



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 23 November 2014 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 my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the ninth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014) ([S/2014/840](#)):

1. The numbers tell a clear story regarding the actual effectiveness of humanitarian work in Syria. In paragraph 36, the report indicates that the United Nations was able to deliver humanitarian assistance to 3.9 million beneficiaries in October 2014. According to other paragraphs in the report, cross-border assistance was delivered to approximately 208,000 persons only, that is, less than 5 per cent of the total number of beneficiaries. At the same time, assistance was delivered to 3.7 million beneficiaries from inside Syrian territory, that is to say, some 95 per cent of the total number of beneficiaries. This success in delivering assistance from inside Syrian territory would not have occurred without the full cooperation of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic with the United Nations and its agencies in Syria.

2. The Syrian Government is therefore dismayed that the authors of the report insist on continuing to include information that flies in the face of objectivity and only serves the political agendas of certain States and certain officials of the United Nations Secretariat. Such information has been included as part of the effort to pressure the United Nations to issue or extend politicized resolutions under humanitarian pretexts. The facts on the ground and the figures in the report demonstrate the lack of effectiveness and utility of the system of cross-border assistance in achieving the humanitarian objectives that Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) is purported to promote. The arguments proffered by the report's authors to gain support for cross-border operations and impose it on the international community are completely baseless. The United Nations should therefore focus on delivering all humanitarian aid from inside Syrian territory in cooperation with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

3. The Syrian Government is surprised that the report contains inaccurate statements regarding the effectiveness of the mechanism for monitoring cross-border assistance, as well as claims that the mechanism has fulfilled its mandate in all respects. The facts on the ground demonstrate that the United Nations does not



have an effective mechanism for verifying that humanitarian assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries in areas in which armed terrorist groups are present. That is because the United Nations is unable to enter those areas and must make do with monitoring the arrival of shipments at border points from the other side of the border. Those shipments are then turned over to parties whose identities and affiliations are unknown. Such conduct is not consistent with the provisions of resolution 2165 (2014) or the guarantees that were agreed on in the Security Council during the negotiations that preceded the adoption of that resolution.

4. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is surprised by the claim made by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs about its commitment to provide detailed tables of the supplies and assistance being brought across the border into various parts of Syria. In fact, it submits a notice containing only general information and deliberately neglects to identify the parties to which it delivered materials for distribution. The Office also fails to specify the criteria used to assess needs in areas where it has been proposed that aid should be distributed or the numbers of beneficiaries and the distribution mechanism employed. Numerous reports have indicated that personnel charged with bringing assistance across borders have unloaded it haphazardly, and failed to make certain that it was received by the intended beneficiaries. In most cases, armed terrorist groups included in lists maintained by the Security Council have seized the aid and prevented it from reaching its rightful recipients. That constitutes a violation of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), and also of the Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism, in particular resolutions 2133 (2014), 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), which prohibit financing and providing support for armed terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusra Front, Al-Qaida and armed terrorist groups associated with them.

5. The Syrian Government also once again expresses its surprise that the United Nations side is delivering humanitarian assistance, particularly assistance that is being brought in across the borders, to areas that were previously being provided with assistance from within Syrian territory, and at very close intervals. In that regard, it reiterates that the United Nations must coordinate aid delivery activities with the Syrian Government, including assistance that is delivered across borders despite its limited effect, in order to ensure that aid is not delivered twice to the same beneficiaries and to avoid wasting time, effort and funds.

6. The Syrian Government is surprised that the authors of the report have given a veneer of legitimacy to the illegal and illegitimate work of non-governmental organizations that are operating in border areas in the north and south without the approval of the Syrian Government. That approach sets a dangerous precedent with negative implications for the credibility of humanitarian work carried out under the aegis of the United Nations, because it is a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Some media outlets in the United Kingdom have recently reported that investigations have been opened into 86 British charities because funds donated by British persons found their way to ISIL terrorists. We have warned repeatedly of the dangers of non-governmental organizations working illegally and without effective supervision in any part of Syria, out of fear that such assistance will end up in the hands of terrorists. That would constitute a violation of Security Council resolutions, and in particular of resolution 2133 (2014), and we therefore believe that anyone committing such unacceptable violations should be held accountable.

