

Daily struggles of the Syrian people should serve as a dire warning to the international community

Thank you Mr President, and may I start by thanking our briefers, Special Envoy Geir Pederson and ASG Joyce Myusa – and welcome you to your role.

Today we are reminded of the long-term consequences of war.

After nearly 11 years of conflict in Syria, where we have seen appalling violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, 14.6 million Syrians require humanitarian assistance.

The decimation of civilian infrastructure has left 76% of the population unable to meet the most basic needs. This means chronic malnutrition, rising bread prices, families camping in freezing cold conditions and the stunted growth of young children – levels of suffering that will take a generation of recovery.

So, as we look at the horror of the unfolding situation in Ukraine, the daily struggles of men, women and children in Syria should serve as a dire warning to the international community. The untold suffering of millions, leading to mass displacement, regional instability and economic shock, serves no purpose.

The need for a continued and consistent humanitarian response in Syria is clear: assistance needs to be delivered through all modalities possible. Security Council resolution 2585 needs to be implemented in full and, as we look ahead to July, the renewal of the UN's cross-border mandate remains essential. The UK supports all efforts to improve cross-line access and improved early recovery efforts.

But to end the conflict and bring lasting peace in Syria, a UN-led political process, as set out in resolution 2254, remains essential. The UK welcome's Special Envoy Pederson's continued efforts and the intention to reconvene the Constitutional Committee talks in Geneva in the second half of March. The Syrian regime must engage meaningfully with this process. We urge all parties, including the regime's backers, to redouble their efforts to find a way forward.

I thank you, Mr President.