



THE EU AND THE SYRIA CRISIS

Ten years into the conflict, the situation in Syria is still critical, with millions of Syrians displaced and in need of humanitarian protection and assistance. The level of violence remains high and there is little progress in sight towards a sustainable resolution of the conflict. On the contrary, Syria today finds itself on a trajectory of protracted instability, further compounded by the collapse of its economy and the coronavirus pandemic in the region.

The Syria crisis deeply affects its neighbours. Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey have shown **extraordinary solidarity towards the refugees**, so have other host countries in the region such as Egypt and Iraq. They continue to require assistance to meet the growing needs of the refugees and the communities hosting them.

Only a credible political solution in line with UN Security Council resolution 2254¹ and the

2012 Geneva Communiqué² **will ensure a peaceful future and sustainable stability for Syria and the region.** For this reason, the EU continues to work in support of a UN-mediated, inclusive, credible, Syrian-led and Syrian-owned dialogue in Geneva as the only way forward towards a genuine political solution and a peaceful, prosperous future for the Syrian people. The EU remains actively engaged with all regional and international partners and with Syrian civil society to support the UN-led Geneva process. The EU also continues to support the Syrian population, as well as refugees and the communities that host them in neighbouring countries, with humanitarian, stabilisation, development and economic assistance.

The European Union firmly believes that sustainable peace goes hand in hand with the restoration of Syria's social fabric. This will only be achieved when all Syrians will feel safe, free and able to live in dignity in their own country.

“Ten years ago, the Syrian people's demands for democratic reforms were met with extreme violence that turned into a deadly conflict. Today, the country is devastated, its people fearing for their lives, displaced and facing a dire humanitarian and economic situation. Through the Brussels Conference, we will continue to address the needs of the Syrian people, and to work towards a lasting and comprehensive UN-mediated political solution that would address the root causes of the conflict.”

Josep Borrell

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice-President of the Commission

¹ - United Nations Security Council resolution 2254 was unanimously adopted on 18 December 2015. It calls for a nation-wide ceasefire, unhindered humanitarian access and a political settlement in Syria.

² - The Geneva Communiqué was issued on 30 June 2012 after a meeting of the UN-backed Action Group for Syria. It laid out a six-point plan intended to stop the violence and move the two sides towards a political settlement. It was endorsed by UN Security Council resolution 2118/2013.



#SyriaConf2021



Supporting the future of Syria and the region
Brussels V Conference | 29-30 March 2021

The right to **safe, voluntary and dignified** return is an individual right of refugees and internally displaced persons. The EU supports the Syrian refugees and their aspiration to live safely at home, but **for them to be able to return to their country, the necessary conditions need to be in place**. The EU works closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the conditions that are needed for organised returns to be safe. Access to the entire territory is needed for UNHCR and other mandated humanitarian organisations to monitor the situation. **These requirements are not in place yet.**

In the meantime, it is **essential to maintain asylum space and to continue strengthening the resilience of refugees and the communities that host them**. This is why the **EU continues to show solidarity with and support for refugee-hosting countries**.

The EU's assistance in response to the Syrian crisis does not only benefit Syrian refugees but

also the Jordanian, Lebanese, and Turkish people, helping to create job opportunities, infrastructure including schools, as well as better health and water services.

Once a political solution is reached, the EU will help Syrians "win the peace". However, there can be no shortcuts in the way towards a truly sustainable peace.

The EU will be **ready to assist in the reconstruction of Syria only once a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive political transition is firmly underway**, negotiated by the Syrian parties on the basis of UNSC resolution 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué.

The EU's reconstruction funds cannot be invested in a context that would exacerbate pre-war inequalities and deepen long-standing grievances. The rule of law and basic human rights must be guaranteed to ensure that reconstruction efforts will benefit all Syrians. Only then can reconstruction lead to genuine reconciliation and lasting peace.

EU SANCTIONS



Since 2011, the EU has put in place targeted sanctions against the Assad regime and its supporters to halt repression and increase pressure in support of a lasting political settlement of the Syrian crisis in line with UNSC resolution 2254.

