



Security Council

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9 July 2020

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Letter dated 9 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 the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/658, submitted by the Russian Federation, in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”. In accordance with the voting procedure set out in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council (S/2020/253), a procedure agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the draft resolution received four votes in favour (China, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Viet Nam), seven against (Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America), and four abstentions (Indonesia, the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia). The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

Pursuant to the above-mentioned procedure, I enclose herewith copies of the related documents:

- My letter dated 7 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/2020/658 (see enclosure to annex 1);
- Letters received in reply from members of the Security Council indicating their national position on the draft resolution (see annexes 2 to 16);
- Statements subsequently submitted by members of the Security Council providing explanations of their votes (see annexes 17 to 24).

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

(Signed) Christoph Heusgen
President of the Security Council



Annex I

Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to 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 set out 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 issue:

The members of the Council discussed the draft resolution, submitted by the Russian Federation, in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”. The draft resolution has been put in blue (S/2020/658, see enclosure).

In my capacity as President of the Security Council, I hereby put the above-mentioned draft resolution to a vote. The non-extendable 24-hour voting period for the draft resolution will begin at 6.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 7 July 2020 and will expire at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 8 July 2020.

Please submit your vote (in favour, against or abstention) on the draft resolution, as well as your possible explanation of vote, by sending a letter to the Director of the Security Council Affairs Division in the United Nations Secretariat (egian@un.org) signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d'affaires a.i. within the non-extendable 24-hour voting period set out above.

It is my intention to circulate a letter listing the outcome of the vote within three hours of the conclusion of the 24-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 the afternoon of Wednesday, 8 July 2020.

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

Enclosure

United Nations

S/2020/658

**Security Council**Provisional
7 July 2020

Original: English

Russian Federation: 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,

Expressing grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Syria, in particular the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, which worsen the socioeconomic and humanitarian situations, undermine the livelihoods of civilians, and further compromise the capacity of Syria to ensure access to food, essential health supplies and medical support to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing that the pandemic presents a profound challenge to Syria's health system, underlining the urgency of lifting unilateral coercive measures, and *calling for* the provision of humanitarian assistance to all parts of Syria,

Recalling the guiding principles of Humanitarian Emergency assistance as set out in the GA resolution 46/182 and reiterating the need for all parties to respect and uphold the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance, emphasizing the importance of upholding the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, in the provision of humanitarian assistance and recalling also the importance of humanitarian deliveries reaching their intended beneficiaries,

Emphasizing that the cross-border mechanism was established in 2014 as an urgent and temporary solution to address the humanitarian needs of the population, which could not be reached through existing cross-line operations,

Welcoming improvement of cross-line deliveries of UN humanitarian assistance in 2020 and encouraging all relevant parties to further increase cross-line humanitarian operations to all parts of Syria,

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. *Calls upon* all parties to ensure principled, sustained and improved humanitarian assistance to Syria in 2020;

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

3. *Further demands* that all parties allow safe, unimpeded and sustained access for United Nations' and their implementing partners' humanitarian convoys to all requested areas and populations according to United Nations' assessment of need in all parts of Syria, including in Idlib;

4. *Calls upon* United Nations humanitarian agencies to improve monitoring of the delivery and distribution of United Nations relief consignments and their delivery inside Syria;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide a report on the direct and indirect impact of unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria on its socioeconomic situation and humanitarian deliveries from outside Syria, including through humanitarian agencies, and on economic and humanitarian cooperation between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other Member States, not later than 31 August;

6. *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 the humanitarian impact of unilateral coercive measures, 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 as authorized by resolution 2165 (2014) and this resolution, including on the number of beneficiaries, locations of aid deliveries at district-level and the volume and nature of items delivered;

7. *Reaffirms* that it will take further measures under the Charter of the United Nations in the event of non-compliance with this resolution or resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), and 2504 (2020);

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

Annex 2**Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I refer to the President of the Security Council's letter of 7 July, relating to the draft resolution, submitted by the Russian Federation, in connection with the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East" (S/2020/658).

In accordance with the procedure set forth for the adoption of resolutions under the current extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, Belgium votes against the draft resolution. My delegation intends to deliver the explanation of vote enclosed with this letter.

(Signed) **Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

Annex 3

Letter dated 8 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 kindly be informed that China votes in favour of the draft resolution (S/2020/658) submitted by the Russian Federation in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”.