7. The Syrian Government also deplores the fact that the United Nations has been in contact with terrorist groups such as the Nusra Front on the pretext of delivering cross-border assistance to the areas in which such groups are present, because that is a violation of Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism. We wonder how long certain United Nations officials will continue to commit such violations of Security Council resolutions under the pretext of humanitarian work. More importantly, the armed terrorist groups to which the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs claims to be giving assistance use it to meet the needs of their fighters and sell the rest to innocent civilians at exorbitant prices, as noted in reliable reports.

8. Months ago, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic warned of the danger of an acute funding shortfall in the humanitarian response plan. As of 16 November 2014, only 39 per cent of the required funding had been secured. That shortfall is the basic obstacle, after terrorism, to delivering aid to affected civilian recipients inside Syria. In that regard, the Syrian Government regrets that the United Nations side has reduced the contents of the food parcel it provides by 40 per cent, even though it continues to sustain the current delivery rate. Syria calls on the United Nations to be completely forthright by drawing attention to this challenge and the Office's responsibility for it. It must stop politicizing the humanitarian issue and blaming the Syrian Government without cause, when the finger of blame should really be pointed at those United Nations personnel who failed to carry out their tasks.

9. The Syrian Government expresses its grave concern that certain donor States, in implementation of their own political agendas, are following a discriminatory approach to humanitarian work and granting funding for cross-border assistance to organizations and groups whose commitment to the United Nations and its mechanisms is questionable. Such a course of action is discriminatory and non-humanitarian, and violates international agreements and the guiding principles for humanitarian work. Its negative repercussions have already been felt in the form of shortfalls and declines in the quality of assistance provided to civilians affected by the crisis in Syria.

10. Syria has also stressed that the Syrian Arab Red Crescent must be a primary partner in the distribution of humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance, directly to beneficiaries in all parts of Syria, including difficult-to-reach areas and hotspots. The United Nations is called on to comply with that request in order to ensure the safety of Syrian civilians and to prevent the recurrence of a humanitarian crime such as happened in September 2014 in the countryside of Idlib governorate, which is located in the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, when so-called humanitarian assistance sent by parties known for their disregard for the lives of Syrians murdered 15 children with tainted vaccines.

11. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is dismayed that, for political motives, senior United Nations officials continue to make statements and issue reports that contain arbitrary estimates and inaccurate and undocumented figures on humanitarian needs in Syria. Such conduct adversely affects the credibility and precision of humanitarian work. We have found this to be the case with many of the reports on the Syrian crisis issued by the United Nations, including the report under discussion. The report cites unreliable testimony and reports coming from parties hostile to Syria, including, in particular, the reports of

the international commission of inquiry for Syria, but also the reports of others, that are characterized by politicization, lack of objectivity, hostility and reliance on information provided by armed terrorist groups.

12. The Syrian Government finds it reprehensible that, for political motives that are now obvious, the authors of the report insist on claiming that the Syrian Government is blockading parts of Syria and preventing the delivery of aid thereto. Nothing could be further from the truth. For example, the Yarmouk camp is besieged from within by armed terrorist groups, and they are the ones who are preventing access by humanitarian teams to humanitarian aid distribution points in the camp. It is those terrorist groups that have been firing on civilians and relief teams. The same applies to Mu'addamiyah and villages in eastern Ghutah, where armed terrorist groups are preventing civilians from leaving those areas and, in fact, using them as human shields while seizing any humanitarian assistance they have received. Similarly, it is not the Government that is standing in the way of requests from the United Nations side to deliver assistance to areas in Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr governorates that ISIL now controls.

