



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 13 January 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, and further to my previous letters on the topic, I should like to reiterate the following points.

Some States members of the Security Council, in particular Western States, are circulating false information that the Syrian Arab Army and its allies are bombing civilian targets and installations in Idlib governorate; those States are doing so in order to impede the efforts of the Syrian State and its allies to protect civilians from the actions of armed terrorist groups, most notably the Levant Liberation Organization (the Nusra Front), which is listed by the Security Council as a terrorist group, and in order to raise the morale of those terrorist groups and provide them with protection and political cover. Regrettably, it is not only those States that are doing so, but also some senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would also like to draw attention to the following:

- Idlib city and some of its surrounding areas are controlled by the Levant Liberation Organization, that is to say the Nusra Front, which is included on the Security Council list of terrorist organizations as the arm of Al-Qaida in Syria.
- That terrorist group has exploited the failure of the Turkish regime to fulfil its obligations under the de-escalation agreement and the Astana and Sochi understandings in order to take control of Idlib governorate and commit the most heinous crimes against its people.
- The operations that are being conducted by the Syrian Arab Army and its allies are in response to the systematic crimes committed by the Levant Liberation Organization against civilians in that city and nearby villages and towns.
- The Levant Liberation Organization terrorist group, which controls Idlib city, has tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters in its ranks.
- The Levant Liberation Organization terrorist group is using hundreds of thousands of civilians in the city as human shields and is committing the most heinous, barbaric crimes against them. It has spread death and destruction and expropriated civilian facilities, including hospitals and schools, which it has converted into military barracks and centres where it detains, tortures and kills those who reject its takfirist and radical ideology. Moreover, it has been proven that this group has confiscated most of the humanitarian assistance that reaches



the governorate, including the assistance delivered across the border pursuant to Security Council resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#).

- This terrorist organization has committed crimes not only in the areas that it controls, but also in civilian-populated areas in neighbouring towns and cities, which it has bombarded indiscriminately with shells and rockets, killing dozens of civilians, most of them women and children.
- The Syrian Government is more concerned than any other party about the lives of its citizens, and it continues to take every measure to ensure their security and safety. Accordingly, on 13 January 2020, the Government opened three crossings to evacuate civilians in response to the calls of civilians from the Idlib area to be returned to their homes in the towns and villages that were recently freed from the clutches of armed terrorist groups. The Government will provide them with all basic necessities, as well as transportation to their homes, bearing in mind that the armed terrorist groups are preventing civilians from leaving through those crossings.
- The Syrian Government continues to exercise its sovereign and constitutional right to defend its territory and its citizens, a right that is guaranteed under international law, the Charter of the United Nations and all Security Council resolutions concerning counter-terrorism.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that in order to end the suffering of Syrians in Idlib, hypocrisy, politicization and support for terrorism must end, and the bare minimum must be done to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the practices of armed terrorist groups, instead of resorting to intimidation and remaining divorced from reality.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls upon the Security Council and the Secretary-General to condemn immediately and forcefully the crimes committed by terrorist groups against defenceless populations, and to support the Syrian State in its war against terrorism. Moreover, it urges the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security by taking preventive and punitive measures against those regimes and governments that support and fund terrorism, with a view to implementing the relevant resolutions of the Council, in particular resolutions [2170 \(2014\)](#), [2178 \(2014\)](#), [2199 \(2015\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#).

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

(Signed) **Bashar Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative