



# General Assembly

Seventy-first session

**59<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting  
Friday, 9 December 2016, 3 p.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Thomson . . . . . (Fiji)

*In the absence of the President, Ms. Kasese-Bota (Zambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

## Agenda item 31 (continued)

### Prevention of armed conflict

#### Draft resolution (A/71/L.39)

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly will continue to hear speakers in explanation of vote after the voting on resolution 71/130, as orally corrected.

Before giving the floor for explanations of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): Singapore welcomes the fact that the General Assembly has convened to consider an issue of utmost importance to the international community. Given the failure of the Security Council to take decisive action to resolve the long-standing crisis, it is legitimate for the General Assembly to play its rightful role in contributing to the resolution of the conflict. Let there be no doubt: the convening of this meeting reaffirms an important principle and establishes an important benchmark for the General Assembly. When the Security Council fails to act, the General Assembly has a right to convene and discuss issues. When the Security Council is paralysed, the General Assembly must catalyse dialogue and action.

As a small country committed to the multilateral rules-based system, Singapore attaches great importance to the role of the General Assembly. However, while the General Assembly has a rightful role to play, we have to recognize the reality that the General Assembly cannot solve pressing problems of the day by simply voting on resolutions. The role of the Assembly is to build consensus, not accentuate differences and divisions. In that regard we believe it is very important for the General Assembly to avoid finger-pointing or playing the blame game.

The reality is that the resolution we adopted earlier today is not a perfect document. There are elements of the text with which Singapore is not comfortable. However, the ultimate priority of the international community is to achieve a cessation of hostilities to ensure the safety of civilians and to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need. Singapore supported the draft resolution because we believe it is important to send a signal to all of the parties that the cessation of hostilities and the resumption of humanitarian assistance is a fundamental issue for the international community.

The adoption of resolution 71/130 is not a cause for celebration. The stark reality is that the resolution will not change the situation on the ground in Syria, but we hope that it will give new impetus for all parties involved in the terrible crisis to engage in renewed dialogue and consultations and to reach a political solution to end the conflict. Ultimately a durable solution will require all parties to reach out to each other. It will require all parties to respect each other. It requires all parties to respect their different positions and to find common

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ground. It requires all parties to work together to allow the Syrian people and the Syrian Government to put an end to the conflict and build a peaceful and prosperous country.

The adoption of resolution 71/130 today does not absolve the Security Council from its responsibility to address threats to international peace and security. Those who have the responsibility to act under the Charter of the United Nations, notably the permanent members (P-5) of the Security Council, must live up to their responsibilities. Singapore calls on all of the P-5 to show leadership on one of the biggest conflicts of our time — one that has imposed a huge cost in terms of human suffering. We urge the P-5 to find common ground. We ask them to please put aside their differences and work together for the sake of the United Nations and for the sake of the international community.

Any meaningful political solution in Syria must respect important principles, such as the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Syria and the need for an inclusive Syrian-led political process. We welcome the reaffirmation of those key principles in the resolution adopted today. We also welcome the request for the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution.

**Mr. Skinner-Klée** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala voted in favour of resolution 71/130, on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the critical situation in Aleppo. We are appalled by the terrible suffering of the more than 13.5 million Syrians facing a humanitarian crisis of tragic proportions. We joined in the adoption of the resolution also because of the grave and persistent human rights violations against the Syrian people, who have been forced to flee, in an unprecedented exodus, to seek a minimum of shelter in the midst of the Dantean situation in their country. Given the need to assist those victims and the Security Council's inability to take a decision enabling humanitarian access to provide humanitarian aid to the affected population, we joined in the adoption of the resolution as the only option available other than remaining powerless before that grotesque and unforgivable situation.

We take note of the impasse within the Security Council itself, which is the organ with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. We recognize that, in accordance with Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations, the General

Assembly may discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security and therefore acted accordingly.

Given the differing opinions in the Council, and in the various diplomatic efforts undertaken in parallel to the negotiations that were taking place at the United Nations, and the fact that the Council was unable to fulfil its responsibilities, Guatemala voted in favour of the draft resolution. We did so because we regard it as an option that is consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and because it has the aim of ending the hostilities. Above all, it sends a clear and unequivocal message condemning the war mentality of the parties, which, sadly, is causing blood to flow in Syria day after day.