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

Annex 4**Letter dated 8 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 July 7, 2020, regarding the draft Security Council resolution S/2020/658, under agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”.

Upon instructions from my Government, the delegation of the Dominican Republic votes against the above-mentioned draft resolution.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**

Ambassador

Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic

Annex 5

Letter dated 8 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 the Council, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, that my delegation votes against of the draft Security Council resolution S/2020/658, in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” (Syria cross-border humanitarian aid), put to the vote on 7 July 2020.

(Signed) **Sven Jürgenson**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations

Annex 6**Letter dated 8 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 7 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council inviting all members of the Council to vote on the draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation on Syria cross-border humanitarian aid in connection with agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”, as contained in document S/2020/658, France votes against.

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

Annex 7

Letter dated 8 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 7 July 2020 from the Presidency of the Security Council initiating a written voting procedure in line with the agreement reached between members of the Security Council.

The vote of the Federal Republic of Germany on the draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”, as contained in document S/2020/658 is as follows:

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

(Signed) **Christoph Heusgen**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

Annex 8**Letter dated 8 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 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, in his capacity as the President of the Security Council, dated 7 July 2020, regarding the draft resolution under the agenda item, "The situation in the Middle East" (S/2020/658).

I hereby indicate that Indonesia abstains in the voting on the draft resolution.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

Annex 9

Letter dated 8 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 7 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council calling on the members of the Security Council to express their votes on the draft resolution (S/2020/658), submitted by the Russian Federation under the item “The situation in the Middle East”.

In accordance with the agreed temporary procedures for the adoption of resolutions during the coronavirus disease pandemic restrictions, I have the honour to indicate that the Republic of the Niger has decided to abstain in the voting on the said draft resolution.

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

Annex 10**Letter dated 8 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 of 7 July 2020, on the beginning of the voting procedure for the draft resolution in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East” (S/2020/658).

In accordance with the procedure for the adoption of resolutions of the Security Council in place during the restrictions on movement in New York due to the coronavirus disease pandemic, outlined in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council (S/2020/253), I have the honour to inform you that the Russian Federation votes in favour of the draft resolution S/2020/658.

(Signed) Vassily **Nebenzia**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

Annex 11

Letter dated 8 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 (S/2020/658) submitted by the Russian Federation for the extension of the Syria cross-border mechanism.

In that respect, I wish to inform you that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines abstains in the voting on 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 8 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 7 July 2020 regarding the draft Security Council resolution concerning “The situation in the Middle East”, contained in document S/2020/658.

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 8 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 7 July 2020 emanating from the Permanent Representative of Germany, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, regarding the draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation in connection with the agenda item “The situation in the Middle East”, as contained in document (S/2020/658), I would like to inform you that Tunisia abstains in the voting on that draft resolution.

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

Annex 14

Letter dated 8 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 from the President of the Security Council of 7 July, the United Kingdom votes against draft resolution contained in document S/2020/658 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 8 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 the Russian Federation regarding the agenda item “The situation in Middle East” (S/2020/658), the United States of America votes against.

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

Annex 16**Letter dated 8 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 date 7 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council relating to the draft resolution submitted under the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East” as contained in document S/2020/658, I would like to hereby inform you that Viet Nam votes in favour of the 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

The Secretary-General has asked many times for more humanitarian access in Syria, not less. He called for a renewal for 12 months of the two crossings in the north-west, Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al-Salam, and for more cross-line and more cross-border access to the north-east.

After nine years of war, hundreds of thousands of civilians in the north-west of Syria had no other choice than to flee the violence earlier this year, further to the north. The offensive caused a massive displacement of people into a shrinking territory. While the Bab Al-Hawa crossing is used to deliver aid to Idlib province, aid coming through the Bab Al-Salam crossing reaches the region north of Aleppo, currently home to over 800,000 internally displaced persons.

The Russian proposal, however, aims to stop the mandate for the border-crossing of Bab Al-Salam, limiting humanitarian access to a single border crossing in the north, Bab Al-Hawa. Although the size and capacity of the border crossings are different, they are both equally essential to provide assistance to 2.8 million people in need in north-western Syria. Both areas are separated by conflict lines. Finally, the numbers of those in need did not decrease; on the contrary, demands for food, shelter and health care increased to record levels.

Therefore, my country has voted against this text.

