



# Security Council

Distr.: General  
16 July 2020

Original: English

---

## **Letter dated 12 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution 2533 (2020), in connection with the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East” and adopted on 11 July 2020. Resolution 2533 (2020) was adopted in accordance with the voting procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council dated 27 March 2020 (S/2020/253), a procedure agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Pursuant to that procedure, I enclose herewith copies of the related documents:

My letter dated 11 July 2020, addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (see annex 1), putting to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/684 (see enclosure to annex 1);

Letters received in reply from members of the Security Council indicating their national positions on the draft resolution (see annexes 2 to 16);

Statements submitted subsequently by members of the Security Council providing their explanations of vote (see annexes 17 to 26).

This letter and its annexes will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Christoph **Heusgen**  
President of the Security Council



## Annex 1

### **Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council**

In accordance with the procedure agreed upon by the members of the Security Council in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, and as reflected in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to all members of the Council (S/2020/253), I would like to draw your attention to the following.

The members of the Council have considered a draft resolution, submitted by Belgium and Germany, in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”. That draft resolution, contained in document S/2020/684, has been put into blue (see enclosure).

With the understanding of members of the Council and in my capacity as President of the Security Council, I hereby put the above-mentioned draft resolution to a vote. The non-extendable three-hour voting period for that draft resolution will begin at 2 p.m. on Saturday, 11 July 2020 and expire at 5 p.m. on Saturday, 11 July 2020.

Please submit your vote (in favour, against or abstention) on that draft resolution and possible explanation of vote by sending a letter to the Director of the Security Council Affairs Division of the Secretariat (egian@un.org) signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d'affaires a.i. within the non-extendable three-hour voting period set out above.

It is my intention to circulate a letter publishing the outcome of the vote within three hours of the conclusion of the three-hour voting period. I also intend to convene a video-teleconference of the Security Council to announce the outcome of the vote shortly after the conclusion of the voting period, on Saturday, 11 July 2020, at 5.30 p.m.

*(Signed)* Christoph **Heusgen**  
President of the Security Council

Enclosure

United Nations

S/2020/684



# Security Council

Provisional  
10 July 2020

Original: English

## Belgium and Germany: draft resolution

*The Security Council,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 2042 (2012), 2043 (2012), 2118 (2013), 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2175 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2209 (2015), 2235 (2015), 2254 (2015), 2258 (2015), 2268 (2016), 2286 (2016), 2332 (2016), 2336 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and its Presidential Statements of 3 August 2011 (S/PRST/2011/16), 21 March 2012 (S/PRST/2012/6), 5 April 2012 (S/PRST/2012/10), 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15), 24 April 2015 (S/PRST/2015/10), 17 August 2015 (S/PRST/2015/15), and 8 October 2019 (S/PRST/2019/12),

*Reaffirming* its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

*Determining* that the devastating humanitarian situation in Syria continues to constitute a threat to peace and security in the region,

*Underscoring* that Member States are obligated under Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations to accept and carry out the Council's decisions,

1. *Demands* the full and immediate implementation of all provisions of all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018) and 2504 (2020);

2. *Decides* to renew the decisions in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), for a period of twelve months, that is, until 10 July 2021, excluding the border crossings of Al-Ramtha, Al Yarubiyah and Bab al-Salam;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to brief the Council monthly and to provide a report on a regular basis, at least every 60 days, on the implementation of resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and this resolution and on compliance by all relevant parties in Syria and further requests the Secretary-General to continue to include in his reports overall trends in United Nations cross-line and cross-border humanitarian access and detailed information on the humanitarian assistance delivered through United Nations humanitarian cross-border operations, including on the number of beneficiaries, locations of aid deliveries at district-level and the volume and nature of items delivered;

4. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

## Annex 2

### **Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I refer to the letter of the President of the Security Council of 11 July 2020 relating to the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany in connection with the agenda item “The situation on in the Middle East” (S/2020/684).

In accordance with the procedure set forth for the adoption of resolutions under the current extraordinary circumstance caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, I am pleased to indicate that Belgium votes in favour of the draft resolution.

*(Signed)* **Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

---

**Annex 3****Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I thank you and your team for the continued strong support in facilitating the voting procedure.

Please be kindly informed that China abstains in the voting on the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” (S/2020/684).

*(Signed)* **Zhang Jun**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations

**Annex 4**

**Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I refer to your letter dated 11 July 2020 on the draft resolution contained in S/2020/684, submitted under the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”.

Upon instructions from my Government, the delegation of the Dominican Republic abstains in the voting on the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/684.

*(Signed)* José **Singer Weisinger**  
Ambassador

Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic

---

**Annex 5****Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to inform you that, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, my delegation votes in favour of the draft resolution on cross-border humanitarian aid in Syria (S/2020/684) to be adopted in connection with the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East” on 11 July 2020.

*(Signed)* **Sven Jürgenson**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations

**Annex 6**

**Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

[Original: French]

In reference to the letter dated 11 July 2020 from the German presidency of the Security Council inviting the members of the Council to vote on the draft resolution on cross-border humanitarian aid in Syria under the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East” (S/2020/684), France votes in favour.

*(Signed)* **Nicolas de Rivière**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations



**Annex 7****Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

It is my honour to write to you in response to the letter dated 10 July 2020 from the presidency of the Security Council initiating a written voting procedure in line with the agreement reached among members of the Security Council.

The vote of the Federal Republic of Germany on the draft resolution submitted by Germany and Belgium in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”, as contained in document S/2020/684, is as follows:

The Federal Republic of Germany votes in favour the above-mentioned draft resolution.

*(Signed)* Christoph **Heusgen**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

**Annex 8**

**Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I am writing in reference to the letter of the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, in his capacity as the President of the Security Council, dated 11 July 2020, regarding the draft resolution in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” (S/2020/684), submitted by Belgium and Germany.

I hereby indicate that Indonesia votes in favour of said draft resolution.

*(Signed)* Dian Triansyah **Djani**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

---

**Annex 9****Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I am writing in response to the letter dated 11 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council, calling on the members of the Council to express their votes on the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/684, submitted by Belgium and Germany under the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”.

In accordance with the agreed provisional procedures for the adoption of resolutions during the coronavirus disease pandemic restrictions, I have the honour to indicate that the Republic of the Niger decides to vote in favour of said draft resolution.

*(Signed)* Abdou **Abarry**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations

**Annex 10**

**Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 11 July 2020 initiating the voting procedure on the draft resolution in connection with the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, contained in document S/2020/684.

In accordance with the procedure for the adoption of Security Council resolutions during the restrictions on movement in New York due to the coronavirus disease pandemic, outlined in the letter dated 27 March from the President of the Security Council (S/2020/253), I have the honour to inform you that the Russian Federation abstains in the voting on draft resolution S/2020/684.

*(Signed)* Vassily Nebenzia  
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

---

**Annex 11****Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to refer to the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany on the extension of the Syria cross-border mechanism (S/2020/684).

In that respect, I wish to inform you that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines votes in favour of the above-mentioned draft resolution.

*(Signed)* Inga Rhonda **King**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  
to the United Nations

## Annex 12

### **Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I refer to your letter dated 11 July 2020 regarding the draft Security Council resolution on the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, contained in document S/2020/684.

The delegation of the Republic of South Africa votes in favour of the above-mentioned draft resolution.

*(Signed)* Jerry Matthews **Matjila**  
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations

---

**Annex 13****Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

Further to the letter dated 11 July 2020, emanating from the Permanent Representative of Germany in his capacity as President of the Security Council, on the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany contained in document S/2020/684, I would like to inform you that Tunisia votes in favour of that draft resolution.

*(Signed)* **Kais Kabtani**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations

**Annex 14**

**Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

With reference to the letter of the President of the Security Council dated 11 July 2020, the United Kingdom votes in favour of draft resolution S/2020/684, in connection with the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East".

*(Signed)* Jonathan **Allen**  
Ambassador  
Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain  
and Northern Ireland to the United Nations



---

**Annex 15****Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

On the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” (S/2020/684), the United States of America votes in favour.

*(Signed)* Kelly **Craft**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of the United States of America  
to the United Nations

**Annex 16**

**Letter dated 11 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

In reference to the letter of the President of the Security Council dated 11 July 2020 relating to the draft resolution in connection with the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, as contained in document S/2020/684, I would like to hereby inform you that Viet Nam votes in favour of said draft resolution.