Once again, Guatemala deplores the indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population, especially its most vulnerable members, the women and children, who are suffering daily from the indiscriminate violence and the barbaric and inhuman acts of the parties to the conflict. We hope that this call from the General Assembly will resonate strongly and find support among the parties involved in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, in order to end the indiscriminate attacks against civilians and immediately allow humanitarian aid to reach the affected population.

Finally, we pay tribute to the humanitarian personnel of the United Nations and the specialized agencies in the region, who, under the banner of the Organization, have the primary purpose of safeguarding the human rights and lives of a population besieged by violence driven by war and hegemonic interests.

**Mr. Scappini Ricciardi** (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam, for convening this meeting of the General Assembly. On behalf of the Republic of Paraguay, my delegation wishes to express its profound dismay at the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. We voted in favour of resolution 71/130, on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, for the following reasons.

An immediate and comprehensive response to the dire situation in the Syrian Arab Republic is urgently needed on the part of all the parties to the conflict, with priority being given to the protection of civilians. Member States must work together to achieve as soon as possible a political solution to the conflict in Syria through a Syrian-led process. The General Assembly is the highest expression of democracy for the peoples

that make it up, on the basis of the sovereign equality of States, and it cannot remain indifferent to the Syrian situation, which has global implications. My delegation considers it imperative that the Security Council first and foremost, and all the States Members of the Organization, contribute to an effective system for protecting the rights of civilians in armed conflict.

We had an opportunity to participate, along with the delegations of other Member States, in the consultations on the text of the resolution, which safeguards the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, considers the roles played by all the parties to the conflict and gives priority to addressing the dire humanitarian situation throughout Syria. It was not, however, possible to fulfil all our expectations. Certain references in the resolution dilute its main purpose, which is an immediate response to the humanitarian situation. Although we voted in favour of the resolution, we express our reservations with regard to the fifth preambular paragraph and the references in other preambular paragraphs that prejudice the Syrian Government.

**Mr. Sinirlioğlu** (Turkey): Resolution 71/130, which we adopted today, demands an immediate and complete end to all attacks on civilians and civilian objects, an immediate end to all sieges and the immediate cessation of hostilities. It expresses support for the political process and stresses the need to ensure accountability in Syria.

Turkey values all the efforts to put an end to the unbearable suffering of the Syrian people and reach a political solution based on the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), as outlined in Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). With that understanding and in the spirit of solidarity with the international community, we voted in favour of the draft resolution. However, we need to underline the following concerns.

We should not forget how we reached this point in the Syrian crisis. The Syrian people asked for democracy and a better future. The regime, instead of meeting those legitimate aspirations, has employed every instrument of violence available to it to prolong its grip on power. The people of Syria have been punished brutally, including by chemical weapons, barrel bombs, ballistic missiles, targeting of civilians, demographic change, sexual violence, arbitrary detentions, torture, starvation and siege. Those are the facts. They are all documented. We all know the blunt reality, and

the persistent lies of the regime representative do not change anything. What has been going on since March 2011 is nothing less than an all-out war by the regime against its own people.

Next week will mark the first anniversary of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). Where we stand right now is, unfortunately, way behind where we were a year ago. Al-Assad very recently elaborated on how he never took the political process seriously. His statements made clear that he has been wasting everybody's time and efforts since last year.

Resolution 71/130, despite all the best intentions, falls short of resolutely pointing the finger at the perpetrators of the atrocities in Syria. It does not say loud and clear that the regime disregards the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and fails to implement relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. We are beyond the stage where we can limit ourselves to mere expressions of concern or condemnation. The words of outrage have not stopped the regime's slaughter in Syria. Aleppo is being reduced to rubble by ever-intensifying attacks. A heartbreaking carnage is taking place before our eyes. The acts of the regime and its supporters amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Syrians are tired of being abandoned by the international community. They deserve our collective action. We can and should do better. All of our efforts should be streamlined to increase the pressure on the regime and its supporters and make the consequences of their actions no longer affordable.