The co-penholders will further engage in efforts with all parties to come to consensus. This is an important responsibility of the Council. We hope we can find unity, in the interests of the Syrian people in need.

Annex 18**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

Estonia voted against the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation for the renewal of cross-border aid mechanism to the Syrian Arab Republic. That text would not have supported Syrians, who are suffering following nine years of war and chemical attacks.

Instead, Russia tried with that draft to twist the arms of the members of the Security Council into assisting Moscow in its pursuit of its political and military objectives. We saw it yesterday, when Russia and China vetoed the text of humanitarian co-penholders Belgium and Germany (see S/2020/661), and we see it again today with the proposed draft resolution (S/2020/658).

Despite repeated calls by humanitarian non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies to renew cross-border aid deliveries for one year, the Russian draft demanded a closure of yet another crossing of the current mechanism.

However, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Bab Al-Salam is crucial for reaching hundreds of thousands of people in the outskirts of Aleppo. The attempt to decrease humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable communities in Syria in the light of the coronavirus disease outbreak is irresponsible. Estonia considers Russia's position unacceptable.

Finally, we also want to underline that the rhetoric around unilateral coercive measures is purely politically motivated. European Union sanctions, in particular, do not have any considerable effect on humanitarian deliveries and activities inside Syria, as they target the elites in support of the Syrian regime.

As such, we stress once again that Syria's current socioeconomic problems are a result of widespread corruption, warlordism and mismanagement. These are also the main reasons that multinational companies avoid doing business with Syria.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations**

Germany has voted against the above-mentioned draft resolution (S/2020/658) presented by the Russian Federation.

The Secretary-General asked many times for more humanitarian access in Syria, not less. He called for a renewal, for 12 months, of the two crossings in the north-west, Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al-Salam, and for more cross-line and more cross-border access to the north-east. After nine years of war, hundreds of thousands of the civilians in the north-west of Syria had no other choice than to flee the violence earlier this year further to the north.

The Russian proposal, however, is aimed at stopping the mandate for the border crossing of Bab Al-Salam, limiting humanitarian access to a single border crossing in the north, Bab Al-Hawa. Although the size and capacity of the border crossings are different, they are both equally essential to provide assistance to 2.8 million people in need in north-western Syria. While the Bab Al-Hawa crossing is used to deliver aid to Idlib province, the Bab Al-Salam crossing reaches the region north of Aleppo, home to an additional 300,000 internally displaced persons since the last offensive. Both areas are separated by conflict lines. The offensive caused a massive displacement of people to a shrinking territory. But the numbers of those in need did not decrease; on the contrary, demands for food, shelter and health care increased to record levels.

The co-penholders will further engage in efforts with all parties to come to consensus. This is an important responsibility of the Council. We hope we can find unity, in the interests of the Syrian people in need.

We also reject the language proposed on sanctions. European Union sanctions are not targeted at the Syrian people; they are exclusively targeted at representatives of the authorities in Damascus. They were introduced because of the repressive policies of the Al-Assad regime against the civilian population of Syria and the regime's grave violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. They do not affect the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need, containing as they do specific provisions allowing for the provision of humanitarian aid, including the supply of medicines and medical equipment needed in order to respond to the coronavirus disease in Syria.

Annex 20**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

Indonesia appreciates the efforts of the Russian Federation in trying to find a solution with regard to the renewal of the cross-border mechanism.

Since the negotiations started on 18 June, my delegation has shared and highlighted various recommendations by the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies, which emphasized it was imperative to renew the cross-border authorization for the use of the Bab Al-Salam and Bab Al-Hawa border crossings for 12 months.

The two border crossings are indeed lifelines for millions of civilians, particularly those in camps for internally displaced persons. And the United Nations cannot reach them by other means.

We welcome the improvement of cross-line deliveries of United Nations humanitarian assistance, in cooperation with the Syrian Government and other key humanitarian partners.

At the same time, we also note the Secretary-General's observation in his report that

“[c]ross-line assistance is currently not a viable alternative, and a sustained, large-scale cross-border response will continue to be necessary to meet the enormous humanitarian needs in the north-west” (*S/2020/576, para. 50*).

In this regard, we believe that the draft resolution (*S/2020/576*) does not fully capture the urgent needs of millions of people in the north-west whose lives depend on the two cross-border operations.

My delegation would like to thank the co-penholders for continuing the discussion and for engaging all Council members with the aim of reaching compromise and consensus.

