



Syria's Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shalbani, his Danish counterpart Lars Løkke Rasmussen and delegation members during the talks in Damascus on Tuesday. SANA

DIPLOMACY

Syria, Denmark expand ties after embassy reopening in Damascus

Direct flights between Damascus and Copenhagen will begin on Sept. 21

SANA Damascus

Syria's Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shalbani met his Danish counterpart Lars Løkke Rasmussen in Damascus on Tuesday for talks on strengthening bilateral ties and expanding cooperation across a range of sectors.

The meeting at Tishreen Palace came a day after Denmark reopened its embassy in Damascus following a 14-year closure, restoring its diplomatic presence in Syria.

The two sides discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation across a range of fields, with a particular focus on early recovery and reconstruction. They also explored opportunities to broaden the partnership between the two countries in support of mutual interests, development and stability.

President Ahmad Al-Sharaa met Rasmussen and

his accompanying delegation at the People's Palace on Monday.

Rasmussen reopened the Danish Embassy in Damascus, reaffirming Copenhagen's commitment to supporting Syria's recovery and stability.

He also expressed Denmark's interest in expanding investment, trade, scientific and cultural cooperation with Syria.

Syria and Denmark agreed to prepare a bilateral partnership agreement to provide an institutional framework for cooperation between the two countries.

The two ministers also announced that direct flights between Damascus and Copenhagen will begin on Sept. 21, serving the Syrian community in Denmark and strengthening ties between the two countries.

Al-Shalbani said the sides discussed turning the Syrian-Danish Business Council from an agreement in principle into a functioning mechanism for practical cooperation.

Rasmussen said Denmark's business sector was ready to

invest in Syria and that the two countries sought a comprehensive partnership based on mutual interests, including economic and security cooperation.

The Danish minister said his country would also reopen the Danish Institute in Damascus as soon as possible.

Rasmussen said Denmark had significant expertise in

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agriculture and was ready to support Syria in developing the sector, adding that Syria had the potential to become the region's breadbasket.

The two sides also discussed broader economic cooperation and opportunities for Danish investment in Syria.

The ministers discussed the situation of Syrians in Denmark and voluntary return.

Al-Shalbani said Syria's doors were open to all its citizens without exception and that Damascus supported their safe and voluntary return.

Rasmussen said Denmark had developed plans to support Syrians who wished to return to their homeland.

Al-Shalbani praised Denmark's humanitarian support during the years of the Syrian revolution, highlighting the Danish Refugee Council's work in mine clearance, securing water supplies, and supporting agriculture and livelihoods.

He also welcomed Denmark's positions at the UN Security Council in support of Syria's unity and independent national decision-making.

Al-Shalbani said Israel continued its aggression on Syrian territory, citing 65 incursions in July and 52 during the first 18 days of August.

He said 147 people had been

detained since the beginning of the year, with 49 remaining in detention, adding that Israeli actions had also included raids on homes in Quneitra and the Damascus countryside.

Al-Shalbani said statements that Israeli occupation forces would not withdraw from Mount Hermon represented an explicit intention to entrench the occupation and undermined claims of a security justification.

He reaffirmed Syria's commitment to pursuing a diplomatic solution and its demands for the full implementation of the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, sovereignty over the occupied Syrian Golan and its sovereign right to build its national army.

Al-Shalbani also said the era of ethnic and sectarian divisions had ended with the deposed regime, stressing that Syria belonged to all Syrians and that its diversity was a source of strength.

He encouraged Syrians abroad to return and contribute to reconstruction and development.