The double veto that we saw on Monday in the Security Council (see S/PV.7825) once again showed us that the Council is unable to exercise its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Given the continuing horrific situation on the ground and the political atrophy in the Council, there are steps we need to take in the General Assembly without further delay. The magnitude of the crisis needs to be treated accordingly. We strongly believe that the call for an emergency special session is more justified than ever. The Syrian people have suffered enough. We cannot condone inaction anymore. Turkey will continue to support the efforts to bring a lasting solution to the crisis that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

**Mr. Tayel** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Resolution 71/130, which we adopted this morning, contains

nothing new. It fails to identify the causes of the Syrian crisis. The two sponsors of the resolution described some of the facts, but the text is not commensurate with the scale of the crisis, which is one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time and could have a major impact on the Middle East.

Nevertheless, we recognize the binding nature of General Assembly resolutions and therefore voted in favour of today's draft resolution, which reaffirms the principles that we believe should be priorities when it comes to Syria. These principles focus on the interests of the Syrian people and underscore the importance of putting an end to all human rights violations, regardless of who the victims are. We must put an end to the hostilities in accordance with Security Council resolution 2268 (2016) and enable the resumption of a political process immediately. Furthermore, these are the same principles that we have supported in the Security Council, either by voting for them or by proposing them.

Whenever we believe that we have reached a turning point in the Syrian crisis and that the suffering of the Syrian people can be brought to an end, we discover that this is in fact not the case, for the parties believe that they can score a victory at the expense of others. But there is no victory to be had in Syria; there is nothing to be had but the destruction of this country, whose territory has been violated by all parties.

I would like to warn of the repercussions of this crisis, which we shall experience throughout the region for a great many years to come and will also be felt by countries that may believe themselves to be far from Syria. Egypt will therefore maintain its approach of considering all options discussed by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the International Syria Support Group. We will continue to use our diplomatic experience and influence with other countries, allies and those involved in the Syrian situation in order to attempt to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people, regardless of their situation.

I take this opportunity to remind all parties in Syria that they should place the well-being of the Syrian people and the humanitarian situation above all other interests. We must also work to put an end to terrorism, which has proliferated in Syria. We must bring to an end all cooperation with the terrorist groups that control a large part of Syrian territory, particularly Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front, which is now known as Jabhat Fath

al-Sham. I also call on the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities to closely follow all developments on the ground and to adopt any necessary resolutions.

A political process is required to address the new challenges emerging in Syria. There are waves of refugees, and communal tensions are being exacerbated. We are convinced that there is no military solution to this crisis; rather, there is a need to address these challenges in a comprehensive political process that does not exclude anyone. We therefore call once more on the Secretary-General, through the efforts of his Special Envoy, to resume negotiations with the Syrian Government and the broadest possible spectrum of the opposition on an urgent basis, in keeping with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex). This will launch the transition phase in Syria. I further call on the Secretary-General to withstand any pressure and to reveal which parties are preventing negotiations.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): We welcome the convening of this meeting on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. My delegation continues to be very concerned about the devastating human tragedy unfolding in that country. Our highest priority remains stopping the killing and ending the suffering of innocent civilians. There should be an immediate end to the violence, and talks should begin to reach a Syrian-led political transition that reflects the will of the Syrian people as whole.

South Africa condemns all human rights abuses, in particular violations of the rights of vulnerable groups such as women, children and ethnic minorities. South Africa calls for unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for the people of Syria as a whole. During the recent Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Summit held in Goa, India, the BRICS leaders called on all parties involved:

“[t]o work for a comprehensive and peaceful resolution of the conflict, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria, through inclusive national dialogue and a Syrian-led political process based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 and in pursuance of United Nations Security Council resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016) for their full implementation”.

For us, it is essential that a political path be supported by unity and cohesion and by international efforts towards Syrian-led negotiations and a political transition aimed at establishing a pluralistic society in which minorities are protected.

South Africa abstained in the voting on resolution 71/130 earlier today as we remain concerned that some countries may be using this opportunity, under the guise of providing humanitarian assistance, for political grandstanding, advancing their own political interests and effecting regime change at a time when the people of Syria are relying on the United Nations to save them from the scourge of war. What is required from the international community is unity of purpose and common action, rather than divisive statements and actions that benefit only those who want the conflict to continue and so undermine any efforts towards negotiated peace.

