

Statement on United Nations Security Council Reauthorization of the Syria Cross-Border Mechanism

Washington, D.C. - On January 9th, 2023, through the current legal basis, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voted unanimously to reauthorize [Resolution 2672 \(2023\)](#) allowing the United Nations and its agencies to continue conducting cross-border humanitarian operations at the Bab-Al Hawa crossing-point in Northwest Syria for a period of 6 months. The American Relief Coalition for Syria (ARCS), is relieved that this extension will allow for a continuation of the life-saving cross-border aid mechanism, but reiterates that such a short extension period will never be sufficient to provide a reliable and dependable humanitarian response for the 4.1 million people currently in need in Northwest Syria.

Since 2014, the United Nations and its agencies have played a central and commendable role in building and leading the Cross-Border Humanitarian Aid System in Syria. As of November 2022, UN agencies have sent over 53,246 trucks of humanitarian assistance across the Turkish border and provided critical funding to support a host of essential services implemented by cross-border actors including education, psychosocial support, and health services.

The levels of need in Syria now are tremendous. The past eight years of annual negotiations about humanitarian access have consistently politicized humanitarian aid in Syria. The current legal basis for this essential humanitarian mechanism, UN Security Council authorization, is atypical. Resolutions 2139 and 2165 in 2014 represented an unprecedented step to express the unanimous desire and will of the international community to address the needs of civilians in Syria through UN humanitarian agencies, and their partners, in the face of uncertain access. Today, the resolution has become an obstacle for UN agencies to continue their leading role in coordinating and sending cross-border humanitarian assistance to Northwest Syria in 2023 and beyond.

“The partnership between Syrian, Syrian diaspora, and International NGOs and the UN agencies through the Syria Cross-Border Mechanism since 2014 has been the most efficient, accountable and reliable aid humanitarian operation in the world. There is no legal or humanitarian justification to reduce the level of engagement of UN agencies in lifesaving cross-border humanitarian operations, but rather any obstruction of this engagement will cause unnecessary and undue harm to the 4.1 million civilians in Northwest Syria reliant on UN-Aid.” said ARCS Chairman, Husni Al-Barazi.

ARCS continues to advocate for the consideration of alternative legal bases that allow for the UN and UN agencies to continue providing all activities pertaining to cross-border humanitarian response, including procurement, funding, and coordination, into Northwest Syria regardless of the consensus method in line with the humanitarian needs in Syria.