actions in the Black Sea and the situation in the Strait of Hormuz.

This month, more than 5 million Syrian children returned to the classroom. However, the Syrian education system continues to face serious challenges. The large-scale return of the population is placing an additional burden on already weakened infrastructure. There is therefore an urgent need to rebuild schools and water supply and sanitation systems, as well as to train teachers.

The mine threat also remains a serious problem. Explosive ordnance is being found in residential areas, including near schools and children's playgrounds. Children account for approximately 30 per cent of those killed and 40 per cent of

those injured in mine explosions. The population must therefore be systematically informed about the dangers posed by landmines. In 2025, Syria began incorporating relevant modules into school curricula. We consider that work a priority, alongside mine clearance and assistance to victims.

All those factors must be taken into account when assessing the current situation. However, the resolution of those challenges depends directly on the availability of resources. The humanitarian response plan is only 30 per cent funded. We call for predictable funding for humanitarian operations in Syria in order to prevent a reversal of the emerging positive trends and to create conditions for a transition to sustainable development.

We are convinced that consolidating Syrian society, addressing economic problems, mitigating the risk of the country's fragmentation and combating terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters, must remain priority tasks. However, any discussion of stabilization in Syria becomes meaningless when external actions are simultaneously being taken that undermine the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have consistently opposed the use of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic as an arena for geopolitical rivalry and the settling of scores. We believe that all constructively minded States in the Middle East and beyond share a responsibility to avoid steps that could trigger another cycle of escalation in Syria.

In that connection, we wish to emphasize the unacceptability of Israel's aggressive actions against Syria, be it the occupation of significant areas of the country, the continuing attacks by the Israel Defense Forces or armed raids deep into Syrian territory. Nor can we ignore the recent provocative visit by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz to arbitrary positions of the Israel Defense Forces on Mount Hermon, or the statements made concerning West Jerusalem's absolute control over the area from Mount Hermon to the Yarmuk River and its continuing expansionist ambitions in the region. Such actions and rhetoric not only contravene international law but also create additional risks for regional security, which continues to suffer the grave consequences of the United States-Israeli military misadventure against Iran.

We call on West Jerusalem to immediately cease its arbitrary activities in the Syrian Golan Heights, comply strictly with the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and withdraw Israeli troops to the positions prescribed therein. Legitimate security concerns cannot justify violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. It is time for the Israeli leadership to recognize that military methods of resolving problems lead nowhere and to heed the reasonable message from Damascus that it is prepared to sit down at the negotiating table. We are convinced that only a political and diplomatic approach, coupled with strict compliance with international law, can provide lasting security for all States of the Middle East.

For its part, Russia will continue to assist in stabilizing friendly Syria, establishing a genuinely inclusive political process and strengthening its statehood, unity and territorial integrity, in accordance with the key provisions of resolution 2254 (2015).

Ms. Bruce (United States of America): I thank today's briefers.

The United States welcomes the ongoing progress that the Syrian authorities continue to make on political, humanitarian and security priorities. As we noted last month, the United States, under President Trump, is committed to supporting a stable, unified Syria and to building a more prosperous and interconnected region.

We welcome the decision of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on 9 September to end its long-standing finding of non-compliance by Syria. It reflects the Government's commitment to cooperative engagement with the IAEA, transparency about the former regime's clandestine nuclear programme and the peaceful use of nuclear technology going forward.

We encourage Syria to continue working with the IAEA to strengthen its domestic safeguards for nuclear material, including by adopting an additional protocol and implementing its provisions in full. The conclusion of an additional protocol would be an important demonstration of the Syrian Government's enduring commitment to transparency and to fostering international trust.

We also take this opportunity to remind Council members that 15 years ago, in June 2011, the Council first received notice from the IAEA that the Al-Assad regime had violated its Safeguards Agreement. As we said at the time, it was obvious that Al-Assad had tried to build a nuclear reactor in order to produce weapons-grade plutonium. Yet some members of the Council shamelessly parroted the Al-Assad regime's lies and tried to deflect blame onto Israel. We now know that, all along, the IAEA was right. Israel was right. The United States was right. We point this out not to boast, but to remind fellow Council members, as well as proliferator States such as Iran, that with enough time and effort, the truth will always prevail.

As we did last month, the United States commends the integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces into Syrian State institutions, marking further progress on Syria's path towards one army, one Government and one unified State.

We remain concerned, however, about the escalation in Suwayda' and reaffirm our support for the trilateral road map announced nearly a year ago by the United States, Syria and Jordan, which provides a path towards the dignified reintegration of the province and full rights and obligations of citizenship for its Druze community. We urge all parties to exercise restraint and pursue dialogue in earnest, and we look for continued progress towards accountability, security and the safe return of the displaced. We also call on both Israel and Syria to exercise restraint and seek de-escalation with regard to territorial issues. The United States will continue to engage closely with both countries and with all regional stakeholders to promote dialogue and peaceful solutions.

As we look ahead to the high-level week of the General Assembly next week, we encourage members of the Council and all Member States to use this opportunity for meaningful engagement with the Syrian Government in support of a stable, secure and prosperous Syria, which, of course, is in the interest of the entire globe. We reiterate our call for United Nations institutions and Member States to support the Syrian Government's efforts to advance these goals. We urge the Syrian Government to work with 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 and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic to finalize memorandums of understanding that will enable them to provide resources to support the ongoing transitional justice project in Syria.

We also take note of the remarks of the Deputy Special Envoy and the Under-Secretary-General regarding the role of women in Syria. The ideas, the work and the insight of women is key to the stability and legitimacy of the new Syria. Their role in every sector is important and is clear in the search for the missing. Their vital role must be fostered in every dynamic.

Ms. Foster (United Kingdom): I thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Mr. Tabbara for their briefings.

Last week marked a significant step forward in Syria's compliance with its international obligations. With the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) closure of Syria's long-standing safeguards file by consensus. After 15 years of obstruction by the Al-Assad regime, this decision is an important symbol of Syria's commitment to meeting its international obligations. We also commend Syria's constructive engagement with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The United Kingdom stands ready to support the complete and verified destruction of Al-Assad-era chemical weapons and the full implementation of Syria's obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Lasting stability will not be delivered, though, by security arrangements alone. It must be underpinned by reconciliation, accountability and protection for all communities. We remain concerned by reports of ongoing violence in north-east Syria. We continue to support a unified and inclusive Syria and encourage all parties to exercise restraint, avoid inflammatory rhetoric and work together to resolve outstanding issues related to the implementation of the integration agreement. Ultimately, ensuring that all Syrians feel secure, represented and protected is an essential part to Syria's journey towards long-term stability and recovery. To support the recovery plans of the Syrian Government and the needs of the displaced and vulnerable populations, the United Kingdom will contribute $90 million this year.