My Government remains convinced that in a complex and diverse society such as Syria's there can be no military solution to the conflict. In this context, we reject any calls for regime change, external interference or any action that is not in line with the Charter of the United Nations. If the crisis in Syria continues to be fuelled with weapons — especially from external sources — it is ultimately the people of Syria who will pay the heaviest price, as we have witnessed in similar situations elsewhere in the world.

The Security Council has failed the people of Syria owing to its paralysis. The structural deficiencies of an archaic and outdated body, where national interests trump international responsibilities and obligations, once again reflect the urgent need for reform of the Council. This failure is also manifested in the double standard; we know of other cases where civilians have continued to die, such as in Libya, Iraq, Yemen and Palestine.

It is not acceptable to South Africa for the General Assembly, especially the sponsors of the resolution we have just adopted, to be silent about the immense human suffering in Yemen, Libya and elsewhere in the region. The conflict has now resulted in well over 6 million Syrian refugees. In this regard, South Africa calls on the States members of the European Union and Syria's regional neighbours to utilize all relevant domestic entities, multilateral forums and bilateral mechanisms to assist Syrian refugees, in full accordance and compliance with all human rights laws.

According to an African saying, any child is my child. A Libyan child is my child. A Yemeni child is my child. A Syrian child is my child. As the United Nations and as the Security Council, we cannot discriminate against others' children. All those children — our children — and their mothers deserve the assistance of all the States Members of the United Nations.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to speak in explanation of vote after the voting. I first want to thank the delegation of Canada for its initiative and for the efforts it made during the consultations on today's resolution 71/130 to bring the various positions of Member States closer together. The world has been witness to the disastrous situation in Syria, particularly Aleppo, as the Syrian regime has continued with its bloodthirsty policies and attempts to starve the Syrian people into surrender. Qatar has urged the General Assembly to act in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and since the Security Council has been unable to reach agreement on the steps that should be taken to end the Syrian crisis, and based on our belief that the situation in Syria is an extraordinary and dangerous one that requires immediate attention, we believe the Assembly should hold an emergency special session in order to shoulder its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We participated in the negotiations and made a major effort to strengthen today's resolution to ensure that it is adequate to the breadth of this crisis, in which civilians are dying at every moment. The crisis is affecting the entire region, not to mention the whole world, and the General Assembly must take measures aimed at compensating for the Security Council's inability to act.

Lastly, we voted in favour of the resolution because we hope that it represents the start of a new phase of serious effort on the part of the international community, aimed at finding a way out of the situation in Syria as quickly as possible. We reiterate our urgent request that the Assembly hold an emergency special session, in view of the fact that this week the Security Council has once again failed to adopt a resolution on the situation in Syria. The humanitarian situation has reached an unprecedentedly dire level. The Syrian regime's continuing perpetration of acts that constitute war crimes has been well documented, and it must be held accountable to international justice for those acts.

**Mr. Mendoza-García** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 71/130 today because we believe firmly that the inability of the Security Council to take effective decisions on the critical situation in Syria means that the General Assembly should assume its subsidiary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation believes that, if implemented, the recommendations included in the operative part of the resolution will bring about changes in the humanitarian situation on the ground that, while they are not enough, could save lives and give hope to the civilian population in Syria. Costa Rica did not sponsor today's resolution because in our view it should have focused more on the humanitarian aspects that enjoy broad support in the Assembly. We believe it is important to avoid polarizing Member States' positions on the conflict and to put the plight of the victims before their own national interests.

**Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan is seriously concerned about the grave situation in Syria and is strongly convinced that only a political and diplomatic solution can bring lasting peace and security to the region. We fully support the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, to find possible solutions to this ongoing conflict. In particular, we hope that the negotiation process launched in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the steps taken by the International Syria Support Group, will continue and produce positive developments.