13. In spite of the politicization of the humanitarian issue and the accusations levelled against the Syrian Government that it is obstructing the delivery of humanitarian aid, the Syrian Government, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, continues to facilitate, where possible, the efforts of the United Nations and international organizations to access many areas that are classified as hard-to-reach. Those areas include hotspots in the governorates of Rif Dimashq, Homs, Aleppo, Dayr al-Zawr and Raqqah. That is in addition to the humanitarian assistance delivered to hotspots by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. During the period from 15 October to the present, aid delivery has included the following:

- In September and October, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delivered humanitarian assistance in the form of aid parcels to approximately 1 million beneficiaries, or an average of 500,000 beneficiaries per month. ICRC also delivered medical assistance and water purification supplies to hard-to-reach areas in the Aleppo countryside, the Yarmouk camp in Damascus and the Wa'ar area of Homs.
- The World Food Programme (WFP), according to its report on its activities from 15 to 30 October 2014, succeeded in dispatching food parcels at a rate of 92 per cent of its monthly target. Food parcels were distributed to 785,000 families, or the equivalent of 3.9 million beneficiaries in 12 Syrian governorates. Approximately 200,000 of those recipients received parcels that had been brought in across the borders, meaning that 3.7 million beneficiaries were reached from inside Syrian territory.
- In the period from the mid-October to mid-November 2014, WFP provided 225,000 persons in Hasakah governorate with food parcels.
- The World Health Organization was able to deliver medical assistance to 2.9 million persons, and provide medical care to 171,474 persons in areas classified as hard-to-reach in the governorates of Aleppo, Hasakah, Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr.
- On 19 October 2014, humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was sent to the Afrin area. It included non-food supplies for some 969 families and food for 3,000 children.

- On 21 October 2014, humanitarian assistance consisting of 2,000 food parcels and children's food was sent to Tayr Ma'lah and Akrad al-Dasiniyah in the countryside of Homs governorate.
- On 22 October 2014, non-food assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to meet the needs of thousands of beneficiaries was sent to Afrin, Urum al-Kubra, Kafr Hamrah, Nubul, Umdan and Magharat al-Artiq in the northern and western countryside of Aleppo.
- On 22 October 2014, ICRC in Syria, in cooperation with the Syrian Government and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, delivered humanitarian assistance from inside Syrian territory. It included 22,500 food parcels to meet the needs of 95,000 beneficiaries in hotspots in the eastern countryside of Aleppo.
- On 25 October 2014, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent sent 5,000 food parcels and 1,600 health packets supplied by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to Raqqah.
- On 26 October 2014, food, non-food and medical assistance provided by the United Nations was sent for distribution in Afrin, Urum al-Kubra, Nubul and Zahra in the northern and western countryside of Aleppo. It included 9,500 food parcels.
- Over the course of several days at the beginning of November, humanitarian assistance provided by ICRC was delivered to the Qadam area.
- On 11, 12 and 13 November 2014, humanitarian assistance provided by WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF was transported into the Wa'r area of Homs city. It included 12,000 food parcels as well as children's food and non-food supplies.
- Relief supplies provided by ICRC were also distributed via the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society to inhabitants of the areas of Kabbas and Dukhaniyah in Rif Dimashq. The supplies included food and medical parcels for 360 families.
- As of 21 November 2014, despite ongoing attacks, assistance continues to flow into the Yarmouk camp, which is besieged from within by armed terrorist groups. Some 2,200 food parcels and 2,200 health packets were delivered, bringing the totals delivered since the beginning of 2014 to 54,574 food parcels and 10,484 health packets. Some 13 sick persons were evacuated to hospitals in Damascus, bringing the total number of sick persons evacuated from the camp since the beginning of the year to 4,510. The medical facility of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has continued to treat patients at the distribution site and provide treatment and medicine to residents of the camp.
- On 23 November 2014, a meeting of the joint Syrian-United Nations committee was held to discuss requests made by the United Nations side to deliver humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance, to hotspots. During the meeting, the Syrian side informed the United Nations side that it had approved a request to deliver assistance to Harasta, Duma, Madaya and Zabadani.