Syria's recovery remains fragile. Israel's actions risk increasing tensions at an already sensitive moment, including Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent visit to the summit of Mount Hermon in the United Nations area of separation. We continue to urge all parties to exercise restraint and avoid actions that could lead to further escalation. We call on Israel to set out a timeline for withdrawal from recently occupied Syrian territory. Dialogue remains the only sustainable path forward. We encourage continued engagement between Syria and Israel and welcome efforts to resolve differences through negotiation rather than confrontation. Respect for Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence remains essential to securing long-term stability. The United Kingdom remains committed to supporting efforts to ensure that Syria emerges from decades of conflict as a stable, sovereign and inclusive State.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone and Under-Secretary-General Fletcher for their briefings, and I have also listened carefully to the statement made by civil society representative Mr. Tabbara.

While the current situation in Syria is generally stable in the region, the country also faces a series of serious challenges, including intertwined internal and external security risks and the arduous task of improving people's lives. The Syrian transitional Government should work hand in hand with the international community, take more pragmatic measures to consolidate the hard-won positive momentum, effectively enhance the well-being of the people and promote long-term stability and peace in Syria.

I would like to make five points.

First, Syria has largely completed the integration of its north-eastern region, and the political transition process has achieved significant new progress. The Syrian transitional Government has made positive efforts in this regard, which deserve recognition. China supports Syria in advancing its domestic political process in accordance with the spirit of resolution 2254 (2015) and the principles of Syrian-led and Syrian-owned initiatives, while actively exploring a development path suited to its national conditions.

Secondly, the recent conflicts and demonstrations within the Druze and Kurdish communities warrant attention from all parties. The ability to properly address inter-ethnic issues is a test of the governance capacity of the Syrian transitional Government. We expect the Syrian transitional Government to act in the interests of all the Syrian people, earnestly listen to the demands of all groups and protect the rights of all ethnic groups equally. Through inclusive dialogue, it should resolve internal conflicts and differences and promote national reconciliation and consensus.

Thirdly, a large number of foreign terrorist fighters remain active in Syria and continue to pose a persistent threat and a grave risk to Syria's peaceful reconstruction. It is the consensus of the international community that Syria must not become a safe haven for terrorism. China urges the Syrian transitional Government to remain resolute in its determination to combat terrorism, take all effective measures and resolutely crack down on all international terrorist organizations designated by the Security Council, including the East Turkestan Islamic Movement.

Fourthly, conflict and upheaval are not Syria's inevitable fate. The Syrian people have the right to forge a new life in a peaceful and stable environment. Currently, Syria faces acute unemployment, inflation and infrastructure challenges. China supports the Syrian transitional Government in prioritizing development and reconstruction as its central tasks and encourages the Syrian side to create a safe and welcoming business environment to foster favourable conditions for economic recovery. We also call on the international community to maintain its efforts in providing humanitarian assistance to Syria and to address the most urgent humanitarian needs of the Syrian people.

Fifthly, the Golan Heights is occupied Syrian territory. The Security Council has adopted multiple resolutions demanding that Israeli forces withdraw from the Syrian Golan Heights. China respects Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. We oppose any attempt to alter the status quo through unilateral actions and call on Israel to cease all military operations within the occupied territories and withdraw from them without delay. The 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces should be strictly observed, and China supports the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in carrying out its duties unimpeded in accordance with the Security Council's mandate.

Next Monday, we will commemorate the International Day of Peace, which reflects the international community's aspirations to end all conflicts and the shared aspiration of the world's people for lasting peace. The restoration of peace and stability across the broader Middle East, including Syria, is an integral part of the cause of world peace and development. As a sincere friend of Syria and the countries of the Middle East, China will continue to play a constructive role in promoting the early realization of security, stability and development in Syria and the Middle East.

Mr. Sánchez Niño (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My thanks extend to Special Envoy Cordone, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and in particular to Mr. Tabbara for their most informative briefings, which have opened up fresh avenues for discussion on the subject. I likewise welcome the presence of the delegations joining us today.

The political and humanitarian dimensions of the decisions taken in this organ on Syria are undergirded by a scaffolding of concrete obligations consisting of an inclusive political process, on the one hand, and safe, sustained and unhindered access nationwide and attention to the humanitarian crisis, on the other. That framework was designed to manage an open conflict and now supports a transition. The transition is when compliance begins to be verifiable. Colombia welcomes the achievements of the transitional Government — the integration of the north-east, the inauguration of

the People's Assembly on 12 July, the constitution of the Constitutional Court and the recognition of citizenship and cultural rights for Syrian Kurds. These developments mark strides towards the inclusive process that the Council required.

When it comes to the humanitarian pillar, the return of more than 3 million people is the most telling sign of renewed confidence, which hinges on assistance being maintained. The humanitarian funding gap is not an abstract figure; it has direct and verifiable consequences. The cuts to emergency food assistance mentioned by Under-Secretary-General Fletcher, from 1.3 million to 650,000 people, show that resource shortages are reflected in immediate deprivation. Colombia calls on donors to ramp up funding for the response plan.

Last but not least, explosive remnants of war are currently one of the main obstacles to sustainable return. They have led to more than 2,000 casualties since December 2024, that is, one every six hours. More than 60 per cent of these incidents occur on agricultural or grazing land, meaning that contamination jeopardizes lives, food security and the return process. Colombia calls for funding, capacities for humanitarian demining and risk education to be stepped up and for comprehensive victim assistance be incorporated into the recovery agenda forthwith.

The gains made demonstrate that the Council's framework is capable of producing verifiable results. Building on them requires more than just political support; it requires the recovery to be funded. The World Bank puts reconstruction costs at $216 billion. The United Nations Development Programme estimates that, at the current rate, it would take Syria 55 years to restore its pre-conflict economic output, or 15 years at a 5 per cent growth rate, even though the lifting of designations and sanctions has created investment opportunities that did not exist two years ago.

Following through on these commitments is what transforms the headway made in the transition into lasting results. Colombia will continue to support an inclusive, Syrian-led and United Nations-facilitated process.

Ms. Alalaiwat (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Mr. Claudio Cordone, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their comprehensive briefings on the latest developments in Syria. We have also taken note of the briefing by the civil society representative, Mr. Yaser Tabbara. I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representatives in today's session.

The Syrian Arab Republic stands today at a watershed moment on the path to restoring security and stability and building national and constitutional institutions capable of meeting the aspirations of the brotherly Syrian people for peace, security and development. The Kingdom of Bahrain believes that the success of this phase requires continued support for the Syrian Government's efforts to consolidate the rule of law, strengthen social peace and national reconciliation and foster values of tolerance and coexistence so as to shore up the social fabric and ensure that all segments of Syrian society have a part in building their country's future.