*(Signed)* **Dang Dinh Quy**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations

**Annex 17****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve**

Some 11 million Syrians continue to be in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The needs are critical: food, water, shelter, medical assistance and care. Since 2014, cross-border operations have offered them a true lifeline, allowing the United Nations and its implementing partners to ensure life-saving assistance from across the border upon simple notification to the Syrian authorities.

Throughout the last months, the co-penholders of the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/684 — now resolution 2533 (2000) — did their utmost to find agreement on a resolution to renew the mechanism. We worked in good faith and in an inclusive, transparent and thorough manner with all members of the Security Council. Our sole guideline was the humanitarian imperative of improving the fate of the people on the ground.

Three crossings are at the very heart of this mandate and were an absolute necessity from a humanitarian perspective, particularly in the context of a pandemic. As the Secretary-General has repeatedly pointed out, the gap left by closing the border crossing at Al-Yarubiyah, in the north-east, earlier this year is still a long way from being filled, and the population remains in dire need of medical aid. After many rounds of discussion — and votes — and given the divergent positions among the members of the Council, the Security Council had no choice but to make yet another decision that does not reflect the humanitarian needs on the ground, in order to find compromise. Some 1.3 million people, including 800,000 internally displaced persons, live in the Aleppo area, among whom 500,000 are children, received the necessary humanitarian aid through the Bab Al-Salam border crossing.

Today is yet another sad day. It is a sad day not only for the Security Council, but also — and mostly — for the Syrian people living in those areas. Both Al-Yarubiyah and Bab Al-Salam were vital crossings for delivering, in the most efficient way possible, the humanitarian assistance those people deserve. Yet, in the interest of the almost 3 million civilians who depend on the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing, the Council had to make the decision to compromise. The decision we have taken today allows for Bab Al-Hawa to stay open for 12 months, which will allow for better planning and greater predictability for the many non-governmental organizations that, under difficult circumstances, guarantee the survival of the people suffering in and around Idlib. This is today's only good news. It is the reason that Germany and Belgium put forward draft resolution S/2020/684. We would like to thank the overwhelming majority of Council members for their active support throughout the process.

Finally, in this context, we once again urge the Syrian authorities to cooperate without reserve with the United Nations and its implementing partners in the cross-line delivery of aid, fully in line with the needs on the ground, in the interests of the Syrian people.

**Annex 18****Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

[Original: English and Chinese]

It is China's consistent position that the international community should increase humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people on the basis of respecting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. China encourages the relevant parties to step up communication and cooperation with the Syrian Government to facilitate its positive role and help remove obstacles to cross-line humanitarian relief to meet the needs of the Syrian people.

China continues to have reservations about the cross-border mechanism. Considering the actual situation in Syria, China does not object to retaining the cross-border mechanism at this stage. At the same time, China believes that the cross-border mechanism should be adjusted accordingly in the light of the developments on the ground. We have noted that the latest resolution presented by Belgium and Germany (resolution 2533 (2020)) reaffirms the commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and includes further adjustment to the cross-border mechanism. This is another step in the right direction.

It must be pointed out that years of illegal sanctions have exacerbated the economic and humanitarian crises in Syria, devastating livelihoods and bringing untold suffering to innocent civilians. The sanctions have also seriously undermined Syria's ability to respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The repeated calls made by Secretary-General Guterres and Special Envoy Pedersen for the lifting of unilateral coercive measures have received the overwhelming support of United Nations Member States. We thank the majority of Security Council members that support China's position.

In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, lifting unilateral coercive measures becomes more important and urgent to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria. China calls on the Security Council to address this critical issue and requests a comprehensive assessment by the Secretariat on the impact of unilateral coercive measures on the humanitarian situation in Syria. We urge the United States to lift its unilateral coercive measures on Syria immediately, stop causing more harm to the lives and livelihoods of the Syrian people, stop politicizing the humanitarian issue and putting up a hypocritical political show and demonstrate a responsible attitude and a spirit of humanitarianism with concrete actions.

