

**DEPUTY SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR SYRIA
CLAUDIO CORDONE**

BRIEFING TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

13 February 2026

Mr. President (Amb. James Kariuki, UK),

1. It is an honour to brief the Security Council for the first time as Deputy Special Envoy for Syria and Acting Head of Mission. I have had the pleasure of meeting this week with Syria's Permanent Representative, Council members, and other key stakeholders to engage in a dialogue about how our Office can best serve Syria and its people during the country's political transition. And I look forward to discussing this with Foreign Minister Shaibani in Damascus shortly.
2. Before I update you on the next steps our Office is keen to take, let me highlight significant developments since Assistant-Secretary-General Khiari briefed you on 22 January.
3. On 30 January, a ceasefire and comprehensive agreement was announced by the Syrian Government and the Syrian Democratic Forces, providing for a phased military and administrative integration process. This agreement also included provisions on the return of the displaced and civil and educational rights for Syrian Kurds, building on the 16 January Presidential decree Number 13 concerning linguistic, cultural, and citizenship rights of Kurds within the Syrian state.
4. So far, hostilities have ended and work on an implementation plan has been progressing in a positive manner. A number of Ministry of Interior forces have begun to deploy in al-Hasakeh and Qamishli city centres. Discussions are proceeding on political appointments, local governance arrangements, and further military and administrative integration. Positive indications include visits by the Ministry of Defense to meet with counterparts in al-Hasakeh, as well as visits by the Ministry of Interior to Qamishli Airport, now returned to the Government, the oil fields, and Ain al-Arab, also known as Kobane.
5. You will have seen the Secretary-General's statement of 30 January welcoming the agreement. Let me also commend the parties for reaching it, and thank those who have been supporting them in this effort. We look forward to its full and swift implementation with regard to the peaceful integration of northeast Syria, the protection of the rights of Syrian Kurds, and the safe, dignified and voluntary return of displaced persons, creating conditions whereby all in that part of Syria can live in dignity and free from fear. We encourage the parties to continue to uphold their commitments and resolve any implementation-related differences peacefully and expeditiously.
6. We also call on the parties to investigate allegations of abuses against civilians, and combatants alike, and hold to account those responsible.

7. And we are following closely the situation surrounding detention facilities in the north-east, including the transfer of large numbers of Syrian and non-Syrian Daesh-suspected detainees to Iraq where they are expected to be brought to justice. We look forward for those responsible for atrocities to be held to account and that the Iraqi authorities ensure any legal proceedings fully respect fair trial standards. The evolving situation also underscores the need for Member States to enhance efforts to repatriate their nationals as swiftly as possible. In this regard, we take note of the commitments made during discussions held in Riyadh on 9 February by members of the Global Coalition Against Daesh.

Mr. President,

8. In Sweida, there have been renewed clashes between Government security forces and local armed groups, and reports of material damage and electricity outages in parts of the governorate. The Syrian Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of a member of the internal security forces, following an official investigation that identified him as suspect in the killing of four civilians and the wounding of another on 7 February. There have been new rounds of protests inside Sweida calling for self-determination and the withdrawal of Government security forces from towns and villages north and west of Sweida. We reiterate our call on the parties to engage on confidence-building measures, including those outlined in the “Sweida Roadmap” of 16 September 2025, aimed at the peaceful resolution of this dangerous situation within the full respect of Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.
9. Still in the south, Israeli incursions and search operations have continued. There are reports of aerial spraying of herbicides by Israel, causing damage to crops and pastures. We reiterate our call for full respect for international law, Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also call on Israel to withdraw from areas it occupies in violation of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. And we support the pursuit of mutually acceptable security arrangements between Israel and Syria.

Mr. President,

10. The next step in the political transition is the formation of the People’s Assembly. This Council will recall that voting for 122 of the 140 elected seats took place in October 2025. Following the 30 January agreement, the Supreme Committee for Elections announced that voting for four vacant seats in Raqqqa governorate will take place in the coming weeks. Clarification is still pending on steps to fill a further 11 elected seats in Hasakah governorate and in the district of Ain-al-Arab, also known as Kobane. Meanwhile, we are awaiting confirmation of the timeframe for the announcement of the 70 presidential appointees, and of the date of the opening session of parliament. We reiterate the importance of ensuring that Syria’s regions and diverse groups are meaningfully represented in the People’s Assembly.