Kazakhstan welcomes the Canadian initiative to resolve the tragic humanitarian crisis in Syria. As resolution 71/130, adopted in this Hall today, states in its ninth preambular paragraph,

“more than 13.5 million people are now in need of humanitarian assistance in the Syrian Arab Republic ... including the nearly 6.3 million people who are internally displaced, [and] in addition to the half million Palestinian refugees”.

Those numbers are truly appalling. The main emphasis, in Kazakhstan's view, should focus directly on that aspect of the crisis and on real and practical assistance on the ground to the Syrian people in need.

We also commend the resolution's humanitarian aspect concerning such issues as the protection of civilians and communities, a complete cessation of hostilities and attacks and the provision of unconditional and unhindered humanitarian access throughout Syrian territory. We believe that we should follow it

up in accordance with the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016), as well as other resolutions on Syria and the fight against terrorism. In our view, efforts should be directed at organizing the delivery of humanitarian aid to Aleppo and other areas affected by the conflict and to ensuring a cessation of hostilities by all parties. They should also focus on separating moderate opposition forces from organizations that the Security Council has designated as terrorist, and on launching an inclusive process for a political settlement, as stipulated in resolution 2254 (2015) and in the agreements within the framework of the International Syria Support Group.

However, Kazakhstan abstained in the voting on the resolution because it is not just one side — that is, the official Syrian authorities — that is responsible for the situation in the country, as the resolution suggests, and because we believe that such a stance detracts from the document's positive spirit and could exacerbate the confrontation between the major actors in the Syrian conflict. It is important to strengthen cooperation aimed at achieving a united and inclusive political solution of the shared issues associated with the humanitarian situation in Syria. Kazakhstan calls on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the opposing forces inside the country, together with the countries that have influence on them, to consider the fate of innocent civilians, especially women and children. We need and therefore call for political will to be exercised with the specific goal of ending the bloodshed and mitigating the country's humanitarian crisis.

Kazakhstan is fully committed to finding a solution that will end a six-year conflict that has had some of the most catastrophic consequences in modern history and is ready to join the multilateral action to that end.

**Mr. Kalamverzos** (Greece): Greece aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (see A/71/PV.58). We would like to state the following regarding our position on resolution 71/130, entitled “The situation in the Syrian Arab Republic”.

We joined Canada and 72 States Members of the United Nations in requesting today's meeting of the General Assembly and the adoption of a resolution on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. Greece reiterates its conviction that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict. We are gravely concerned about the serious and continued human rights violations and

abuses and violations of international humanitarian law in Syria, and we deplore the disastrous humanitarian situation in Aleppo. In that spirit, therefore, we voted in favour of today's resolution. We believe, however, that the fifth preambular paragraph goes beyond the humanitarian scope of the resolution, and we therefore disassociate ourselves from that paragraph.

**Mr. Roet** (Israel): As we gather here today for this special meeting of the General Assembly on the situation in Syria, Syria continues to bleed and its civilians continue to suffer under the crushing rule of the Syrian regime, which relentlessly and intentionally targets its bombs at its own citizens. The massacre in Syria has claimed the lives of over 400,000 persons, including tens of thousands of children and displaced persons. Approximately half of the Syrian population is displaced.

Israel cannot remain silent in the light of the grave and serious situation on the ground and the suffering of the Syrian population. We condemn any attacks against civilians by the Syrian regime and terrorists alike. We believe that urgent action is needed. The lives of the Syrian people must be saved. The violence inflicted by the Al-Assad regime, which brutally assaults its own people using conventional and non-conventional weapons, has plunged the country into the worst humanitarian crisis in the history of the Middle East. The shocking erosion of the absolute prohibition against the use of the world's most horrific weapons has, unfortunately, become a daily reality in Syria.

As the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations concluded with regard to the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons, the Syrian regime has been responsible for four chemical weapons attacks on civilians. I would like to echo the statement of the Mechanism's Leadership Panel's words in its fourth report, to the effect that "the use of chemicals as weapons, for any reason and under any circumstances, is totally abhorrent" (S/2016/888, para. 52). In my worst nightmare, as a member of a people that suffered the horrific ramifications of the use of Zyklon B on human beings, I simply cannot believe that in 2016 chemical weapons are being used again and again, and that the perpetrators of the horrific crimes involving their use sit in this grand Hall and complain about procedural matters.