I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate that the Syrian issue should be addressed with a holistic approach, taking into account the political, counter-terrorism, security, humanitarian and other aspects as a whole. China calls upon the relevant parties to strengthen dialogue and consultation and to actively promote a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political process. China will continue to play a responsible and constructive role in the efforts to achieve a peaceful, just and proper settlement of the Syrian issue at an early date.

**Annex 19****Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic, José Singer Weisinger**

The Dominican Republic decided to abstain in the consideration of resolution 2533 (2020), submitted by the co-penholders of the humanitarian file, regarding the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

At the outset, I would like to reiterate in the strongest terms the full support of the Dominican Republic to Germany and Belgium. To Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Christoph Heusgen and their teams, I say that in no way has this decision anything to do with the role that they tenaciously and patiently performed as co-penholders. This is a decision based uniquely on the following points.

We are disappointed that the Security Council has once again been unable to collectively and constructively address one of the greatest humanitarian tragedies of our time. The humanitarian needs of the people in Syria are dire. Ten years of conflict have had devastating impacts on the civilian population, including women, children and particularly the displaced.

From its creation up to now, the cross-border mechanism has been a lifeline for them. Now, amid a global pandemic, coupled with the looming possibility of yet another offensive and a devastating economic situation, Syrians could be facing yet another chapter in their nightmare, maybe the worst.

Yet the Council has turned its back on that reality. Although we renewed the mechanism, we were not up to the immense challenge that was put in our hands. Our failure to reopen the border crossing of Al-Yarubiyah and our decision to close the Bab Al-Salam crossing will have terrible consequences for the lives of hundreds of thousands of children.

Who are we to determine their future? Are we not supposed to facilitate the humanitarian assistance and the protection they are entitled to? To whom will they turn now that so many services they were receiving thanks to the cross-border mechanism have been shut?

The flagrant politicization of the decision that we just took is not one of which we should be proud. We still hope that the Council will be able to overcome the many differences, divisions and fears that prevent it from taking principled, people-centred humanitarian decisions.

## **Annex 20**

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

We can cross this finish line together today, knowing that humanitarian aid will cross Syria's borders tomorrow. Millions of people will continue to get the help that they so desperately need.

The tireless efforts of Belgium and Germany — their Permanent Representatives and teams — have ensured another one-year lifeline to the people in Idlib. We thank them for their dedication, and we pay our highest respects to all the humanitarian workers on the ground.

This final compromise was not easy to reach. Moscow once again used delaying tactics, trying to create friction among Council members, who had already twice voted in favour of the co-penholders' proposals, only to see those draft texts vetoed twice by Russia and China. That was the direct result of Moscow pursuing its political and military goals in Syria instead of standing up to protect humanitarian principles.

We condemned that kind of irresponsible playing with human lives in January (see S/PV.8700), and we do so again today. Moving from four crossings half a year ago to one today will have disastrous consequences for millions of civilians in Syria. Like many others present, we voted in favour of the co-penholders' resolution 2533 (2020) today for one reason only — so that these people could stay alive and resist this injustice.

**Annex 21****Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

Indonesia is delighted that the Council finally adopted resolution 2533 (2020), regarding the cross-border mechanism in Syria.

We know that this resolution is not satisfactory to everyone. However, my delegation believes that the text submitted by the co-penholders is the result of a compromise among Council members, and it serves as the urgent formula for the Council to continue assisting the Syrian people. In that context, my delegation would like to thank the co-penholders, Belgium and Germany, for their tireless efforts and commitment in facilitating the entire process.

Obviously, the issue of the humanitarian situation in Syria will not be fully resolved only with the authorization of this mechanism. We encourage all key parties to remain committed to their obligations to protect civilians under international law and international humanitarian law, particularly to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people in need throughout Syria without delay.

My delegation wishes to once again emphasize the importance of increasing the cross-line deliveries, in close cooperation with the Syrian Government, the United Nations and key humanitarian partners. Indeed, a combination of cross-border and cross-line deliveries is required to sustain humanitarian assistance.

The Council's responsibility does not end with this resolution. There are still many tasks for us to alleviate the impact of the conflict on the Syrian people.

**Annex 22****Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**

The Russian delegation abstained in the voting on resolution 2533 (2020), on the extension of the cross-border mechanism for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Syria.

Our vote reflects Russia's principled position on the cross-border mechanism. The mechanism was established in 2014, when the aid to certain parts of Syria could not be delivered from within the country. Since then, the situation has changed. The Government of Syria has restored its control over most of the country's territory. It means that humanitarian assistance can, and must, be delivered in accordance with the principles of General Assembly resolution 46/182 and international humanitarian law. At the same time, we were guided by the intention to help the Syrian population, who are in a difficult humanitarian situation due to the long-lasting conflict in this country.

Due to our consistent position, another important step has been taken towards the gradual phasing out of the cross-border mechanism. It excludes the Bab Al-Salam crossing point, which covered only 14 per cent of all cross-border deliveries from outside Syria. At the same time, the Security Council extended the work of the cross-border mechanism through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing-point for another 12 months. Regular and uninterrupted provision of humanitarian aid to this area of Syria will be continued.

We have repeatedly underscored that the cross-border mechanism in Syria does not reflect the minimal requirements of international humanitarian law. The United Nations still has no presence in the Idlib de-escalation zone, which is controlled by international terrorists and fighters. Therefore, it is impossible to monitor in order to control how humanitarian assistance is delivered and who are its final beneficiaries. It is not a secret that the terrorist groups listed as such by the Security Council control certain areas of the de-escalation zone and use United Nations humanitarian aid as a tool to exert pressure on the civil population and openly profit from such deliveries. There is increasing direct and indirect proof of these acts.

Moreover, the cross-border mechanism has been used by some external players as a tool to consolidate the dividing lines in Syria, thereby jeopardizing the integrity of Syria by breaking apart its regions. That contradicts the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, which has been repeatedly affirmed in Security Council resolutions, including this resolution. We remember how vehemently a number of our colleagues tried last January to oppose the closure of the Al-Yarubiyah border crossing, which provided humanitarian deliveries to the north-east of Syria within the framework of the cross-border mechanism (see S/PV.8700). They consistently misled the international community that there were no other ways to help the civilian population in that area.

As it turned out, this was just a political game. After the closure of Al-Yarubiyah, the Syrian Government expressed its readiness to promptly coordinate the deliveries of United Nations humanitarian aid from Damascus. After lengthy delays by the humanitarian agencies, on 4 July the World Health Organization carried out another cross-line road delivery of humanitarian aid to Al-Hasakah governorate. In total, since the beginning of 2020, when Al-Yarubiyah was closed, more humanitarian aid has been delivered to the north-east of Syria than in previous years, including through the above-mentioned border crossing. It is a fact that speaks for itself. At the same time, the humanitarian deliveries approved by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic go both to the areas and to the medical facilities under its control as well as



to those managed by the Kurdish authorities. It proves that the Syrian Government observes the non-discriminatory principle of humanitarian assistance delivery.

The Syrian Government has affirmed its readiness to provide cross-line humanitarian supplies to the Idlib de-escalation zone. However, these efforts are hindered. We urgently call on the United Nations to arrange and increase the deliveries to all parts of Syria from within the country, including Idlib.

Coming back to the text of the adopted resolution, we cannot but note how desperately our Western colleagues opposed reflecting in the resolution the negative impact of the unilateral sanctions they have imposed on Syria. These coercive measures not only seriously undermine the socioeconomic situation in Syria but also impede the activities of many humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are ready to help the population in territories controlled by the Syrian official authorities. The so-called humanitarian exemptions from sanctions regimes do not work. This is confirmed by the humanitarian workers themselves. Sanctions have a paralysing effect, as NGOs and third countries are scared of being sanctioned if they join efforts with the authorities in Damascus.

We proposed that the resolution request the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the assessment of the impact of Western sanctions on the Syrian economy and how much they affect ordinary citizens and the provision of humanitarian assistance. Our Western colleagues were ready to sacrifice the entire cross-border mechanism to prevent this amendment from being adopted. Despite this hypocrisy, they cannot sweep the truth under the rug. Blocking our amendment once again revealed their double standards.