We have the responsibility to save people's lives, and that includes the lives of millions of Syrian people.

Annex 21**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

I wish to reiterate South Africa's call for a cessation of all hostilities across Syria and for safe, unimpeded and impartial delivery of humanitarian aid throughout the country and assistance to all who require it, no matter where they are.

My delegation also wishes again to commend the United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, other aid organizations as well as donors for their important work and contributions in respect of the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria.

The prolonged conflict has left lasting effects throughout Syria and a permanent scar on its people. Children born in the past decade have known no peace. They have known only war and seen devastation around them.

As we have seen from the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/576), the humanitarian situation in Syria remains dire, with women and children bearing the worst of the conflict and deteriorating humanitarian circumstances. South Africa is deeply concerned that the number of people throughout Syria who are now food insecure has reached 9.3 million in the past six months, the highest number ever recorded in Syria.

The spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) also remains a threat in Syria, with a significant increase in positive cases in the past month and the potential for a further increase in the coming months.

Preparedness and response planning are an essential component of any humanitarian response. This is even more critical in a situation where the health system is fragile and there are large groups of people staying in overcrowded spaces, such as refugees and internally displaced persons, the elderly and people with underlying health conditions, who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

We also note the dire economic situation in Syria, which has led to rising food prices and growing food insecurity and is further exacerbating the humanitarian situation in the country. Efforts should therefore be made across the board to address the overall humanitarian situation in the country, especially in the context of an economically debilitating pandemic that has adversely impacted all countries.

In that regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the unilateral sanctions imposed on Syria have had a further deteriorating impact on the economic and humanitarian situation in the country. Those measures have compounded the conflict and have led to a further deterioration of the economy, thus affecting the livelihoods and food security of ordinary Syrians throughout the country. We question the intended impact of the sanctions, as it surely is not to resolve the conflict. Measures adopted by the international community and individual Member States should aim to save lives and improve the humanitarian situation, rather than lead to further hardship.

The Secretary-General has clearly stated in his most recent report that

“[t]he provision of humanitarian assistance requires timely, safe, sustained and unimpeded access by the United Nations and all humanitarian partners to people in need across the Syrian Arab Republic” (S/2020/576, *para.* 28).

South Africa fully supports the Secretary-General's call and will continue to advocate for the provision of humanitarian assistance to all Syrians in need through all available and direct means and modalities, including cross-border and cross-line

deliveries. We commend the United Nations, the World Health Organization and other aid organizations that are working with the Syrian Government to facilitate cross-line humanitarian assistance. At the same time, we note, per the report, that cross-line assistance has to be bolstered by cross-border assistance.

It is for these reasons that South Africa will be voting in favour of the draft resolution before us (S/2020/658), as we did when the draft resolution on cross-border crossings (S/2020/667) was submitted yesterday.

It is unfortunate that the renewal of the Council's provisions to address the plight of the Syrian people must again be subjected to political manoeuvring within the Council, thus undermining its ability to respond effectively to the needs of the affected people. South Africa remains concerned that political differences among the members of the Security Council is impacting the provision of safe, unimpeded and impartial humanitarian assistance, including urgent medical assistance, to Syrians in need.

For South Africa, the humanitarian interests of the Syrian people are the core driver for its engagement and action in the Council on this particular issue. Accordingly, we will act to ensure that the Syrian people receive the maximum support possible. It is therefore our sincere hope that members of the Security Council will be able to set aside their political differences and agree on a resolution to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria, including the provision of humanitarian access.

Finally, we wish to reiterate that the situation in Syria can be resolved only through negotiation and dialogue. We therefore again call on all parties to make every effort to fully implement resolution 2254 (2015) so as to further avoid the displacement of Syrians and the loss of innocent lives.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations**

We are deeply troubled by the Russian and Chinese politicization of this humanitarian issue. Yesterday, Russia and China vetoed a text that would have met the humanitarian needs of those in north-western Syria. Russia then put forward its own text, focused on only one crossing, That would deprive 1.3 million people of the cross-border aid they rely on via Bab Al-Salam. There is simply no reasonable justification for shutting off that vital lifeline. The need for two crossings to be renewed for 12 months has been made abundantly clear, including by the Secretary-General.