EU sanctions on Syria mostly target specific individuals and entities. They are designed to avoid impeding the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including additional global efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Exports of food, medicines or medical equipment such as respirators and ventilators are not subject to EU sanctions. Even for potentially dangerous goods banned from entering Syria, exceptions are allowed for humanitarian purposes.

HOW IS THE EU HELPING?



Saving lives
by addressing the **humanitarian needs** of the most vulnerable Syrians across the country and in the region



Supporting the UN-mediated intra-Syrian negotiations towards a genuine political transition



Strengthening Syrian civil society organisations to provide community support to the population and promote democracy, human rights and freedom of expression



Promoting national reconciliation, transitional justice, justice for detainees, missing persons and their families, and **accountability** for war crimes



Supporting the **resilience of Syria's population** and society, **refugees** in neighbouring countries, the **communities and countries that host them**

€24.9 billion

Since the outbreak of the conflict in 2011, the EU and its Member States have mobilised **€24.9 billion** to help those affected by the Syrian war. This makes the EU collectively the **largest provider of international aid in response to the Syria crisis**, delivering humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience assistance inside Syria and in neighbouring countries.

BRUSSELS V CONFERENCE ON "SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF SYRIA AND THE REGION", 29-30 MARCH 2021

The overarching objective of the Brussels Conferences is to support the Syrian people and mobilise the international community in support of a lasting political solution to the Syria crisis, in line with UN Security Council resolution 2254.

As with the four previous editions, Brussels V will address the most critical humanitarian and resilience issues affecting Syrians and communities hosting Syrian refugees, both inside the country and in the region. It will renew the international community's political and financial support for Syria's neighbours, particularly Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, as well as Egypt and Iraq. Brussels V will be the main pledging event for Syria and the region in 2021. As in previous years, the Conference will also provide an interactive platform for dialogue with **civil society and NGOs active in Syria and the region** through an online survey and targeted discussions with EU and UN local partners in Syria and the region.



Mohammad Syrian refugee – Jordan

“In the future, I hope to continue my studies if I get the opportunity, [...] to be successful and to benefit the society I live in [...] and my country, Syria.”

Mohammad, 28, is from Syria and arrived at Za’atari camp in 2012 after fleeing the war in his home country. He was finally able to go back to his studies 5 years after he arrived, thanks to a scholarship he was awarded.

“I was hearing about scholarships but I wouldn’t apply because it was not possible for me to study, even with [financial help], when my parents needed support [...] When the situation got a bit better at home, I decided to pursue my studies.”

With the scholarship, Mohammad switched from Arabic literature to Business Administration. *“It gave me the opportunity to continue my studies, [...] and it opened a door [...] when it was hard for me to do so.”*

Seiran Syrian refugee - Kurdistan Region of Iraq

“Hopefully, if the situation [in Syria] improves, we will all go back to Derik. We are studying to build the country later.”

Seiran, 20, had to quit her town Derik in Syria and her Arabic studies at university to settle with her family in Shaklawa, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Seiran wanted to continue her studies, but was afraid she would not be able to manage attending classes in a foreign language. She applied for a scholarship and she got it.

“When I first started, I thought of dropping out because I thought I could not handle it. Later, I realised I could continue: the lectures are in Kurdish but the curriculum is all in English. I am in my third year now [...] I still have the scholarship and everything is good.”

Seiran hopes to continue her academic career so that, one day, she can go back and help rebuild her country.



Yemin Syrian refugee - Turkey

“I struggled to forget the past. I started school in Turkey... Learning Turkish was challenging for me, but I tried hard to learn it.”

Yemin was born in Aleppo, Syria. When he was 10, he had to flee with his family to Turkey, after surviving a bomb attack that killed his older brother Ahmed.

“He was just a child, and the war took him away from us. He was my guide, my elder. I became the oldest child in the family at the age of 11.”

Yemin is now 17 and he studies at the Radio and Television Department of Hatay Erol Bilecik Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School.

“I chose the Radio and Television Department because I want to become a director in the future and tell my story.”