We also want to note that the co-penholders of the resolution ignored our principled concerns from the very beginning. That forced us to block the German-Belgium draft resolution twice and present our alternative texts. If not for this, we could have avoided the eleventh-hour adoption of the resolution after the technical expiration of the cross-border mechanism. We want to remind the authors of this resolution, as well as the penholders of other dossiers in the Security Council, that the so-called penholdership is not a privilege but rather a special responsibility vis-a-vis other members of the Security Council, as well as the whole international community.

Nonetheless, the result has been achieved. The Russian Federation intends to follow the provisions of the resolution consistently and in a transparent manner. We hope that our Western colleagues will stop ignoring the evolution of the situation in Syria and will encourage international humanitarian workers to cooperate with official Damascus. Notwithstanding the fact that a part of the civil population of Syria is still in need of humanitarian aid channelled through the cross-border mechanism, it is high time for a transition to humanitarian assistance provided in line with international humanitarian law.

## **Annex 23**

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains extremely concerned by the humanitarian situation in Syria. The fate of millions of Syrians depends on the preservation of the cross-border mechanism. We therefore supported resolution 2533 (2020) for the sake of human dignity.

Our position has always been, and remains, that we support optimal access arrangements, through all modalities, to guarantee the rapid, uninterrupted and direct provision of aid. Indeed, there are no perfect solutions in these circumstances, and we are guided by the responsibility to ensure that those who rely on the critical lifeline of humanitarian assistance are able to access it.

The scaling up of the humanitarian response through cross-line deliveries is needed now more than ever to assist in filling the gaps that now exist. We therefore encourage further cooperation in this regard. We acknowledge the efforts of the co-penholders — Belgium and Germany — in facilitating the discussions on this matter. On complex questions such as this, where there are many competing concerns and different perspectives, the need for an inclusive and consultative approach cannot be overstated.

The humanitarian situation in Syria will continue to worsen in the absence of a political solution to the conflict. We must therefore continue to work together to realize the goals of resolution 2254 (2015).

**Annex 24****Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

The United Kingdom is grateful for the determination and skilful diplomacy shown by the German and Belgian delegations on resolution 2533 (2020). The co-penholders worked tirelessly to deliver what the United Nations and its humanitarian partners have told us they need in order to meet the needs of millions of people in Syria.

Unfortunately, the co-penholders have been blocked in this task by Russia and China. Twice this week, they have vetoed draft resolutions that commanded overwhelming support in the Security Council. Twice they voted to block the flow of aid to some of the most vulnerable people in the world today. Twice they put their own political calculations above saving human lives.

We are disappointed that the Council was left with no choice but to approve a resolution that does not meet the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people. It reduces humanitarian access and puts lives at risk. We reiterate our thanks to the co-penholders for their unstinting efforts: this situation is the responsibility of Russia and China.

The United Kingdom has committed over £3.3 billion in response to the Syria crisis since 2012, which includes support for saving lives through shelter, medical help, water and food for victims of the violence across Syria and the surrounding region. Humanitarian aid is not a political tool to be bargained with and should be based purely on humanitarian need. The United Kingdom's substantial assistance to the United Nations Syria appeal is not politicized. It is distributed by the United Nations and its humanitarian partners according to need and across all of Syria, whether in areas controlled by the regime or not.

We believe that cross-border and cross-line access is vital for getting aid to north-east and north-west Syria, particularly given the need to prepare and respond to coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The loss of the Al-Yarubiyah border crossing six months ago has crippled the health-care system in parts of north-east Syria. The United Nations has been clear that cross-line deliveries from within Syria have not adequately filled the gap left by the termination of cross-border assistance by Russia and China earlier this year.

The loss of the Bab Al-Salam border crossing today deprives 1.3 million people in north-west Syria of cross-border humanitarian assistance that they rely on. Over the past few days, we have heard of more confirmed COVID-19 cases in that area, so that loss will hamper the ability of aid agencies to respond effectively to the outbreak of the virus there.