Misleading language has no place in a Security Council text. We therefore cannot accept Russia's wilful misrepresentation of sanctions. Members of the Council have repeatedly made clear that sanctions do not apply to food or medicine. There are also exemptions for humanitarian activity in place for United Kingdom-European Union sanctions. We need to be clear that it is the actions of the regime that are the main driver of the dire humanitarian situation in Syria.

The United Kingdom is one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid to the Syria crisis. Our total contribution stands at £3.3 billion. If Russia and China truly care about the humanitarian situation, they should support those suffering from the conflict rather than closing down routes for aid to reach them. It is beyond belief that, despite what we all know of the devastating impact of the coronavirus disease, they are obstructing an effective response in a region already ravaged by conflict.

In the light of that, the United Kingdom will vote against the draft resolution. We must do better. Russia and China still have time to reconsider and support a compromise solution that brings the Council together in the name of humanity. We urge them to do so.

Annex 23**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, Kelly Craft**

The United States of America today voted against the draft resolution authored by the Russian Federation (S/2020/658). We are disappointed, but not surprised, by Russia's disingenuous attempt to put forward a resolution designed to protect the murderous Al-Assad regime and divide the Council.

Yesterday, 13 members of the Council — an overwhelming majority — voted to take a principled and humanitarian stand in support of the Organization's impartial, apolitical and needs-based recommendation to reauthorize the existing cross-border mechanism, that is two crossings in the north-west, for 12 months. That was, quite literally, the bare minimum the Council should have done to help the Syrian people.

What Russia has put forward today is a text that spreads lies about the effectiveness of Al-Assad-controlled cross-line assistance, while promoting the false narrative that sanctions are to blame for the humanitarian crisis rather than Al-Assad's vile behaviour. Moscow's immoral proposal cuts the number of border crossings down to just one for only six months.

Their draft resolution has no correlation to the situation on the ground and blatantly defies the explicit and fact-based recommendations of the Secretary-General, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and countless international non-governmental organizations operating in Syria. It is filled with baseless propaganda aimed at bolstering Al-Assad regime's control over United Nations humanitarian assistance, even though we all know Al-Assad uses it as a weapon of war and political retribution.

The text is a repeat performance from six months ago, straight from Moscow's extortion playbook. Russia wanted to play politics and make a mockery of the Council, and they have done it, once again, at the expense of millions of Syrian lives. For the People's Republic of China to join them in this farce is indefensible. The citizens of both countries should be ashamed by the actions of their Governments and should speak out and hold them accountable.

While we are disgusted by the utterly irresponsible and heartless action of Russia and China, it is important that we point out that they are isolated in their despicable position. Yesterday, every other member of the Council put the Syrian people first and voted in favour of a compromise text that accurately reflected the situation on the ground and authorized the remaining two border crossings for 12 months. Every other member of the Council — 13 of us — negotiated in good faith to find a principled way forward to get the Syrian people life-saving humanitarian aid. We thank our colleagues for their moral stand and conviction.

Today, the United States was again joined by a majority of the Council in denying Russia and China the votes necessary to score political points with the Al-Assad regime. Since December, we have spoken out against Russia and China's support of Al-Assad's siege-and-starve campaign. We will not tolerate that. The United States will always advocate for the Syrian people.

Annex 24

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

The delegation of Viet Nam would like to express its profound disappointment that the Security Council has been unable to adopt a resolution to renew the cross-border humanitarian assistance mechanism for Syria. It is our strong belief that discussion on the renewal will continue over the next few days to find an optimal solution for supporting the most vulnerable population.

Viet Nam voted in favour of the two draft resolution contained in documents S/2020/654 and S/2020/658, bearing in mind the critical need to maintain life-saving humanitarian operations in Syria. It is crystal clear to us that the continuation of that mechanism must be ensured in order to respond to the considerable humanitarian needs on the ground at this moment in time.

The humanitarian situation in Syria is alarming, especially as it is being further aggravated by the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the exceptionally severe economic crisis. The gravity of the situation now continues to demonstrate the need for enhancing our humanitarian response.

As the lives of millions of people are at stake, we would like to emphasize that the members of the Council cannot afford to not be united on this issue. Finding a way out of the current impasse through genuine dialogue and extensive consultations that focus solely on humanitarian aspects will requires the continued efforts of all parties.

My delegation supports the efforts of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to people across Syria and will continue to engage actively towards that shared noble goal. Without a doubt, it is of the utmost importance that the Security Council show unity in supporting people in need. The Syrian people and the international community expect nothing less from us.