In the context of supporting Syria's return to cooperation and active engagement with international institutions, the Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes the adoption by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of a resolution on the Syrian Arab Republic and the conclusion of its assessment of the implementation of the Safeguards Agreement in the Syrian Arab Republic. We hope that this mark a further step towards fostering trust and cooperation between Syria and international institutions, while opening up broader prospects for supporting its stability and recovery. The Kingdom of Bahrain also commends the efforts of the Arab Group within the IAEA Board of Governors, led by the Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia and involving the participation of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Kingdom of Morocco, and its role in presenting the draft resolution.

Sustainable stability in Syria continues to be first and foremost contingent on full respect for its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Accordingly, the Kingdom of Bahrain objects to continued Israeli attacks on, and incursions into, Syrian territory, including recent developments in southern Syria and Mount Hermon, and underscores the need to desist from any measures or practices that would impose a new reality on the ground or infringe upon the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic and its territorial integrity.

In a related context, the Kingdom of Bahrain encourages diplomatic efforts aimed at de-escalation, bolstering security and stability and continuing dialogue with a view to arriving that an understanding that safeguards the region's security and stability on the basis of full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Kingdom of Bahrain emphasizes the need to adhere to the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 497 (1981), and to halt escalation, while averting any action that undermines security and stability in Syria and the region. The Kingdom also affirms the importance of the role played by the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the need to ensure the safety and freedom of movement of its personnel so that they can fully discharge their mandate.

On the humanitarian front, the return of increasing numbers of Syrians from abroad is an encouraging development. However, sustaining this return requires providing the conditions for a dignified life, restoring basic services, creating livelihood opportunities and repairing damaged infrastructure. Accordingly, the Kingdom of Bahrain calls upon the international and the donor communities to continue supporting the humanitarian response and to ensure unimpeded aid access to relief for all those in need, while expanding early recovery and reconstruction programmes to foster the conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced people.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain reaffirms its solidarity with the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic and its support for all efforts to strengthen its security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It looks forward to the international community continuing to work alongside the Syrian people to build a future of security, peace, development and prosperity.

Mr. 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 Under Secretary General Fletcher for their comprehensive briefings. We thank Mr. Tabara for his contribution and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in this meeting.

The A3 welcomes the positive momentum in Syria. Despite persistent challenges, the Syrian Government has shown resolve in restoring national institutions, consolidating stability, promoting national unity and responding to the aspirations of its people. In this regard, we wish to make the following points.

First, we acknowledge the Syrian Government's steps towards national integration and institutional consolidation, including the decision of 25 August concerning the dissolution of the Syrian Democratic Forces and their integration into

the national defence architecture. This is a significant step towards unified security structures and stronger State authority. We encourage continued progress on inclusive governance, the participation of women and youth, the representation of all communities and human rights. We reaffirm that resolution 2254 (2015) remains the central framework for a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process.

Secondly, we recognize the Government's cooperation with the United Nations and humanitarian partners to facilitate assistance, restore services and support the return of Syrians. The return of more than 3.5 million displaced persons and refugees signals renewed confidence. Yet millions still require life-saving aid, while funding shortfalls threaten essential operations. Sustainable returns require security, housing, schools, healthcare and public services. We call for predictable funding for humanitarian assistance and early recovery activities.

Thirdly, economic recovery is essential to sustainable peace. We welcome the removal of Syria from the United States State sponsors of terrorism list on 24 August. This important step can support financial reintegration, trade, investment and public service delivery. The Syrian Government is working under challenging conditions to stabilize the economy and rehabilitate infrastructure. Rising fuel and commodity prices continue to strain households. We call for constructive economic engagement and unhindered investment to restore utilities, protect vulnerable communities and create sustainable livelihoods.

Fourthly, we deplore the continued military strikes and ground incursions inside Syria, which threaten civilians, undermine stabilization and risk regional escalation. We take serious note of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry's findings of 8 September concerning the unlawful incursions, arbitrary raids and expanding buffer zones in southern Syria. We call for the release of detained Syrian nationals and an end to unilateral cross-border operations. The occupied Syrian Golan remains an integral part of Syria under resolution 497 (1981). The 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces must be fully respected.

Fifthly, the clashes in Suwayda' underscore the need for de-escalation, local dialogue, reconciliation and national cohesion. We support the Government's efforts to restore calm and address local grievances through inclusive engagement. We also commend the Syrian authorities for confronting Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh and other violent extremist groups. Unified national security mechanisms and coordinated international partnerships consistent with international law remain vital to preventing their resurgence.

To conclude, the A3 reaffirms its unwavering commitment to Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. We recognize the Government's positive steps to consolidate institutions, advance integration, improve security and establish the foundations for economic recovery. We urge the Security Council and the wider international community to work constructively with the Syrian Government and to support the Syrian people in their pursuit of national reconciliation, recovery, stability and lasting peace.

Mr. Stamatekos (Greece): I thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Mr. Tabbara for their valuable contributions.

Syria is at a moment of profound transition. There is now a real opportunity to move from a country emerging from conflict to a country rebuilding its institutions and fully reclaiming its place in the international community.

I would like to make three points.

First, institutions must now deliver on the promise of an inclusive transition. The establishment and convening of the People's Assembly and the announcement of

the composition of its Committees are important milestones, but representation must be more than a formal exercise. Women and all components of Syrian society, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, must have a meaningful voice in shaping the country's future. The next major test will be the constitutional project — one that protects rights and guarantees equality before the law for all Syrian citizens. The same principle applies to transitional justice. There can be no lasting reconciliation without accountability, and no accountability without equal protection for all victims. The adoption of the General Assembly resolution on women searchers of missing persons last week (General Assembly resolution 80/301), which Greece was proud to co-sponsor, is a reminder that the fate of those who remain missing continues to be one of the deepest wounds of the conflict. We welcome the steps taken to address the trauma of the conflict and the increasing engagement of the Syrian authorities with international mechanisms. We encourage further engagement with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism and all relevant institutions.

Secondly, Syria's opening to the international community must now translate into recovery and opportunity. The real test will be whether a new economic horizon translates into a better life for ordinary Syrians. Recovery must reach communities across the country and give young Syrians a reason to build their future at home. At the same time, humanitarian assistance remains necessary. Greece will be at Syria's side during this transition. It stands ready to contribute to Syria's recovery and to efforts that strengthen its links with the wider international community.

Thirdly, Syria's political opening must be matched by a genuine security settlement. We welcome the completion of the process leading to the dissolution of the Syrian Democratic Forces and their integration into the Syrian State institutions. This is a significant step towards restoring the unity of the Syrian State and consolidating its sovereignty. At the same time, integration must be coupled with guarantees for the rights and meaningful participation of the Kurdish community in Syrian institutions. The situation in Suwayda' also requires sustained attention. It cannot be allowed to falter or disintegrate. The September 2025 road map must be fully implemented, while the restoration of trust between communities and State institutions must remain at the core of all efforts, with the aim of a truly inclusive Syria. The same is true for Syria's relations with its neighbours. We encourage direct contacts between Syria and Israel, facilitated by the United States. De-escalation must remain the immediate priority, while negotiations should contribute to durable security arrangements. Greece reiterates its firm respect for Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. All violations must therefore cease, and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces must be respected.

