

Due to their high number, Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) who travelled to Iraq and Syria are expected to continue to pose an acute short, medium and long-term threat, with estimates of those alive ranging from 20,000 to almost 27,000.

The situation of ISIL fighters and associated family members in detention and displacement facilities in Iraq and Syria has worsened since I presented to this Council the 9th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the group. Their fate remains a major challenge to the international community. ISIL has become increasingly focused on freeing them. Meanwhile, most Member States have not yet assumed responsibility for the repatriation of their nationals.

The report of the Secretary-General also highlights relevant activities of United Nations entities in support of Member States over the past six months, especially in light of the requirements under Security Council resolutions 2396 (2017), 2462 (2019), 2467 (2019), and 2482 (2019).

Mr. President,

In the Middle East, ISIL reconstitution as a covert network in Syria follows a similar pattern as in Iraq since 2017. The north-east of Syria has seen a spike in attacks targeting the international counter-ISIL coalition and local non-state armed groups. Along the Syrian-Iraqi border, the crossing of fighters in both directions presents a challenge.

The most pressing challenge, however, is the untenable situation of over 100,000 people still stranded in detention and displacement facilities in the north-east of Syria, of which more than 70,000 are women and children in the Al Hol camp. Their situation has short to long-term implications that require urgent attention and action of all concerned Member States. The humanitarian crisis on the ground, along with issues related to physical security, risk of escapees and potential radicalization to violence in the facilities, must be addressed.

Reports of children deprived of their liberty and interned in pre- and post-trial detention camps for their actual or alleged association with ISIL remain of concern. Children, including those with links to United Nations-listed terrorist groups, should be treated primarily as victims, and any prosecution should be conducted in accordance with internationally recognized standards.

((, , ((, () way and back to their home countries, with the rest of their families, as soon as possible.

I urge Member States to regain their primary responsibility for their nationals in terms of protection, repatriation, gender-sensitive and age-appropriate prosecution,

