



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

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**Permanent Mission of Slovakia
to the United Nations**

UNGA Debate pursuant to GA resolution 76/262 following the use of the veto by a permanent member during the 9087th meeting of the Security Council on 8 July 2022 on “The situation in the Middle East”

**21 July 2022
New York**

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Mr. President

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. The following remarks will be made in my national capacity.

We appreciate convening of this second debate held pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 76/262, providing an opportunity to broader UN membership to speak about the important topic of humanitarian access in Syria. Slovakia commends renewal of the mandate of the cross-border mechanism to Syria ensuring that irreplaceable humanitarian assistance can continue crossing at Bab Al Hawa, for now.

The extension of the mechanism's mandate was a humanitarian imperative in order to preserve the functioning of a critical humanitarian lifeline for 4.1 million Syrian men, women and children, including 2.8 million internally displaced in northwest Syria depending on the vital humanitarian assistance delivered through this mechanism for their survival. It is estimated that today 12 million Syrians are food insecure and fully relying on external food assistance.

We were, however, saddened by the veto applied by the Russian Federation to the resolution proposed by the co-penholders for a twelve-month renewal of the cross-border mechanism. This proposal calling for a full year renewal, which have been advocated by numerous humanitarian experts, OCHA and Secretary General himself, had garnered wide support from Security Council members, with 13 votes in favor. Russian Federation, ignoring these calls, has once again politicized the discussion, took the Security Council hostage and in a cynical way blocked paths towards predictable, long-term, cross-border humanitarian access in Syria.

Slovakia continues to advocate for all parties to depoliticize and allow unimpeded and continued delivery of humanitarian aid to all those in need.

Cross-border assistance will continue to be vital to meet the immense humanitarian needs in Syria and we strongly urge the members of the Security Council to uphold their commitment to renew the resolution for a further 6 months by January 2023, to ensure that humanitarian assistance continues through the middle of winter, when people need it most.

As well documented by the humanitarian community, there is no adequate alternative to cross border assistance in order to meet significant humanitarian needs that only continue to increase, especially in light of the food crisis due to Russia's illegal, unjustified and totally senseless invasion of Ukraine. Life-saving and life-sustaining humanitarian actions must not be disrupted, targeted, or politicized. Safe, unhindered, and sustained access to all those in need in Syria must be guaranteed.

Slovakia calls on all parties to the conflict to join forces to reaffirm and consolidate strong support for a political solution in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254, and commends the tireless efforts of the UN Special Envoy Pedersen to advance political solution in Syria. In the meantime, all parties must respect their obligations under the International Humanitarian Law, including those related to the humanitarian access. Sustainable peace and

stability can only be achieved by a genuine, inclusive and comprehensive Syrian-led political solution.

I thank you.