In conclusion, Syria's transition must belong to Syrians — all Syrians. The international community now has a responsibility to help make that transition work. Syria has come a long way in a short period of time. The task now is to make this progress irreversible. Greece will continue to support a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned transition, an inclusive political process, accountability and reconciliation, economic recovery and a Syria that is sovereign, united, stable and at peace with itself and its neighbours.

Ms. Pavļuta-Deslandes (Latvia): I thank Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Claudio Cordone and Under-Secretary-General Tom Fletcher for their informative briefings and Mr. Yaser Tabbara for his contribution.

Following decades of devastating civil war and dictatorship, and amid the ongoing turbulence in the wider Middle East, Syria strives for stability, both internally and at its borders. Stability is essential for advancing Syria's political transition and reconstruction. Over the past year and a half, Syria's new Government has achieved

substantial progress. The resilience of the Syrian people and their desire for a dignified life are at the heart of this process.

We recognize the principles of transparency, cooperation and responsibility demonstrated by the Syrian Government as it restores the country's place in the international political and economic arena. We encourage those same principles to be prioritized in further strengthening Syria's social cohesion. Transparency regarding decisions taken, continuous engagement with a free and open Syrian civil society, the meaningful participation of women in political decision-making and inclusive representation of all ethnic and religious communities in political processes are essential to ensuring broad and genuine Syrian ownership of the transition.

We look forward to the significant legislative work to be undertaken by the People's Assembly, including the drafting of the permanent constitution. The Syrian people rightfully await the restoration of the rights and freedoms of which they were deprived for the past six decades. The people's expectation of being represented and heard underscores, in particular, the deeply symbolic role embodied by the new Parliament.

We also underscore the importance of conditions conducive to the continuation of the dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons, including through demining, reducing risks and ensuring the safety of affected communities. We echo Under-Secretary-General Fletcher's assessment that there is genuine potential for Syria to move towards recovery, while acknowledging that humanitarian needs remain significant. The Syrian population continues to face economic hardship, exacerbated by growing fuel prices. It is therefore clear that full socioeconomic recovery will require continued efforts, time, investments and sustained international solidarity.

Rebuilding the rule of law and restoring confidence in public institutions, recognizing the suffering of victims and providing answers to families of missing persons are essential steps towards healing the painful scars of the past and contributing to lasting peace in Syria. Beyond ensuring accountability for the crimes of the former regime and preventing their recurrence, the Syrian people look forward to a genuinely comprehensive and transparent transitional justice process.

We commend the results achieved through 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 and call for the Syrian Government and the relevant national bodies to continue their constructive engagement with international mechanisms and organizations and further facilitate their work on the ground. We welcome and encourage further contributions from countries to support Syrian law enforcement agencies, investigative authorities, prosecutorial authorities and judges.

We also acknowledge the commitment by the new Syrian Government to resolve questions inherited from the ousted Al-Assad regime, which is well reflected by the ongoing work on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme and, recently, on the declared nuclear materials. We commend the cooperation between the Syrian authorities and the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has led to a decision taken by the Board of Governors to close the outstanding issues related to Syria's nuclear file.

Turning to the external dimension, Syria's demonstrated commitment to fostering regional stability has opened up new opportunities for the normalization of relations with its neighbours, as well as for integration into regional economic corridors and the attraction of international investment. We welcome this trajectory and encourage Syria to build on these positive developments, further strengthening

its role as a constructive and responsible regional partner. Even though the Council, in its resolution 2824 (2026), has unanimously underscored that there should be no military activity of any kind in the area of separation, military actions in the Syrian Golan continue. They violate relevant United Nations resolutions and the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces, and they are by no means a sustainable solution to Israel's security concerns. We encourage Israel and Syria to resume negotiations towards mutually acceptable security arrangements, in full compliance with international law, respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and ensuring the protection of civilians on both sides of the border.

In conclusion, we call on the international community to remain steadfast in its support for Syria as it advances along the path of political transition, recovery and reconstruction. The United Nations is uniquely placed to support Syria-led priorities by bringing together its political, humanitarian, development and institution-building capacities. Latvia continues to support the people of Syria in their efforts towards a stable, peaceful and prosperous future.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): We thank Deputy Special Envoy Cordone, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher and Mr. Tabbara for their briefings.

Syria has travelled a considerable distance in a remarkably short period. What began as a moment of profound transition is increasingly becoming a process of national consolidation, rebuilding State institutions, restoring Syria's unity, reconnecting with the region and the wider international community and laying the foundations for recovery after years of devastating conflict.

We appreciate the determined efforts of the Syrian Government in steering the country through this consequential period. We welcome the continued efforts towards the unification and consolidation of the Syrian State. Progress in the implementation of arrangements concerning the north-east, including the integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces and other institutions into the structures of the State, represents an important step towards restoring Syria's unity. We encourage all concerned to continue addressing outstanding matters through dialogue, accommodation and mutual understanding. A process that brings all Syrians together and strengthens national institutions will provide the strongest foundation for Syria's future.

We equally recognize the considerable efforts being undertaken to restore governance, security and normalcy across the country, despite immense challenges. The fight against terrorism remains critical. The terrorist groups, including foreign terrorist fighters, continue to pose a threat. Syria should receive the international cooperation and capacity-building support necessary to confront terrorism effectively in accordance with international law.

Syria continues to bear the enormous economic, humanitarian and infrastructural consequences of years of conflict. In this context, the lifting of sanctions by the United States and the European Union represents an important step forward. The growing investment and economic engagement of partners and brotherly countries, including from the Gulf region and the European Union, will contribute meaningfully to restoring livelihoods and creating the foundations for development.

At this critical juncture, Syria's transition must not be undermined by external actions. Israel's continued military activities and presence on Syrian territory constitute violations of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity must be fully respected, along with the strict observance of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and relevant Security Council resolutions. We strongly condemn the recent incursions into Syrian territory by senior Israeli officials,

including at Mount Hermon. These constitute a flagrant violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Israel must vacate the Syrian Golan and other occupied territory in Syria.

The Syrian people have endured extraordinary suffering. Today, however, there is also a genuine opportunity before them. The task now is to consolidate these gains. Pakistan will continue to stand with the Syrian people and support a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned process that leads to a peaceful, united, sovereign and prosperous Syria.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the briefings by the Deputy Special Envoy for Syria, Claudio Cordone, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Tom Fletcher, and the co-founder of the Syrian Forum, Yaser Tabbara. We also acknowledge the presence of the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel, Türkiye and Oman, who honour us with their participation.

