



## STATEMENTS BY THE SPOKESPERSON

# Statement by the Spokesperson on the escalation in South West Syria

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The Syrian regime and its allies have started an offensive in the region of Deraa, in South West Syria, intensifying artillery and airstrikes, which are causing the civilian population to flee towards the border with Jordan and with possibly devastating humanitarian consequences. According to the United Nations, this offensive endangers more than 750.000 civilians in the region.

The on-going military operation takes place in a de-escalation zone that the Astana guarantors committed to safeguard. The Astana guarantors are bound to ensure cessation of hostilities in these zones as a matter of priority and they are expected to deliver on this commitment. All necessary measures to protect civilian lives as well as unhindered, safe and sustainable humanitarian access need to be ensured.

The European Union recalls that there can be only a political solution to the conflict in Syria according to UNSC Resolution 2254 and the Geneva Communiqué and reiterates its strong support to the UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura and to the Geneva process.

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