

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
1 May 2019
English
Original: Arabic

**Identical letters dated 24 March 2019 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 sixtieth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions [2139 \(2014\)](#), [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#), [2401 \(2018\)](#) and [2449 \(2018\)](#) (S/2019/321):

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. The current report displays the same flawed approach as its predecessors. It is in dire need of greater transparency and professionalism in order to have the credibility that is required in order for both sides to work together. We reiterate that the foundation on which the authors should be building when preparing such reports is full commitment to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and to providing humanitarian support to Syrian civilians in Syria without politicization or selectivity. The authors should not keep making the same errors involving major departures from their mandate. They should not keep wilfully disregarding the comments, concerns and queries expressed by the Syrian Arab Republic, and the questions it has raised about previous Secretariat reports on this subject, which now number 60. This endless stream of repetitive and tiresome reports is a waste of material and human resources. The reports have lost their added value and usefulness, and are instead being used for political purposes, in response to the dictates and agendas of certain influential States in the Security Council and their proxies in the region. What follows is an overview of the position of the Syrian Government with respect to the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the report under consideration:

- The report provides indirect political cover for military operations being carried out by the United States-led international coalition against civilians. Its language casts doubt on the barbaric atrocities perpetrated by the international coalition against innocent civilians in Baghuz and other areas of Dayr al-Zawr. In the very first words of the paragraph 1, the authors of the report opt for the passive voice: "Large numbers of civilians were reportedly killed and injured in Baghuz". They ignore dozens of identical letters sent by the Syrian Government to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council over the



recent period. Those horrific crimes have also been documented and reported by the international media.

- The Syrian Arab Republic finds it surprising that, in paragraphs 2, 4, 6, 21 and 23, the authors persist in using such terms as “settlement at Rukban” and “makeshift settlements”. The Syrian Government categorically rejects the use of such terminology which, once again, calls into question the authors’ transparency, credibility and objectivity. The Syrian Arab Republic requests that those terms be removed and replaced with terms consistent with the practices and language of the United Nations, in order to reflect the fact that the locations are merely makeshift camps set up by displaced persons who fled terrorist repression.
- The Syrian Arab Republic finds it odd that the authors of the report should insist on describing the perpetrators behind abductions, car bombings, roadside bombs and attacks on schools and hospitals as “non-State armed opposition groups” and “unidentified armed non-State opposition groups” in a manner at odds with international law. These crimes are all occurring, as the report itself indicates, in areas where armed terrorist groups, militias that cooperate with the United States-led coalition, or militias that operate under the command of the Turkish regime are active (paragraphs 4, 5, 7 and 17). It has been confirmed that the Syrian Arab Army is fighting only against armed terrorist groups. The Syrian Government therefore rejects any hint or suggestion that it has bombarded educational or medical facilities (paragraphs 4 or 5). The events described in the report are inconceivable: a country that spent decades building its infrastructure would not target and destroy it in such a manner.
- The position of the Syrian Arab Republic is that the Brussels conference held in mid-March 2019 concerning supposed financial commitments (see paragraphs 7, 11, 20 and 39) was merely a hollow propaganda conference and a waste of time and money because what ought to be the genuine objective, namely to combat terrorism, was not mentioned. The Conference referred only to assistance described by the United Nations as “life-saving”. The Syrian Government believes that that concept is inhumane and degrading. Such assistance is not evidence of the European Union’s support for the Syrian people. The latter is suffering because of the unilateral economic measures imposed on it by many of the States that attended the Conference, measures that caused the recent energy crisis. The assistance is in fact intended to deter the refugees from going home. Moreover, the Syrian Government believes that the report exaggerates the scale of the donors’ commitments. It cites a figure of \$7 billion; but only a modest portion of those funds will ever reach Syria, owing to the prohibitive conditions imposed by the donors, which are inconsistent with the principles of humanitarian action, international humanitarian law and the resolutions of the United Nations. The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes the need for increased international humanitarian support to meet the urgent needs of Syrians. It demands that the Secretariat take a clear position on the donors who, at their review conferences, have tied their humanitarian funding pledges to political conditions that are incompatible with the principles of humanitarian work. In particular, they refuse to fund the rehabilitation of basic services, infrastructure and sectors that are strictly humanitarian in nature, such as agriculture, which feeds 70 per cent of Syrians. Such action could help strengthen the resilience of Syrians and support the return of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons to their areas in a safe and dignified manner.

