



National Coalition of Syrian
Revolution and Opposition Forces

Office of the President

March 25, 2014

The Honorable Robert Menendez (D-NJ)
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert Corker (R-TN)
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker:

The situation in Syria is dire, and the people of Syria need the full support of the United States now more than ever. We acknowledge your efforts to bring attention to this issue in your recent letter to President Obama and by holding Committee hearings. For us, this issue is first and foremost about the dignity and democratic aspirations of the Syrian people, but we know it is also a critical issue for the security of the United States and its citizens and allies around the world.

Our Coalition is the broad alliance of Syrians united and dedicated to paving the way for a political transition from the dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad to a democracy that reflects the ethnic and religious diversity that is fundamental to Syria's heritage and its future. The Syrian people are looking to us and to the political process to bring an end to the killing and to stop Assad from demolishing and dismantling our country. The damage already done is overwhelming.

The Assad regime, backed by foreign fighters from the terrorist group Hezbollah and extremists imported from Iran, Iraq and elsewhere, has presided over the death of more than 140,000 Syrians. Almost half of the Syrian population—more than nine million civilians—have been forced from their homes. Dozens of cities and towns have been entirely demolished by regime air strikes and artillery bombardment.

The saddest part of this calculated catastrophe being carried out by Assad is what is happening to the children. There are over one million children refugees and thousands dead. According to UNICEF, more than five million children are at risk. For many of them, there is no school, there is no refuge; families have been decimated. Many children have been made orphans by Assad's war on the Syrian people. And what does the future hold for them?

We represent the best hope for their future. During the recent negotiations in Geneva, our delegation presented a detailed Statement of Principles that lays out a measured, realistic plan for the political transition, beginning with the establishment of a Transitional Governing Body (TGB) with full executive powers, formed on the basis of mutual consent, as required by the Geneva Communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution 2118. I have attached the plan to this letter for your reference.



National Coalition of Syrian
Revolution and Opposition Forces

Office of the President

We have made it clear publicly and on the ground: we reject terrorism and extremism, and we will continue to strengthen our resolve in doing so. We are undertaking a significant restructuring of our Supreme Military Command to increase the professionalism and effectiveness of our forces, and to ensure that they are fighting for a free and democratic Syria, and not to impose any political or religious ideology on Syrians. We need the help of the Senate and the US in this process.

On the ground, moderate opposition forces are fighting two fronts. On one front, we are fighting the regime and the extremist foreign militias that it has allowed to invade Syria, including Hezbollah, Iranians, and sectarian Iraqi militias. Meanwhile, Assad's policies continue to facilitate the influx of al-Qaeda backed fanatics, and our forces have opened up a second front to fight these unwelcome extremists, at the same time.

Senators, we believe the United States must be serious about enforcing UN Security Council Resolutions. The Assad regime has already missed numerous deadlines for eliminating its chemical weapons program as required by Resolution 2118, and the regime has failed to comply with the requirement in Resolution 2118 ¶ 16-17 that it "engage seriously and constructively" in the Geneva Conference, the goal of which is the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué, "beginning with the establishment of a transitional governing body exercising full executive powers, which could include members of the present Government and the opposition and other groups and shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent." And over the last month, we have seen consistent failure by the regime to comply with the requirements of Resolution 2139, as well, which I will take this opportunity to describe.

Our Coalition has submitted information to the UN regarding compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 2139, despite difficult conditions on the ground. We have reiterated our commitment to support and abide by international humanitarian law. We are committed and seeking to ensure safe access for humanitarian aid to reach civilians anywhere in Syria. We look to the US to support us in these efforts, and we need more help in achieving the organizational reforms necessary to do so.

Meanwhile, Assad and his forces continue to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity. Resolution 2139 ordered the regime to stop its treacherous and indiscriminate campaign of barrel bombing, which causes death and unspeakable suffering to civilians and their homes. The regime has not complied, again flaunting a unanimous Security Council resolution because it has no serious enforcement mechanism, and Russia will ensure that remains the case. Resolution 2139 also requires the regime to stop arbitrary detention and torture, end its sieges, and allow humanitarian access. Instead, the regime continues to block humanitarian aid to thousands of desperate Syrians who are unable to receive food and medicine as long as they are sealed in their blockaded towns.