The humanitarian situation in Syria remains dire. The further reduction of crossings places an added responsibility on the Syrian authorities to ensure that vital aid reaches all vulnerable populations. We urge them to improve cross-line access in keeping with the requests of United Nations agencies. We also urge them to cease their efforts to manipulate humanitarian aid to reward or punish communities that they view as loyal or disloyal. We see that policy evidenced by data in the Secretary-General's bi-monthly reports in response to our request for more detailed information on where the United Nations and its humanitarian partners are being denied sustained access. In addition, we call for strict adherence to the principles and parameters on United Nations assistance in Syria. We look forward to the Secretary-General's updates to the Council and thank him for his leadership on this issue.

It is a matter of great regret that Russia and China have chosen this week to play politics with humanitarian aid, at a time when the world and the region is battling coronavirus. Their actions will result in the loss of life and an increase in human suffering.

**Annex 25****Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

For weeks the Security Council has struggled to come to terms with the efforts of two of its members to end cross-border humanitarian aid to the Syrian people. Good faith negotiations were met with intransigence and contempt, and draft resolutions repeatedly faced inexplicable veto.

But today the Council showed that resolve and unity is a powerful combination. Today the Security Council worked on behalf of the very people the Charter of the United Nations set out to protect. The United States thanks co-penholders Belgium and Germany for their responsible stewardship of this negotiation and once again thanks all of Council members who stood up for what was right. Today we saved lives.

Let us not be mistaken: resolution 2533 (2020) is not what the United States and a majority of the Council fought for over the course of the past six weeks — or, indeed, for the past six months. This resolution is also not what the United Nations, Secretary-General António Guterres and dozens of non-governmental organizations operating in Syria have repeatedly urged the Council to do.

But the United States and the majority of the Council remained determined through nine rounds of voting this week to ensure that United Nations aid convoys, filled with food, vaccines and other humanitarian items, will continue to cross into Syria from Turkey for another year. We have given reassurance and hope to millions of Syrian civilians who have relied on the United Nations aid mechanism since cross-border operations started in 2014.

To be clear, today's outcome leaves us sickened and outraged at the loss of the Bab Al-Salam and Al-Yarubiyah border crossings. Behind those locked gates are millions of women, children and men who believed that the world had heard their pleas. Their health and welfare are now at great risk.

Yet there is no question that the Council's authorization of cross-border humanitarian access through Bab Al-Hawa for 12 months is a victory in the light of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China's willingness to use their veto to compel a dramatic reduction in humanitarian assistance. This solemn victory must not end our struggle to address the mounting human needs in Syria — that fight is far from over.

We fully recognize that the Al-Assad regime has not yet demonstrated that it is ready to end the war against the Syrian people. Until the Al-Assad regime and its backers take the necessary and irreversible steps to implement the political solution necessary to end this conflict, as outlined in resolution 2254 (2015), the United States and our allies will stand with the Syrian people to ensure that the humanitarian aid they deserve reaches everyone in need.

We will never back down, we will always have hope for their future and we will continue to stand with them.

## Annex 26

### **Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

My delegation would like to pay tribute to the tireless efforts of the co-penholders, as well as other members of the Security Council, to reach today's agreement.

The extension of the cross-border humanitarian assistance mechanism in Syria is crucial for the ongoing, life-saving humanitarian response in that country. Viet Nam consistently advocates for the continuation of humanitarian assistance and, to that end, voted in favour of draft resolutions that would help renew the mechanism's mandate, including resolution 2533 (2020).

The deteriorating humanitarian situation, coupled with the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and severe economic hardship, has been putting millions of people's lives at risk and making our task of tending to their needs more and more critical. We therefore call on the international community, including the Security Council, to continue to improve humanitarian support for Syria based on the needs of the people on the ground. It is also important to maintain and promote unity on this humanitarian matter.

We urge the Syrian Government, which bears the primary responsibility for settling humanitarian issues in the country, to enhance its cooperation with all relevant parties, including the United Nations, in order to foster a humanitarian response in Syria, including through cross-line operations. It is also pivotal to ensure safe, unimpeded and sustained access for the delivery of humanitarian relief to the most vulnerable populations in all parts of Syria.

Humanitarian assistance may be the necessary condition for ending the suffering of Syrian people, but it still falls short. My delegation would like to reiterate the vital importance of achieving a durable solution to the humanitarian issues in Syria by working towards a comprehensive political solution in line with resolution 2254 (2015), in full accordance with the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

---