Once again, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic strongly regrets that the authors of the report, in conformity with the instructions of certain Western States, are promoting cross-border assistance in an unacceptable manner (paragraphs 6, 26

and 31). Such assistance has proved to be useless, as it does not reach the civilians who need it. One way or another, it constitutes indirect support for the terrorists, especially when a large proportion of such operations are being channelled across the Syrian-Turkish border towards areas under the control of armed terrorist groups who impose taxes on that assistance, commandeer it, sell it to those in need at exorbitant prices, or distribute it to terrorist loyalists and their proxies. The Syrian Government once again demands that the United Nations should supply it with the names and records of the parties that are supposed to be acting as United Nations partners. It also looks forward to the information and clarification that the Secretariat was requested to provide under Security Council resolution 2393 (2017). It also stresses that United Nations officials operating in Syria should not have anything to do with any separatist entities, illegal “local councils”, or unlicensed charitable associations, especially given that such entities are more often than not attached to terrorist groups active in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

With regard to the situation in the Rukban camp, the Syrian Government reiterates the information provided in its response to previous reports. In addition, because of approvals and facilities granted by the Syrian Government, the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were able to send two humanitarian assistance convoys to Rukban camp. The Syrian Government is prepared to provide support for the deployment of a third convoy provided that guarantees are in place to prevent its reaching the hands of terrorists, as has happened in the past. The number of people who left Rukban camp, as stated in paragraph 5, is inaccurate. As of 20 April 2019, 4,400 people had left the camp. The Syrian Government is also surprised to read, in paragraph 21, the phrase “until the conditions are met for durable solutions”, referring to the camp. It wishes to know what those conditions are. The only reason for the deplorable conditions endured by civilians in Rukban camp is that the United States of America is occupying the land on which the camp is located. The United States has prevented the camp from being dismantled, and has held Syrian civilians hostage there. For political reasons that are well known to everyone, it has prevented displaced persons from leaving the camp and going home. The Syrian Arab Republic had agreed with the United Nations that, in order to bring an end to the suffering of the camp’s inhabitants, the camp would be dismantled so that they could return as soon as possible to the towns and villages from which they had been driven by the actions of terrorists. A number of joint meetings have been held in that regard, most recently on 22 April 2019.

- The Syrian Government has continued to work with the United Nations to prepare to send a convoy of supplies to Hawl camp. It has already granted the necessary authorization to facilitate such a convoy. It has also provided all necessary assistance to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has sent various supplies to beneficiaries in the camp and surrounding areas. As regards Arishah camp, which has been flooded owing to heavy rainfall, the Syrian Government has long requested that the inhabitants be sent back to their villages, but the United Nations has failed to do so. Had that happened, this humanitarian disaster would not have occurred.
- Paragraph 28 of the report states that the access landscape in the Syrian Arab Republic is complex and requires timely, safe, sustained and unimpeded access. Paragraph 29, however, states that the United Nations has continued to provide assistance from within the Syrian Arab Republic to millions of people in need in thousands of locations throughout the country, as much of the country has come under Government control. The authors of the report should revisit and resolve this contradiction. There is no simple way to provide assistance to millions of people in need in thousands of locations without the cooperation and assistance which the Syrian Government provides in order to ensure access to

the beneficiaries. Paragraph 29 also states as follows: “the focus of access has moved from a simple model of tracking the number of convoys to also looking at access of staff, not only for delivery but also for assessments and monitoring and evaluation”. This raises the question of which aspects require monitoring and evaluation.

- The Syrian Government is surprised to read, in paragraph 14 of the report, that the Syrian authorities detained three civilians, including a woman, in Dar‘a Governorate, whereas the report fails to mention that thousands of refugees have returned in a safe and dignified manner through the Nasib crossing in Dar‘a. There are confirmed reports that thousands of Syrian civilians have returned from Jordan and Lebanon. The Syrian Government has welcomed them and devoted all available resources to serving them.
- We wish to state that from 18 February 2019 through 23 April 2019, United Nations agencies submitted 105 entry visa applications of which 72, or 68.5 per cent, were approved. There are 19 applications pending, and nine were rejected.

It is unfortunate that notwithstanding calls from the Syrian Government and members of the Security Council, the authors of the report have failed 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 and the blockade imposed on Syria by the United States of America, the European Union and other States. Those measures are having numerous negative impacts on many aspects of the lives of Syrian citizens. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the continued failure by the authors of the report to address this important issue can only be described as bias in favour of the political agendas of those States that created the crisis in Syria and caused all the destruction suffered by Syria and its society, not to mention “irresponsible conduct and a clear sign of lack of professionalism”. There has been an unacceptable failure to respect the principles of humanitarian work and carry out such work impartially and objectively.

In the report under consideration, the authors endeavour to blur mandates and competences by discussing the political situation and by using numerous politicized terms. The Syrian Arab Republic rejects that approach. Such terms have nothing to do with the authors’ mandate or the topic of the report, which is supposed to be about the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to stop issuing these monthly reports; they waste the resources of the United Nations, which ought to be allocated to genuine, fruitful humanitarian action instead of being used to discredit the Member States of the United Nations and the services that those States provides to their peoples and citizens.

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

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