Humanitarian organizations are being driven out by fear. The continued recognition of Assad as the legal representative of the Syrian state by the US and the UN results in even supposedly



National Coalition of Syrian
Revolution and Opposition Forces

Office of the President

neutral international aid being used to coax local communities to surrender without any political concessions or reforms. The US and the international community can begin to address this problem by further downgrading the regime's legal recognition, elevating the opposition's diplomatic recognition, and – with or without consent of the regime and Russia – enforcing the provisions of UNSCR 2139, which include: humanitarian access to all civilians, direct cross-border aid to Syria, and the immediate halt of barrel bombs and starvation sieges.

Senators, we want a political solution. We went to Geneva in order to seek a political solution. But while we presented our plan in Geneva, Assad's response was to escalate militarily. To our horror, more Syrians were killed during the time we tried to reason with his negotiators in Geneva than during any other previous comparable period of time. Assad's military dropped so many barrel bombs during the negotiations that Syrians began referring to these devastating weapons as "Geneva barrels."

You understand the complexity of the Syrian catastrophe, how it affects the broader Middle East and the potential consequences to our neighbors. Indeed, the crisis cannot be isolated from outside influences, nor can it be contained and ignored within our borders. The millions of refugees flooding into camps in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq are having an enormous effect on those countries, while Syrians living in the tents of these camps wonder if they will ever go home or will live there the rest of their lives. And moreover, the same extremists and terrorists who we are fighting today are also determined to turn their aggression to you as well. With your committed support, we can stop them now, inside Syria.

On behalf of the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people, we implore you to take steps to help us fulfill those aspirations for a political transition in Syria. We welcome your country's generous provision of humanitarian aid, but more serious steps are also required.

We understand your limitations and concerns, but as willing and ready partners, we urge you to take concrete steps to: send a clear message to the Assad regime that there is no military solution to the struggle in Syria; send a clear message to Assad's base of supporters, showing clearly that the US and its allies are serious and committed to the political transition and enabling Syrians to establish the TGB in Syria; send a clear message to the Assad regime and to its base of supporters that achieving military advances on the ground will not make the regime legitimate, and it has lost its legitimacy to govern completely; strengthen the Coalition's capabilities in its fight against terrorist organizations and groups, as well as achieve a more balanced military position on the ground, to a level that creates enough pressure on the regime to push it towards a political settlement in Geneva; enable tangible humanitarian outcomes on the ground; and weaken the military capability and increase the political isolation of the regime and its allies. We need to work together to coordinate a long-term strategic plan for supporting the moderate opposition in its fight against the regime and a joint counter-terrorism plan against extremists from now until an agreement on political transition and a TGB can be reached. We need to work together to develop further our strategic plan for the security and stability of the transition, as well as for future relations between Syria and the US.



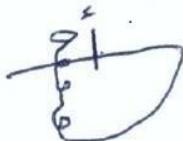
National Coalition of Syrian
Revolution and Opposition Forces

Office of the President

Senators, peace talks are stalled and the Assad regime remains committed to a military victory. The regime proved in Geneva that it has no inclination to talk about political transition. It has no incentive to talk in the absence of a recommitment to shifting the balance of power on the ground. Compelling them to negotiate on transition will require re-energized international support for the moderate opposition. Our forces remain committed to a political solution and are actively fighting international terrorist forces, while the regime has clearly indicated it will not accept the basis for political negotiations nor halt its strategy of mass atrocities.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support.

Sincerely,



Ahmad Jarba
President

cc:	Senator Barbara Boxer	Senator James E. Risch
	Senator Benjamin L. Cardin	Senator Marco Rubio
	Senator Jeanne Shaheen	Senator Ron Johnson
	Senator Christopher Coons	Senator Jeff Flake
	Senator Richard J. Durbin	Senator John McCain
	Senator Tom Udall	Senator John Barrasso
	Senator Chris Murphy	Senator Rand Paul
	Senator Tim Kaine	
	Senator Edward J. Markey	