Mr. President,

11. The protection and promotion of human rights – including addressing the issue of the missing and transitional justice – are fundamental elements for a credible and successful political transition in Syria. Advancing a process of truth, accountability, reparations and reform is essential for a successful political transition. Work on these issues is central to fostering the trust and confidence required for lasting peace and stability. Our Office remains committed to working closely with the Government and national partners, as well as with other components of the UN system and relevant international organizations, to support Syrian efforts in this regard.
12. I wish here to underline the extraordinary role played by Syrian women and by civil society throughout the years of conflict as well as these past 14 months. I especially look forward to engaging with them, including through the well-established Syrian Women's Advisory Board and Civil Society Support Room. The political participation of Syrian women at all levels is a pillar for a state committed to plurality, inclusion and opportunity for all. The members of the Security Council who are signatories of the Statement of Shared Commitments on Women, Peace and Security have today noted their intention to work with the Syrian Government and all relevant partners in this regard. We welcome this. And I look forward to the briefing by Ms. Muzna Dureid.

Mr. President,

13. Let me say a few words now on the work of the Office and our immediate plans. We are determined to be a strong, fair and supportive partner to the Syrian Government and to all Syrians. We shall never lose sight of the immense suffering and loss Syrians have endured over 14 years of conflict and decades of dictatorship. We recognize that this legacy is a heavy one. We know that Syrians today hold both hopes and fears, perhaps in equal measure. We are fully conscious of the difficulties that lie ahead, but also of the many opportunities presented by the new era that began on 8 December 2024. We are committed to supporting the success of this transition for *all* Syrians. We approach our work with humility and in a spirit of partnership.
14. I wish to thank you, Ambassador Olabi, for our positive discussions. I look forward to working with you. I also look forward to being in Damascus next week to continue discussing the specific, concrete ways in which the Office can best support Syria's political transition—support that we believe can be delivered most effectively when the Office is relocated to Damascus.
15. The Office will also work to ensure close coordination with the United Nations Country Team, and I have already initiated positive discussions in this regard with Nathalie Fustier, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator *ad interim*. We are all very conscious of the need to maximize practical impact, avoid inefficiencies and duplication, and ensure that our partnership delivers real results for the Syrian people. The tragic flash flooding of displacement camps in Idlib this week is a stark reminder of the continuing need for humanitarian assistance, as my OCHA colleague will brief you, as well as the need for durable solutions to rebuild the country.

16. Finally, let me stress how closely we wish to work with the countries of the region and with you, the members of the Security Council. In the past 14 months, this Council has demonstrated a welcome unity of purpose, including during the consequential visit to Damascus at the end of last year. Your press statement of yesterday is a further welcome sign in this regard. I am confident that this spirit of unity can be further deepened in the period ahead.

Mr. President,

Allow me to conclude with a few words in Arabic.

17- أودّ أن أؤكد على استعدادي، واستعداد جميع العاملين في مكتب المبعوث الخاص، للعمل بشكلٍ بنّاءٍ مع الحكومة السورية وكافة السوريين من أجل تحديد أفضل السبل التي يُمكن للبعثة من خلالها تقديم الدعم الملموس بالتنسيق مع فريق الأمم المتحدة القطري والشركاء الآخرين، خلال المسيرة التاريخية لسوريا نحو الانتقال السياسي.

18- وأخيراً، أشيد بالشعب السوري – بجميع مكوناته، رجالاً ونساءً – على عزمته في تجاوز عقودٍ من القمع والصراع القاسي. وأتطلع إلى تعزيز شراكة الأمم المتحدة مع سوريا سعياً نحو مستقبلٍ مستقرٍ وسلميٍّ ومزدهرٍ.

17. *[Translation: I wish to underline my readiness, and that of everyone in the Office of the Special Envoy, to work constructively with the Syrian Government and all Syrians in order to define the best way in which the Mission can provide concrete support, in coordination with the UN country team and other partners, during Syria's historic journey of political transition.]*

18. *Finally, I salute the Syrian people – men and women, in all components – for their determination in overcoming decades of oppression and brutal conflict. I look forward to strengthening the United Nation's partnership with Syria in pursuit of a stable, peaceful and prosperous future.]*

Thank you.