Panama is closely monitoring the evolving situation in Syria and the positive efforts Syria continues to make to consolidate an inclusive political transition, address the population's humanitarian needs and advance towards economic recovery. We consider those three elements to be closely linked and to constitute complementary dimensions of a single objective: laying the foundations for a stable, sovereign and peaceful Syria.

Consolidating this new phase also requires a regional environment that allows Syria to focus on rebuilding the country. In that regard, we reiterate our firm commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and to respect for its internationally recognized borders. We consider it essential that regional differences be addressed through diplomatic means and that all actors refrain from actions that could give rise to new dynamics of instability.

Millions of Syrians continue to need humanitarian assistance, while the funding shortfall increasingly limits response capacity. The reduction in food assistance reported by the World Food Programme and the shortages facing many health facilities demonstrate that the lack of resources has a direct impact on people's lives. We therefore recognize the important efforts made by the United Nations, humanitarian agencies and their partners to continue providing assistance to millions of people. In that context, we reiterate our firm support for the relocation of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria to Damascus, which, once established there, can more effectively support the transition process.

At the same time, we are encouraged by the progress made on returns. More than 2 million internally displaced persons and nearly 1.8 million refugees have returned to their places of origin. However, those returns in turn create new needs, and appropriate conditions must be in place to ensure that they are sustainable and enable people to rebuild their lives. We welcome coordinated efforts to remove explosive remnants of war and to prevent them from causing further casualties and restricting access to homes, agricultural land and basic services.

We also welcome signs that the Syrian economy is opening up and gradually reintegrating into the international financial system. The easing of sanctions and the timely decision by the United States to remove Syria from the list of State sponsors of terrorism deserve recognition, as they have helped create a favourable environment for investment and trade. We also note with interest the growing engagement of the private sector and countries in the region in Syria's recovery. Those initiatives can help restore productive capacity, create jobs and strengthen livelihoods. However, these emerging opportunities must be matched by a response commensurate with the scale of the challenges that remain. In that context, recent difficulties associated with

the global rise in fuel prices underscore the need for progress to translate into tangible improvements in people's daily lives.

The resilience of the Syrian people and their hope for a better future deserve to be met with an economic recovery that helps rebuild both the country and the lives of its people. Panama will continue to support efforts by the United Nations, the international community and the Syrian authorities to build a sovereign, prosperous and peaceful Syria that offers a better future for all its people.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I thank Deputy Special Envoy Claudio Cordone, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Tom Fletcher and civil society briefer Yaser Tabbara for their briefings. I also welcome the presence of the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye, Israel and Oman.

Since our previous meeting (see S/PV.10215), the Syrian transition has remained on a positive trajectory, although fragile. Focusing on recent developments, I would first like to underscore the importance of the commitments fulfilled by Damascus before highlighting the challenges it still faces.

First, Syria continues to demonstrate its determination to fully reintegrate into the international community. The Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adopted by consensus a resolution formally closing the Syrian nuclear file, 15 years after finding systematic violations by the Bashar Al-Assad regime of its obligations. We have evidence from the IAEA's in-depth investigations that the regime was conducting an illegal military programme and jeopardizing the non-proliferation architecture. In a spirit of transparency and accountability, the new Syrian authorities have disclosed secret sites, demonstrating their determination to eliminate the programme once and for all. That decision by the IAEA Board of Governors rewards the increased cooperation between Damascus and the Agency. It echoes the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to eliminate the chemical weapons programme inherited from the Al-Assad regime. It is a rare advance amid an otherwise deteriorating international non-proliferation landscape.

With regard to transitional justice, the framework for technical cooperation between the Syrian authorities and 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 will help the Mechanism fulfil its mission to help build a just and lasting peace. The work under way on a transitional justice law contributes to the same objective.

Furthermore, integrating the Syrian Democratic Forces into the State marks a historic step towards a sovereign and pluralistic Syria. The rights of all segments of Syrian society, in particular the cultural and linguistic rights of the Kurds, must become a reality, and the role of women must be affirmed and promoted.

Secondly, efforts to advance the political transition deserve recognition, including the establishment of the People's Assembly and the return of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons. However, those efforts are being undermined by external and internal threats. Respect for Syrian sovereignty is non-negotiable. Israel's repeated incursions, openly acknowledged at the highest level, jeopardize regional stability. France calls for an immediate end to those incursions and for the resumption of security discussions between Israel and Syria. The situation in southern Syria also remains unstable. France calls for the immediate

implementation of the road map on Suwayda’ agreed by Syria, Jordan and the United States, for the benefit of the local population, in particular the Druze community, which aspires to live in peace.

Thirdly, the international community must support the efforts under way. The gradual lifting of sanctions and a reliable banking framework will help restore confidence and attract investment. Humanitarian assistance must continue, and large-scale development assistance programmes must be launched, as thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons seek to re-establish themselves.

Finally, as we commemorated last week the twenty-fifth anniversary of the tragedy of 11 September 2001, we encourage Syria to continue to fight Da’esh terrorism relentlessly. Let us together reaffirm our support for building a stable, sovereign and united Syria.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Olabi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the briefers. I thank Mr. Claudio Cordone for his remarks and his support for Syria. I am glad to see him safely back from Syria. Just as he followed us from there, we followed him from here, with both envy and longing for Damascus and all the governorates of Syria. I also thank Mr. Tom Fletcher for his clarity regarding the challenges, the achievements of the Syrian Government and the international community’s duty to support Syria. I thank Mr. Yaser Tabbara for all his contributions as a member of civil society, both before and after the liberation. We are working extensively with civil society in the new Syria. I also thank all Council members once again, sincerely, for their unanimous support for Syria.

As some members of the Council have noted, at this time last year, Syria was preparing for its historic first participation at the presidential level in the high-level week of the General Assembly. As members will recall, Syria came to New York with a vision of engaging with the international community after decades of absence and of telling the world what it intended to do. This year, Syria comes, having seized that opportunity and matched words with deeds. It has become an inevitable and indispensable partner in ensuring security and stability in the region.

I had wished to speak today about how we completed the building of State institutions and to explain how we completed the process of military and administrative integration. I had wished to brief the Council on the major steps we have taken to combat Da’esh and terrorist organizations and on our efforts to dismantle drug trafficking networks. I had wished to explain how we succeeded in building excellent relations with neighbouring States and to share details of the visit by a large United States trade delegation, the first of its kind, which arrived in Damascus two days ago. I had wished to highlight the results of those efforts by the Syrian Government, which, as some have noted, have led to the return of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons and to the return of the world to Syria.