Nowhere is the situation graver than in Aleppo, where collapsing infrastructure and the lack of basic provisions, including food, water and medicine, have led to a humanitarian catastrophe of unimaginable proportions. The devastating situation in Aleppo is getting worse by the day, and urgent action is needed. Al-Assad's actions not only violate international law, but are an affront to humankind itself. We must send a clear and strong message that the international community cannot and will not allow that to become the new normal.

In conclusion, I would like to comment on the absurd attempt by the representative of the Syrian regime to divert attention from the dire situation at hand. Even as the General Assembly gathers here today for a meeting on the humanitarian crisis in his country, instead of offering ways to improve the situation by committing to ending the slaughter of his fellow citizens, the Syrian representative chose to do the only thing he knows how to do — blame other countries without any basis. The accusations uttered here today are not only ludicrous, but also lack any credibility and serve to prove the growing detachment of the representative of the Syrian regime from the reality on the ground.

I also thank the representative for using the word "satanic" in his statement, as he has helped me to find the right adjective to describe the actions of his regime.

**Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh): Bangladesh remains profoundly concerned over the protracted conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. We have consistently underscored the need for a cessation of hostilities, unhindered humanitarian access to the civilian population across the country and the resumption of a political dialogue. We remain committed to the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and independence of the Syrian Arab Republic. The situation on the ground, especially in eastern Aleppo, continues to evolve rapidly. We agree that humanitarian considerations must come first, and that we need to ensure the voluntary and safe evacuation of civilians from eastern Aleppo and the provision of immediate humanitarian relief assistance to civilians in need. We also agree on the need to consider the resumption of the Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political dialogue with a view to finding a durable solution to the crisis.

We therefore recognize the need for a measured, restrained and cautious approach on the part of the international community to help keep the focus on the

main current concern. Because of that consideration, our delegation abstained from voting on the resolution.

**Ms. Yáñez Loza** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador wishes to express its deep concern at the grave humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. We reiterate our condemnation of any violation of human rights or international humanitarian law, regardless of where those violations occurred. That is why we express our solidarity with the Syrian people, in particular with the innocent victims of armed violence.

The situation in Syria is extremely complex. We feel it is unfortunate that resolution 71/130 attempts to politicize the conditions and circumstances that have led to the current situation in the country. It also seeks to pass off as proven facts some matters that have not yet been established or are still being interpreted. While the resolution reiterates the need for commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and the territorial integrity of Syria, it makes no mention of the important corollary of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States, or of the grievous damage caused by certain States, the self-appointed arbiters of the legitimacy of other Governments, that have pursued regime change in Syria, which that has destabilized the country.

The resolution expresses concern at the presence of terrorist groups in the Syrian Arab Republic. At the same time, the text fails to condemn the financing and military support provided to those groups and their allies or to stipulate the obligation of States to fight terrorism, while, at the same time, respecting human rights and international humanitarian law. To be credible and effective, a resolution with humanitarian aims needs to be based on objective principles so as not to be used for political ends contrary to international law. Ecuador deems that draft resolution does not fulfil those aims and therefore abstained in the voting.

Once again, we reiterate our call for an urgent solution to the crisis in Syria. It must be a political process that is Syrian-led. Respect must be shown for the country's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States, while the need to fight the scourge of terrorism must be emphasized.

**The Acting President:** The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 31.

#### **Programme of work**

**The Acting President:** I should now like to consult members regarding an extension of the work of the Second Committee.

Members will recall that, at its 48th plenary meeting, on 21 November, the General Assembly agreed to extend the work of the Second Committee to Wednesday, 30 November. Members will also recall that, at its 50th plenary meeting, on 30 November, the General Assembly agreed to further extend the work of the Second Committee to Friday, 9 December. However, I have been informed by the Chair of the Second Committee that the Committee requests an additional extension of its work to Wednesday, 14 December. Such an extension is needed to take action on all outstanding texts, including draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.63, entitled "Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system".

May I therefore take it that the General Assembly agrees to extend the work of the Second Committee until Wednesday, 14 December?

*It was so decided*

*The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.*