



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 18 December 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the forty-sixth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions [2139 \(2014\)](#), [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#) and [2332 \(2016\)](#) (S/2017/1057).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates the concerns that it raised in its responses to previous reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the aforementioned Security Council resolutions. It also stresses that the current report is in dire need of greater clarity, transparency and professionalism in order to be credible. In preparing their reports, the authors should exhibit greater respect for the provisions of the above-mentioned United Nations resolutions, and in particular the principles of full commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and the provision of humanitarian support to Syrians in need without politicization or selectivity.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic also draws attention to the following:

As with previous reports, pressure from well known parties both within and outside the Security Council has made it impossible for the authors of the current report to make use of credible sources of information, including Government sources and reports from United Nations representatives operating in Syria that acknowledge the efforts of the Syrian Government, the cooperation it has engaged in the humanitarian sphere, and the facilities it has provided for humanitarian work.

The report acknowledges that the United Nations has successfully delivered humanitarian assistance to millions of people in need within Syria, which would not have happened but for the facilities provided by the Syrian State and its institutions.

The authors of the report have exaggerated the funding made available to Syria through last month (50 per cent), which by its nature is funding that is conditional and insufficient. They have also ignored the fact that many United Nations agencies operating in Syria, after having obtained the necessary approvals and facilities from the Syrian Government, have failed to implement many of their projects because of lack of funding, thereby depriving hundreds of thousands of people in need of necessary care and support.



Regrettably, the authors of the report are continuing their efforts to spread false information. They insist on focusing only on humanitarian assistance convoys run by United Nations agencies, while ignoring convoys run through cooperation between the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and other parties, including the International Committee of the Red Cross. They also ignore humanitarian assistance provided to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries through single-agency convoys operated by United Nations organizations, as well as the assistance provided by international non-governmental organizations and their national partners.

The Syrian Government regrets that the authors of the report speak of what they call “administrative impediments and deliberate restrictions” that they claim are impeding humanitarian access to unstable areas. In this context, the Syrian Government affirms that it facilitates such access in every possible way, provided that the assistance is intended for Syrian civilians in need and that arrangements for its delivery are made in accordance with the applicable Syrian laws and regulations. The Syrian Government has agreed to the proposal of the Resident Coordinator to establish the tripartite mechanism, reflecting its eagerness and its openness to anything that enhances humanitarian work in Syria. The mechanism has held five meetings to date.

Despite their apparent willingness to turn over a new page in cooperation with the Syrian Government, the authors of the report are still using it as a periodic opportunity to relay unfounded claims and allegations with no basis in fact, in order to tarnish the image and undermine the efforts of the Syrian Government and serve the political objectives of certain States that have a harmful influence within the United Nations. Those objectives include promoting the idea that there is an “urgent need” to renew resolution 2165 (2014) and portraying it as a critical element of the humanitarian response in Syria. In that connection, the Syrian Government wishes to state the following:

- The Syrian Government believes that there is no justification for the continued extension of resolution 2165 (2014), given that that recent decisions regarding de-escalation zones have opened the possibility of humanitarian assistance being delivered to recipients from inside the country.
- The resolution has numerous shortcomings, the most serious of which is the lack of coordination with the Syrian Government. It violates the provisions of the Charter by failing to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic by coordinating humanitarian operations with the Syrian Government.
- The people running the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have been unable to maintain the standards of transparency and provide the guarantees necessary to reassure the international community that assistance is going to the rightful beneficiaries rather than to the armed groups. In that regard, we note the vague reference by the authors of the report in paragraph 29 to ideas that have not previously been brought up by any United Nations official with the Syrian Government — the latter being the primary party concerned — concerning so-called “partners and independent third-party companies” contracted by the United Nations to verify that assistance is reaching the right storage facilities and recipients. The Syrian Government demands that the United Nations should supply it with the names and records of the United Nations partners whom it claims are capable of verifying such essential information. The Syrian Government regards such proposals as a blatant example of flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), which some are calling for an extension of, and evidence of the correctness of the Syrian Government’s criticism of that resolution and the monitoring mechanism

established under it. The Syrian Government stresses that the parties promoting and implementing these unacceptable proposals bear full international responsibility for them.

- Now that the Syrian Government, in conjunction with its allies, has liberated most of Syrian territory from the clutches of the terrorism perpetrated by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), Al-Nusrah, and associated terrorist groups that were obstructing the delivery of assistance to civilians in those areas, the mechanism provided for by this selective and politicized resolution should be eliminated, and replaced by national mechanisms for the delivery of assistance from inside Syria.
- The authors of the report, who are defending that resolution, make no mention the refusal by Jordan and the United States to deliver assistance to the Rakban camp or the refusal by Turkey to open the Nusaybin crossing, both of which are evidence of double standards and the politicization of cross-border assistance, and both of which constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.