Regrettably, however, now that the Netanyahu Government has sent its representative to participate in today’s meeting on Syria, I find myself compelled to devote my statement to the greatest threat to the stability of the entire region, not only Syria. How could I do otherwise when the Security Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security? How could I do otherwise when, two weeks ago, all members witnessed the unlawful entry of Israeli occupying officials into Syria in a flagrant violation opposed not only by Syria but also by 44 other States? In less than 24 hours, those States chose to stand with

Syria here, outside the Council Chamber, to affirm the need to respect international law and national sovereignty.

From the very first moment, we demonstrated the true nature of our intentions and actions. Israel did likewise. I shall therefore set out today what they said and what we said and what they did and what we did from that moment onwards. They said, as did we, that establishing security was indispensable. Yet Israel advanced into our villages, forcibly disappeared our people and bombed our facilities. We, meanwhile, chose to open the door to mediation in order to spare the region further calamities.

They said, as did we, that differences must be addressed through dialogue. Yet they evaded the requirements of diplomacy and responded to dialogue with air strikes, incursions, acts of aggression and violations. We, meanwhile, engaged in good faith with the welcome United States initiative.

They said, as did we, that the time had come for development and prosperity in the region. Yet they fomented strife, inflamed tensions, killed Syrians and boasted of the occupation and the unlawful entry of their officials for narrow electoral purposes. At the same time, Syria has become a bridge for development and prosperity, a conduit for energy among the States of the region and a pillar of regional stability.

They said, as did we, that responsible conduct and engagement with the international community were imperative. Yet they placed restrictions on international organizations in Syria and obstructed their efforts to address the legacy of the defunct regime regarding the chemical programme files of the previous era, nuclear materials and other matters. Syria, by contrast, engaged with the United Nations, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the International Atomic Energy Agency and facilitated their work, as colleagues have all commended.

I mention all of that not for linguistic eloquence or out of any fondness for comparisons. Rather, I say clearly that we do wish to move towards diplomatic solutions and a security agreement under United States auspices and with the support of all Council members. We have demonstrated that commitment through deeds, not words, by opening the door to dialogue from the very first moment. That does not, however, under any circumstances, mean accepting the occupation or relinquishing the rights of our people.

In conclusion, let us write a different chapter together, one bearing the title “Stability and development”, not “Wars and aggression”. We shall be fortunate if we seize this opportunity and history records that we chose construction over destruction, cooperation over conflict and prosperity over suffering. Our region has always occupied a prominent place in the holy scriptures and in the books and pages of history. Today, we all find ourselves presented with a golden opportunity to shape how history will write about us. How, then, do we wish history to record this era?

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

Mr. Danon (Israel): It has been nearly two years since the fall of the Al-Assad regime. Since then, Syria has changed. There is a new Government. The international community has engaged with it, and we hear new voices from Damascus. We welcome those developments. We believe in a promising future for Syria, and we believe in a promising future for relations between Israel and Syria. That is why Israel has engaged directly with the new Syrian Government to reach a security agreement. Yet one condition remains: Syria must control its own territory. If Syria wants to be a trusted member of the international community, it cannot allow its territory to become a platform for terrorists, foreign militaries and regional instability.

Al-Assad's fall created a power vacuum in Syria, and that vacuum is being exploited. Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) terrorists are escaping from prisons and rebuilding their cells. Hizbullah is using Syrian territory as a smuggling route for Iranian weapons, and Iran's Quds Force threatens Israel directly from Syrian territory. Even the Syrian Government understands those threats.

In July, Syria announced that it caught a Hizbullah weapons shipment near the Syrian-Iraqi border. It was hidden inside an oil tanker truck. Inside the truck were long-range weapons, guided anti-tank missiles and drones. Those were not defensive munitions; they were advanced weapons. Those weapons were moving through Syrian territory towards the Mediterranean coast and, ultimately, into the hands of Hizbullah in Lebanon, to target Israelis.

Unfortunately, the Syrian Government is limited in its ability to block the wave of smuggling coming from Iran through its territory. In addition, Syria continues to face serious internal instability. Just this week, we saw the largest protest in Syria since the fall of the Al-Assad regime. Rising costs and worsening economic conditions are driving unrest throughout the country. Those developments should concern all of us because instability creates opportunities: opportunities for ISIS, Iran, Hizbullah, Hamas and foreign Powers seeking to expand their influence.

We should be aware of the radical Islamist threat in the Middle East. We remember what happened when radical Islam dominated Syria. We remember the ISIS beheadings of American journalists and British aid workers on Syrian soil. We, in Israel, saw even more horrifying cruelty on 7 October 2023. To refresh his memory, the Syrian Ambassador can turn on Netflix, watch *Fauda* and see the visuals of what happened on 7 October 2023. Israel does not leave its security to chance. That is why Israel maintains a small security buffer in the Golan Heights as a defensive measure. It is designed to prevent a 7 October-style cross-border attack from Syrian territory. We are speaking not only about the threats from inside Syria; there are also external threats. This brings me to the real question before the Council today. If Israel's tiny defensive buffer is considered a threat to Syrian stability, then what about a foreign Power that controls a much larger portion of Syrian territory and is building its military presence there? I am talking about Türkiye.

For years, Türkiye has presented itself as a stabilizing force in our region, a NATO member State, a country that can speak to adversaries, a self-proclaimed regional Power that can maintain order. Today, Türkiye claims to be a partner in Syria's reconstruction. It claims to rebuild Syria's airports, provide energy, help Syria address its housing shortage. Instead look at what is really happening in Syria. Türkiye intends to expand its own military capabilities inside Syria and take over the country. Today, Türkiye has 20,000 troops and over 100 bases in Syria. Perhaps this behaviour rings a bell. Türkiye is following the Iranian proxy playbook. Look at what happened in Lebanon. We speak about it every month — how it became a hotbed for Iranian-backed Hizbullah for decades. Look how hard it is for Lebanon to regain its independence after years of being controlled by Iranian terrorist proxies. I therefore ask, is this stabilization or is it expansion? There is a pattern here. Türkiye has repeatedly expanded its military presence beyond its borders, including in Cyprus, Iraq and Libya. This is not simply about helping a neighbour to rebuild. It is about deepening influence, advancing military ambitions and taking over a neighbouring country.

Even President Erdoğan's own words should make us pay attention. He said "Türkiye is a country whose horizons cannot be confined". He meant what he said. I ask Council members to take a look at this map, to look at this tiny sliver of territory. This is the Israeli security buffer, consisting of 0.1 per cent of Syria. Now look to the north. As of now, Türkiye controls 5 per cent of Syria. That is 50 times the size of

Israel's security buffer. Yet, somehow Israel's tiny defensive buffer is presented as a threat to Syria's sovereignty. If we are serious about sovereignty, then we must apply the same standard and condemnations to everyone.

