

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NACI KORU,
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AT
THE CONFERENCE ON THE SYRIAN REFUGEE SITUATION -
SUPPORTING STABILITY IN THE REGION**

(28 October 2014, Berlin)

Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished UN High Commissioner,
Dear Participants,

I would like to extend my thanks to the German Government for organizing this conference on the “Syrian Refugee Situation - Supporting Stability in the Region”.

Upon the initiatives undertaken by H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, three Ministerial Meetings of Syria Neighbouring Countries have been held in 2013 and this year, in cooperation with the UNHCR.

Building on the progress achieved by such initiatives, this gathering in Berlin is a further attempt to draw attention to the need for stability in our neighbourhood. Indeed, disturbing individual stories present us with a pure human tragedy leading to potentially dire consequences for the region.

As the conflict in Syria entered its fourth year, 200 thousand lives have been lost, 3 million people have sought shelter in the neighboring countries and 6.5 million people have been internally displaced.

This, without a doubt, is one of the worst humanitarian crises of our times.

The regime in Syria continues to oppress the legitimate demands of the people by increased brutality. I am afraid that the situation will get worse before it gets better.

As a neighboring country, Turkey deeply feels the multiple effects of this humanitarian disaster.

Despite all challenges, we maintain an "open door" policy for Syrians fleeing from the violence in their country, without any discrimination with regard to religious or ethnic origin. We respect the principle of non-rejection at the border and provide Syrians with "temporary protection".

Today, the total number of Syrians hosted in Turkey exceeds 1.6 million. As an interesting example, I would like to note that since the arrival of the first group of Syrians, close to 35 thousand babies have been born in camps in Turkey.

Over 220 thousand people are provided with temporary protection in 22 camps.

In fact, whether in or out of the camps, all Syrians in Turkey are under the temporary protection. We seek to ensure their access to vital services, including free medical assistance in all 81 provinces.

At least 50% of all Syrians in the neighbouring countries are children, therefore providing education remains a key challenge. In the 22 camps in Turkey, over 70.000 Syrian students receive education. 3.000 teachers are deployed for this task.

We also do our best to ensure that school-age children outside the camps too do not fall behind their education cycles.

The cost for Turkey has so far been over 4 billion US Dollars. The contribution that we have received from the international community, only 250 million US Dollars, has fallen significantly short of our expectations.

While we appreciate every bit of support, I would like to point out that it amounts to only 5 % of the overall financial burden.

To offer you some further insight, I would like to mention that Turkey's appeal was set around 500 million US Dollars earlier this year in line with the UN inter-agency Syria Regional Response Plan. While the regional average of the appeals financed stands at 51%, we have only received a funding of 25%, the lowest level compared to other countries in the region.

These figures, no doubt, highlight the unequitable financial cost borne by Turkey.

Distinguished Participants,

We ensure that humanitarian relief reaches the northern parts of Syria through the zero point delivery at the border. Currently, the UN cross-border humanitarian operations continue via three border gates between Turkey and Syria.

The total value of the aid channeled to Syria through this type of operations is in the range of 310 million US Dollars.

We welcome the adoption of Resolution 2165; in compliance with this Resolution, so far more than 155 trucks carrying UN humanitarian assistance crossed into Syria providing humanitarian relief for more than 500 thousand Syrians.

Unhindered humanitarian access into Syria remains crucial. We must ensure that resolutions 2139 and 2165 are implemented as we cannot afford the consequences of non-compliance by the regime.

The neighboring countries including Turkey have, to date, had to shoulder an unfair share of the humanitarian burden resulting from the conflict in Syria. In view of the ongoing volatility and gravity of the situation, increased support and solidarity should be offered.

Temporary and inadequate measures no longer represent an option to deal with the enormous challenges faced by the neighboring countries.

We would like to urge members of the international community to honor their pledges and also to revise upwards their planned contributions in the period ahead.

We appreciate the leading role of the UNHCR on the protection of Syrian refugees. Indeed, it has been effective in ensuring protection of the internally displaced Syrians and supporting the refugees in the neighboring countries.

Dear Colleagues,

The regime in Syria bears the sole responsibility for the current chaos, instability and devastation in this country and beyond. ISIL and other terrorist and extremist groups have gained ground in Syria mainly thanks to the support of the regime. The regime pursues policies of indiscriminate killings by air bombardments, ballistic missiles (so far 423), “starve or surrender” strategy or even the chemical weapons.

The growing extremism in Syria and Iraq is a serious threat to the security and stability in the wider region. This threat must be eliminated by collective efforts.

Recent airstrikes against ISIL in northern Syria, alone, will not be sufficient. We need a holistic approach, comprehensive and integrated strategy.

The central elements of such a strategy in Syria should be the implementation of No Fly Zones/Safe Areas. Without these steps, it will not be possible to prevent large scale refugee movements.

For instance, when ISIL began its attacks on Ayn Al Arab (Kobani), we all have witnessed the unpredictability and volatility of the current situation. Within a couple of weeks, an additional 200 thousand Syrians sought refuge in Turkey. This is more than the number of Syrians all EU countries have taken in since the eruption of the conflict.

ISIL poses a threat to territories inside Syria, which it has gradually widened all the way from Aleppo to the Iraqi border, an area of approximately 5 million inhabitants.

Therefore, we are faced with the risk of further humanitarian disasters and continued large scale movements of Syrians towards our borders.

To counter and eliminate this scenario, the international community should take resolute action and address the root causes in confronting the ISIL menace. Turkey is taking the necessary steps to contribute to international efforts to tackle the threat from ISIL that we all face. We are closely coordinating and consulting with our allies and partners.

Distinguished Ministers, Dear Participants,

In conclusion, I would like to underline that our region is going through challenging times. It is a test for us all, as the responsible members of the international community, in many ways. In a spirit of partnership, we are in need of equitable and meaningful burden-sharing by the international community.

This conference will hopefully contribute to increasing awareness with regard to the situation of the Syrian refugees and threats and challenges we commonly face. We further hope that such gatherings will foster international solidarity and cooperation.

I thank you for your attention.