The Government regrets that the authors of the report continue to use the term “besieged areas” when talking about the situation in eastern Ghutah in Rif Dimashq. At the same time, because of pressure from influential States both within and outside the Security Council, they deliberately ignore the fact that civilians in eastern Ghutah are besieged from within by various armed organizations. Those armed organizations are exploiting civilians, using them as human shields, and seizing and monopolizing humanitarian assistance, which they distribute to their supporters or sell to persons in need at exorbitant prices, as was happening previously in neighbourhoods of eastern Aleppo. That it not to mention that the authors — and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) — ignore the terrorist abduction and detention by those groups of thousands of civilians, most of them women and children, who are being kept in inhumane conditions. The report’s authors also ignore the tragic humanitarian situation in the areas of Fu‘ah and Kafraya, which are under siege by armed terrorist groups.

The Syrian Government once again condemns the fact that the authors of the report have ignored the blatant Turkish intervention in Syria and occupation of part of its territory, and reiterates its call to the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to put an end to that occupation.

The Syrian Government categorically rejects the continued bias shown by the authors of the report towards the so-called international coalition and its members by failing to mention the coalition’s own acknowledgement that its strikes have caused hundreds of civilian deaths. The report furthermore avoids holding the coalition to account for the destruction it has inflicted on the city of Raqqah, for the massacres it has committed there and for its use of internationally proscribed weapons in Syria, as well as for other violations of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights that constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Syrian Government again calls for the immediate dissolution of that illegitimate coalition and an end to its crimes against Syrians.

It is unfortunate that the authors of the report, notwithstanding frequent calls from the Syrian Government and members of the Security Council, are still failing to fulfil their responsibility to give the global public a true picture of the economic and humanitarian suffering caused by the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on Syria by the United States of America, the European Union and other States. Those measures have had numerous adverse consequences, especially in the health sector, affecting even the activities of United Nations agencies and foreign non-governmental

organizations operating in Syria, and have led to the suspension of projects vital to responding to the needs of Syrians.

The Syrian Government reiterates that United Nations officials working in Syria should have nothing to do with any separatist entities, illegal “local councils” or unlicensed civil associations. It also calls on the United Nations and its agencies to refrain from all use of the Fish Khabur crossing and not to cooperate with any organizations that have illegally entered Syrian territory via that crossing. The Syrian Government stresses that it will take appropriate measures in the event of continued violations of Syrian sovereignty.

The Syrian Government stands by its position rejecting the continued efforts of the authors of the report to legitimize terrorist groups by using illegal designations for them, such as “non-State armed opposition” or “local authorities in areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups”. It also rejects the failure of the authors of the report to acknowledge the serious crimes being committed by separatist militias supported by the forces of the “international coalition” in areas where they are deployed in the North and East of Syria. Those violations include the following:

- Unofficial education curricula are imposed on the inhabitants of those areas, and young people are subject to compulsory conscription and dragged into combat operations.
- Public service installations are being seized and pillaged, including electrical plants, transformer stations, oil refineries, hospitals, schools and banks. That has created a major shortage of services being provided to the inhabitants of those areas. That is not to mention the deteriorating health situation for inhabitants of those areas owing to primitive oil-refining techniques used by members of those militias.
- There has been pressure on civil society associations operating in those areas to force them to cooperate with those militias under pain of being suspended from operation.
- Civilians are being prevented from fleeing from areas controlled by ISIL to areas controlled by those militias, and the transfer of civilian patients to medical centres is being refused, preventing them from receiving necessary medical care.

The aforementioned violations and others being committed by the armed terrorist groups have not found their way into OHCHR reports, which is yet another sign of the politicized and biased approach in dealing with the Syrian crisis. That approach is the reason why OHCHR representatives are not welcome in Syria. Nor does OHCHR speak with one voice about the murder by the United States-led “international coalition” of thousands of innocent Syrian civilians in the course of its brutal attacks on Syrian cities. That is not to mention the attacks by that coalition that have destroyed numerous services infrastructure facilities in Dayr al-Zawr and Hasakah, and its deliberate destruction of more than 90 per cent of the city of Raqqa.

The Syrian Government reaffirms its position concerning the International Criminal Court and the calls made for the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to be referred to that Court. It stresses that the jurisdiction of the Court does not apply to the situation in Syria and, moreover, that the Court has lost all credibility and has been transformed into a political tool used by certain parties to attack specific States for sordid political ends that have nothing to do with the requirements of justice. The Syrian Government also reiterates what it stated in its letter to the Secretary-General regarding the serious legal flaws in the resolution on the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons

Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 ([A/71/799](#)).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its long-standing position that the crisis in Syria requires a political solution based on intra-Syrian dialogue under Syrian leadership without foreign intervention and without preconditions. We remind you that the success of the political process and any significant improvement in the humanitarian situation will depend, above all, on creating a climate conducive to a serious and non-politicized international and regional commitment to fighting terrorism. The Syrian Government also stresses that it has played a constructive role in the success of the Astana and Geneva meetings and that it is ready to attend the Syrian national dialogue congress to be held in the Russian city of Sochi.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to prevail on the States that support and finance armed terrorist groups to refrain from so doing, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism and the financing thereof, in particular resolutions [2170 \(2014\)](#), [2178 \(2014\)](#), [2199 \(2015\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#). Compliance with and enforcement of those resolutions is the key to resolving the situation in Syria and fully delivering humanitarian assistance to those in need in Syria.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i
Minister Plenipotentiary