- We reiterate that the experience of the United Nations in transporting humanitarian assistance to Mu‘addamiyah and what the Organization witnessed inside the city confirm that it is not under siege, and that the 4,000 civilians remaining in the Darayya area have been able to reach Mu‘addamiyah. That is contrary to what the Secretariat’s reports insist on alleging about Mu‘addamiyah and Darayya, including the report under consideration, which makes no reference to facts on the ground, something that casts doubt on its credibility.
- The Syrian Government renewed its approval for WFP to bring humanitarian assistance through the Nusaybin crossing on the Syrian-Turkish border, in order to allow 46,000 food parcels to be brought into Hasakah governorate in November 2014. It also allowed the Nusaybin crossing to be used to bring in 105 metric tons of fortified biscuits for distribution to schoolchildren in the governorate.

14. With regard to the matter of visas, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to note that, during the reporting period, it granted all entry visas requested for international staff without hindrance or delay. The Syrian Government hopes that the relevant parties at the Secretariat will provide credible and documented information in that regard.

15. The Syrian Government again notes that it has informed the United Nations side about the situation of a number of local staff members who were arrested for committing or abetting acts of terrorism. Those individuals have been remanded to the competent judicial authorities. The Government is therefore surprised that the United Nations should refer to them as detainees, unless the United Nations side wishes to count terrorists as international staff who should be treated with all due honour.

16. The Syrian Government is dismayed that the report once again ignores the negative impact of coercive unilateral measures on the lives of the Syrian people. In order to tackle the humanitarian crisis in Syria, terrorism must be fought and the unilateral economic and financial sanctions that have affected the lives of Syrian civilians must be lifted immediately. The Syrian Government draws attention to the most recent report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which states that coercive and unilateral economic sanctions imposed by the United States of America and its European allies have worsened the living conditions of Syrian civilians and their ability to meet their own basic needs.

17. Syria welcomes the fact that the footnote on the first page of the report indicates that the Security Council has designated ISIL and the Nusrah Front as terrorist entities that are included in the lists maintained by the Security Council committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011). However, it had expected the Secretariat to include that description in the body of the report, and that it would not continue to describe many of the armed terrorist groups as “armed opposition groups” or “groups resisting the Government”, nor continue to insist that the Secretariat does not have the capacity to assess the presence of foreign terrorist fighters in Syria. Doing so is not consistent with the relevant reports and resolutions of the Security Council, particularly resolution 2170 (2014).

18. We should like to note that the sixteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to Security Council

resolution 1526 (2004), which was submitted to the Security Council Committee pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida, and was sent to the Security Council on 27 October 2014, provided an assessment of how terrorism evolves and important information on terrorism in Syria. The report focused, inter alia, on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters. In paragraph 10, it is acknowledged that ISIL is part of Al-Qaida, and paragraph 8 indicates that there are 15,000 terrorists from more than 80 countries carrying out terrorist acts in Syria. Paragraph 71 of the report acknowledges the presence of training camps in Libya, in particular as an intermediate location before deployment to the Syrian Arab Republic, and states that the Team was also able to confirm with Member States that some smaller, mobile and clandestine training camps exist in neighbouring countries. The United Nations Secretariat continues to overlook the support that Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, among other States, groups and entities, give to terrorists. That approach is not conducive to countering terrorism and the threat it poses to international peace and security. It also hinders, directly and indirectly, the important role that the United Nations must play in combating and suppressing terrorism and holding accountable those who support, finance and arm terrorists. The Organization must play that role with complete neutrality and without politicization, in order genuinely to address the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

19. The Syrian Government believes that the policies of the United Nations must be in line with its Charter, international law, provisions governing humanitarian work, General Assembly resolution 46/182, and Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), both of which affirm the priority of combating terrorism and terrorist organizations, including ISIL, the Nusrah Front and associated groups. The Government notes that, in order for certain States to demonstrate they sincerely wish to counter terrorism, they must desist from providing funding, arms and training to terrorist organizations and from smuggling terrorists into the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. Humanitarian work should be conducted exclusively under the auspices of the United Nations and should not exclude any party. Such work must not be conducted under the aegis of certain States that have funded and armed terrorists and smuggled them into Syria, including terrorists affiliated with ISIL, the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups. According to the report under consideration, those terrorists are of various nationalities and include British, Turkish, American, French, Saudi Arabian, Qatari and other nationals.

20. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to stress that the report should not be limited to cataloguing terrorist acts committed by ISIL. It should also cover terrorist acts committed against Syrian civilians in Syria by the Nusrah Front and other armed terrorist groups designated by the Security Council as terrorist organizations and included in the relevant lists the Council maintains. However, if rumours circulating in certain quarters are true, certain States of the region and Western States are attempting to rehabilitate the Nusrah Front and have it removed from the list of terrorist organizations. The Syrian Government draws attention, by way of example, to the fact that, from the beginning of October 2014 and up to 18 November 2014, some 361 persons were killed and another 763 injured, including children, women and elderly persons, by terrorist mortar attacks. These attacks occurred in the majority of Syrian governorates. In many cases, the organizations responsible for these attacks are the very organizations that certain States are calling “the moderate armed opposition”.

21. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic rejects the claims made in the Secretary-General's report that the Syrian armed forces are indiscriminately targeting civilians. The Syrian Arab Army is carrying out its constitutional and moral duty to protect Syrian citizens from armed terrorist groups and prevent these groups from committing crimes against Syrians in their homes, schools, universities, hospitals, mosques, churches and workplaces, and targeting humanitarian assistance convoys. This is most clearly attested to by the fact that those who have been forcibly evicted from their homes have sought refuge in areas that enjoy the protection of the Syrian Arab Army. At the same time, the Syrian Government is earnestly striving to reach a political solution and bring about national reconciliation, which is Syria's national strategy. At the Geneva conference, the Syrian Government emphasized the importance of prioritizing counter-terrorism and bringing about national reconciliation, with a view to arriving at a political solution under Syrian leadership. The receptiveness displayed by Syria towards the ideas of Mr. Staffan de Mistura, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, during his recent visit is the clearest indicator of our desire to cooperate with the international effort to solve the Syrian problem.

22. Syria has declared its readiness to cooperate at the international and regional level in countering terrorism through an international or regional alliance that would be established under the auspices of the United Nations. It is also prepared to engage in bilateral cooperation to that end and supports any international effort aimed at countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, provided that, in doing so, every effort is made to safeguard civilian lives, respect national sovereignty and adhere to international instruments. The Security Council must cooperate and coordinate with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in combating terrorism with a view to addressing the humanitarian crisis in Syria by calling on the international community to stop interfering in internal Syrian affairs and focus on countering and suppressing terrorism, incitement thereto and the financing thereof.

23. Finally, we should like to note that, in keeping with its firm position that the human rights situation and its implications are matters of priority, and in line with its constitutional responsibilities towards its citizens, the Government, since 2011, has marshalled all national resources to meet the essential needs for shelter, food and medicine of those citizens who have been affected by crimes committed by armed terrorist groups. The Government has also cooperated with the United Nations and its various agencies to provide and deliver humanitarian assistance to persons affected by the crisis. In that regard, Syria reaffirms its readiness to continue to cooperate with the United Nations to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all affected Syrian citizens, without discrimination, taking into account the letter and spirit of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014), in accordance with the sequence of steps specified in Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) and the understanding reached in the Security Council in that regard, and on the basis of respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and the guiding principles for humanitarian emergency assistance annexed to General Assembly resolution 46/182, above all the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, which was reaffirmed in Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014). Syria reiterates that, in order to resolve the humanitarian crisis that has developed in many parts of Syria, it is essential to address the roots of the problem

and the factors that are exacerbating it. In particular, this means countering and eradicating terrorism that is being backed by Arab States, as well as States of the region and beyond. Indeed, in its resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014), the Security Council acknowledges this linkage and stresses the importance of combatting and eradicating terrorism, and that is what prompted the Council to adopt resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014). The question that we pose at the end of our response to this ninth report is as follows: Will certain members of the Security Council continue to rely on reports that lack all credibility in their assessment of what is going on in Syria?

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

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