This is where Türkiye's presence becomes directly relevant to Israel. Türkiye is not merely expanding its military footprint. Its leadership has adopted increasingly hostile rhetoric towards Israel. The Turkish Foreign Minister has called Israel "a burden that humanity can no longer bear". We have also heard blatant antisemitism from President Erdoğan. He will come here on Tuesday, and we will listen to him in the General Assembly. I think he is the third or fourth speaker on the list. We know what he will say because we have heard him say it before. President Erdoğan accused Israel of "feeding on the blood of innocents" and has repeatedly called for Israel's destruction, including to "destroy and devastate Zionist Israel". From the podium of the General Assembly, he equated Israeli leaders to the Nazis. Erdoğan's actions support his words. He proudly supports Hamas terrorists. He hosts Hamas and Hizbullah leaders and facilitates their banking infrastructure. Erdoğan has turned Türkiye into a Hamas base of operations. Therefore, when Türkiye moves its military presence deeper into Syria, we have to ask a simple question: what are Türkiye's real intentions?

We know what genuine stabilization looks like. It means building a secure and prosperous future for the Syrian people. It does not mean building military footholds. It does not mean expanding foreign military influence, and it certainly does not mean allowing Syrian territory to become a platform for Turkish aggression against Israel. I therefore ask the Council — what would any other nation do in this scenario? We learned on 7 October 2023 that when someone threatens Israel, we had better believe them.

The blame for this instability does not rest on Türkiye alone. Last week, we heard the Ambassador of Syria claim that sovereignty is not selective, and territorial integrity is non-negotiable. I ask him to then apply those words to Türkiye, which sits right next to him. When Israel is involved, he holds a press conference to condemn us, but when Türkiye occupies Syrian territory, he remains silent. His outrage is selective, and his silence is revealing. Ambassador Olabi, let us be honest. We both know the facts. We asked Syria to prevent Türkiye from taking over the Abu al-Zuhur base in Syria. That was our red line. When Syria ignored the message, we sent it another way. If Syria is serious about re-entering the international community, it cannot allow itself to become a breeding ground for instability. We will not accept this, and the international community should not either.

In conclusion, let me be clear: we want to see a stable Syria; we want to see a sovereign Syria; and we want to see a Syria that controls its territory. But we will never accept a Syria whose territory is used to threaten Israel —not by Hizbullah or Hamas, not by ISIS and not by Türkiye.

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

Mr. Yıldız (Türkiye): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Fletcher, Deputy Special Envoy Cordone and Mr. Tabbara for their comprehensive briefings.

Syria continues to advance towards stabilization despite challenges. Through its constructive engagement with the international community, including the Council, the Syrian Government continues to make meaningful progress in addressing the grave legacy of the former regime.

In this regard, we commend Syria for its commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, its close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the transparency it has demonstrated. Reflecting this constructive approach, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution by consensus on 9 September, closing Syria's nuclear non-compliance file and permanently removing the matter from its agenda. We welcome this resolution and congratulate the Syrian people and Government.

Sustained international support for Syria remains essential to security and stability in the region and beyond. The announcement of the dissolution of the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces and the progress made in the integration process are particularly important developments. We will continue to follow the next steps in collaboration with the Syrian Government and the international community. This process needs to be concluded in a manner that reinforces Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and social cohesion.

It remains essential to sustain reconstruction efforts and create the conditions necessary for the return of all Syrians who fled the atrocities of the former regime and Da'esh. In this regard, we welcome the growing international economic engagement with the Syrian authorities. The international community should build on this positive momentum.

Regrettably, Israel continues to undermine this positive trajectory through its reckless attacks and statements against Syria. The illegal entry of high-level Israeli officials in the occupied Syrian territory is yet another example of Israel's provocative and destabilizing actions against Syria. We condemn Israel's attacks, which target Syria's infrastructure and capabilities and violate its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We reiterate our call on Israel to comply fully with the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces, to refrain from further escalation and to reverse its encroachments on Syrian territory. The international community, and the Council in particular, must use all means at its disposal to bring an end to Israel's aggression against Syria and its occupation of Syrian territory. It is also concerning that illegal Druze armed groups, relying on Israeli support, continue their destabilizing activities in Syria, including by preventing students from sitting their examinations and obstructing the delivery of essential supplies to the governorate.

At last month's Council meeting (see S/PV.10215), I outlined the nature of Türkiye's relations and cooperation with the countries of the region, including Syria. In light of the remarks made by the representative of Israel during his stakeout today and this meeting, I believe that it will be useful to reiterate those points.

First and foremost, strengthening its national capacities is a sovereign right of Syria. It does not constitute a threat to any country, and it is not the business of Israel. Türkiye's relations with the countries of the region, including Syria, are guided by its firm commitment to their stability, security and prosperity. We regard these three elements as indispensable, not only for our own national security, but also for regional and international security. A shared commitment to those objectives by all countries would make a significant contribution to lasting peace and stability in the region.

Conversely, attempts to obstruct Syria's efforts to build and strengthen security capacity would only risk creating conditions conducive to the resurgence of terrorist organizations, such as Da'esh. Against this background, we categorically reject Israel's attempts to smear Türkiye's legitimate cooperation with Syria and to portray it as a threat in an effort to justify its own violations of international law. Türkiye's military cooperation with Syria is conducted with the consent of the sovereign Syrian Government. None of our activities in Syria are directed against, or pose a threat to,

any third country. In this regard, Israel's attempts to draw parallels between its decades-long occupation of Syrian territory and Türkiye's legitimate security cooperation with the Syrian Government are entirely groundless.

Unfortunately, the Israeli representative went beyond all red lines against my country and its President. Indeed, the answers to his questions are clear. What is the difference between Israel and Türkiye? Türkiye is a friend of Syria, whereas Israel is not. Türkiye is a responsible State with deep roots, whereas Israel is a Middle Eastern State that is aggressive towards many countries. Türkiye's friendship with Syria and its care for Syria, the Syrian people and Syrian stability have been well proven during the decade of conflict and the post-conflict period through protecting the Syrian people within Türkiye and within Syria and through helping to rebuild a modern Syria after the revolution and in the post-conflict period.

Therefore, such distortions have been made before in the Council by the representative of the former regime against my country's presence and role in Syria. It is a pity that the Israeli representative has volunteered to take over that role. I reject all of his baseless claims. Türkiye's role in every part of the region has always been positive, constructive and deserves thanks from everybody — although I do not expect it from Israel.

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

Mr. Al Kathiri (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Group of Arab States in New York, I have the honour to deliver this statement at this monthly session of the Council regarding the situation in the Middle East. The Group wishes to express its sincere thanks and appreciation to the briefers.

