

Beat: News

Don't lose focus on Syria, UN envoy tells Security Council

Humanitarian crisis continues

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Although the war in Syria may not be making headlines lately, the international community must remain focused on achieving a comprehensive political solution to the conflict, UN Envoy for the country, Geir Pedersen, said on Tuesday in his latest briefing to the Security Council in New York.

"Recalling that Syria is "a hot conflict, not a frozen one", he listed some of the threats resulting from the war, including an uptick in airstrikes, intensified clashes in the northeast, "regular incidents between or involving international actors", as well as terrorism

"My message today is simple: focus on Syria", said Mr. Pedersen, speaking from Geneva.

"The current strategic stalemate on the ground and Syria's absence from the headlines should not mislead anyone into thinking that the conflict needs less attention or fewer resources, or that a political solution is not urgent."

Syria also remains among the greatest humanitarian crises of this era, he said, and suffering is at its highest level since the war began 11 years ago.

"While the displacement caused by the war in Ukraine is tragically catching up, Syria remains the biggest displacement crisis in the world, with 6.8 million refugees and 6.2 million IDPs (internally displaced persons) – half the pre-war population, a whole generation born and brought up in displacement."

On the humanitarian front, the UN envoy called for expanding cross-line and cross-border assistance, and highlighted the need to address the plight of the tens of thousands of Syrians who remain detained, abducted or missing.

UN deputy humanitarian affairs chief, Joyce Msuya, who also briefed ambassadors, warned that "Syria is on the verge of becoming yet another forgotten crisis" even as millions there struggle each month to survive.

The economic crisis continues unabated, while food and fuel prices spiral, impacting delivery of water and sanitation, as well as other basic services.

As Syrians face a bleak future, humanitarians are also confronting dwindling resources.

"We simply do not have the money needed," she said bluntly. "For far too many people, we are not able to provide the bare minimum in assistance. It is clear, we cannot continue business as usual. We must support Syrians in need to find a more sustainable path forward." " (ref: UN News)

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