The Arab Group reaffirms its steadfast position supporting the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as its commitment to Syria's security and stability. The Group emphasizes the importance of supporting efforts aimed at enhancing stability, reconstruction and the preservation of State institutions, while creating conditions conducive to recovery. It affirms that Syria's unity and stability constitute a cornerstone for the security and stability of the region.

The Arab Group condemns in the strongest terms Israeli attacks and incursions into Syrian territory, including its aggression against Abu al-Zuhur airbase. These actions violate Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, pose risks and represent a blatant attempt to incite strife and undermine de-escalation and stabilization efforts. The Group also condemns the illegal entry of Israeli officials into Syrian territory and calls for Israel to be compelled to respect the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and to refrain from any action that could escalate tensions or create new facts on the ground.

The Arab Group reaffirms that the Syrian Golan is occupied Syrian Arab territory and stresses the necessity of respecting the relevant international resolutions, foremost among them resolution 497 (1981), which deemed Israel's imposition of its laws, jurisdiction and administration over the occupied Syrian Golan null, void and without legal effect.

The Arab Group commends the measures taken by the Syrian Government to combat terrorism and terrorist groups, emphasizes the importance of supporting these efforts to maintain security and stability, and underscores the need to continue combating terrorism in all its forms. The Arab Group underscores the importance of continuing to combat terrorism in all its forms and preventing the resurgence of terrorist organizations or their exploitation of security and economic conditions, all

while respecting Syria's sovereignty, territorial integrity and international law. The Arab Group also welcomes the continued cooperation between the Syrian Government and the United Nations and its specialized agencies, viewing this cooperation as a vital pathway to supporting stability and addressing humanitarian and development needs in line with Syrian national priorities.

The Arab Group calls for international support, investment and enhanced economic cooperation to facilitate economic recovery and reconstruction, as well as to create the conditions necessary for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons, including the provision of services, infrastructure, livelihoods and mine clearance. In this context, the Arab Group commends the significant role played by host countries in sheltering Syrian refugees and calls on the international community to increase and expand support for host nations, which cannot shoulder this burden alone, until the refugees return to their country. Furthermore, the Group encourages continued efforts regarding issues of missing persons, accountability and national reconciliation, thereby fostering trust and supporting long-term stability.

In conclusion, the Arab Group calls upon the Security Council to adopt a balanced and constructive approach that respects Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, rejects any actions that undermine stability and supports economic and humanitarian recovery in a manner that serves the interests of the Syrian people and contributes to the security and stability of the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Syrian Arab Republic has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Olabi (Syrian Arab Republic): I will not address my remarks directly to the Permanent Representative of Israel, because I assume it must be outrageous for him to be asked, once again, to come here and try to repair the international damage caused by actions that violate Syria's sovereignty, all in pursuit of one person's domestic dreams. But let me address several of the points that were made.

On the question of buffers, and on the point of refreshing memories, the Council may recall that when Israel occupied the Golan Heights illegally — which, as colleagues mentioned, is null and void under resolution 497 (1981) — Israel said that it was a buffer because it wanted to protect itself. Therefore, what is happening now is not for military or security reasons. The map shown by the Permanent Representative of Israel does not include the buffer that Israel had previously occupied, allegedly to protect itself.

Assuming there might have been security concerns on day one after the massive change that he talked about, we immediately engaged with the United States and opened bold talks of a kind that had never taken place before in Syria's history, and we said that we were ready for mediation to reach a security agreement. There was no proper answer.

But we are not talking only about breaches of sovereignty and territorial integrity. I can quote from the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/2026/458) on breaches of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces. I can quote from the oral update of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, which went to southern Syria and reported several times on the situation, and I have quotations here about the war crimes being committed by Israel against Syrians: ongoing violations of Syrian sovereignty, along with reported violations of

international humanitarian law, including those that may amount to war crimes, have severe implications for the rights of the affected civilian populations.

With the fall of the Al-Assad regime, we thought the era of commissions of inquiry and war crimes and crimes against humanity was over. It seems we were wrong.

On the points of communities and resilience, some Israeli officials tried to reach out to Syrian Kurds. The Syrian Kurds rejected them and integrated into the Syrian Government. Responsible Syrian Druze did the same. They are in Parliament. They accepted security positions. They rejected foreign support. Those Druze figures who, as the Council heard today from Mr. Cordone, dare to speak against one faction backed by Israel are expelled from Suwayda'. Even Syrian Jews ran for Parliament in Syria. They are back renovating their synagogues. This is the Syria that we are building.

When it comes to military presence in Syria, again, I assume these questions were put to the Permanent Representative of Israel to raise, because I know his legal credentials, and he understands the difference between the consent of one State or another and our ability to choose whom we are working with. We did not hear complaints when we chose to join the United States-led coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. That was military cooperation with many Council members in Syria. The same happened with other countries here in the Council, where we are constantly engaging in military deals, opening doors and so on. Therefore, if it is about one specific situation, it should not be brought before the Council. Meetings on Syria should not talk about proxy issues anymore. That was the case during the regime era. It should no longer be the case. It is, frankly, traumatizing.

But even Israeli figures, opposition figures and think tanks are saying that this Israeli Government is missing an opportunity to show the world that, when there is no credible threat and when mediation efforts are ongoing, Israel will behave differently than in other parts of the region. I think the whole world has seen what has happened.

Time is running out, but not just yet. We will continue to engage with the bold mediation efforts of President Trump in a way that does not jeopardize the rights of Syrian civilians or legitimize occupation. Until then, we will continue to build and build and move ahead with the things that all Council members have praised in order to build the Syria that is worthy of its history and its future.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Israel has asked for the floor for a further statement.

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Danon (Israel): First of all, nobody asked me to come and speak here today. Actually, it is because of Ambassador Olabi's actions that I am here, because I watched his stakeout the other day, and I saw how much attention he paid to Israel in all those discussions in the Council, and I decided that I had to come and ask questions.

I think I am still waiting for answers about the points I raised regarding Türkiye and about what we learned from Lebanon, because today we are paying a heavy price in fighting the radicals in Lebanon, and we want to see an independent Lebanon. One thing we all want to avoid is seeing Lebanon not be the last country to be taken over by other countries in the region. Therefore, believe me when I say that we do want to see an independent Syria, just as we want to see an independent Lebanon.

But when we look at what is happening in Syria, we look at the actions, not the declarations. Unfortunately, Syria is not yet taking the right actions. When it comes to the minorities, to the Druze minority, we have seen the road map, we have read the reports, and Syria is not fulfilling the road map. When it comes to fighting terrorists, Syria is not meeting expectations. I would therefore suggest that Syria focus on its actions. And believe me, I come to the Council too much. I am not looking for more reasons to come here.

Many countries throughout history have liked to blame Israel for their own problems. Those countries should focus on gaining control of their own countries, and they will find Israel to be a reliable partner in the region.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.