

The President of the Security Council presents her compliments to the members of the Council and has the honour to transmit herewith, for their information, a copy of a **letter dated 6 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations** addressed to the President of the Security Council, and its enclosures.

This letter and its enclosures will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2015/316.

6 May 2015



United Kingdom
Mission to the
United Nations

6 May 2015

H.E. Ms. Raimonda Murmokaitė
Permanent Representative
Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations
President of the UN Security Council

The Permanent Representative,
Matthew Rycroft CBE
One Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
885 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Tel: +1 212 745 9334
Fax: +1 212 745 9316
www.ukun.fco.gov.uk

Dear Raimonda,

I have the honour to write to transmit to you a letter from the Representative of the Syrian National Coalition dated 5 May 2015.

I would be grateful if you could have this and the accompanying letter from the Syrian National Coalition circulated as a document of the Security Council.

Please accept, your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours,

Matthew Rycroft

الائتلاف الوطني لقوى
الثورة و المعارضة السورية



National Coalition of Syrian
Revolution and Opposition Forces

Representative Office to the United Nations

H.E. Ms. Raimonda Murmokaitė
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations
President of the UN Security Council

5 May 2015

Your Excellency,

It is with great concern that I draw your attention to an alarming proliferation of chlorine gas attacks perpetrated by Syrian regime forces in Idlib and Hama governorates, and the urgent need for Security Council action to prevent further atrocities, including through the imposition of Chapter VII measures of the UN Charter, as required by UN Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015).

In the past two weeks alone, witnesses and medics on the ground in Idlib and Hama governorates reported at least nine separate instances of toxic chemical attacks – several of them deadly. As described in Annex I, in each instance, barrel bombs loaded with poisonous chemical substances were deployed from Syrian regime helicopters. More than 150 civilians sustained injuries as a result of these attacks and suffered symptoms ranging from suffocation to labored breathing. At least two children died as a result of these attacks—both under the age of three.

It is highly likely that the chemical agent responsible for causing such suffering was once again chlorine gas. Lethal when deployed for military purposes, chlorine's use as a chemical weapon constitutes a war crime as defined by the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed in Geneva on 17 June 1925, and to which Syria acceded on 22 November 1968. It also represents a direct violation of UN Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015).

Since the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2118 in September 2013, the will of the Security Council has been repeatedly, systematically and willfully violated. More than 92 separate incidents of chemical weapons use have been recorded since the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), including more than 25 separate incidents since the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2209 (2015) just two months ago. But this past week's atrocities represent the most prolific use of chemical weapons by Syrian regime forces to date. Syrian Civil Defense teams are struggling to keep pace with the growing increase in chemical weapons use by Syrian regime forces—and Syrian civilians are dying as a result.

Your Excellency, the failure to enforce Security Council resolutions 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015) represents a permanent stain on the international community, and the Security Council in particular. The failure to enforce the will of the Council has allowed impunity to reign. It has cost lives in Syria. And it has prolonged the crisis—fuelling the rise of terrorist extremist groups like ISIL and imperiling regional and now global security.

Existing resolutions on Syria can and must be enforced, including through the adoption of Chapter VII measures of the UN Charter, as mandated by Security Council resolutions 2118 and 2209. Without such enforcement, more civilians will die and this conflict will continue to threaten international peace and security.

On behalf of the people of Syria and the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, I am therefore calling on the Security Council to work without delay to:

- I. **stop the systematic use of chlorine gas through the implementation of a safe zone enforced by a no-fly zone.** A no-fly zone would put an immediate end to Assad's deployment of chemical gas by air. It would save lives, alleviate suffering and begin to lay the foundation towards a political solution.
- II. **name and shame those responsible for the chlorine gas attacks.** To date, the OPCW Fact Finding Mission has not been mandated to determine responsibility for the use of chlorine gas. The reason for this is clear: one member of the Security Council wishes to ensure a lack of accountability. This must change. Anyone and everyone responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be identified and held accountable in a court of law.
- III. **pursue justice through all legal means.** A lack of consensus among Security Council members continues to prevent the Council from authorizing the foremost instrument capable of delivering justice to victims: an International Criminal Court (ICC) referral. If the Security Council is incapable of referring the situation in Syria to the ICC because of the irresponsible use of the veto, concerned Member States should establish an alternative mechanism such as an ad hoc tribunal.

Your Excellency, the priority of the Syrian National Coalition is to save the lives of our people. There is no reason that one more Syrian should be gassed to death by a brutal dictator intent on exploiting his monopoly of air power to barrel bomb his own people into submission. To stop the barrel bombs in Syria, the Security Council must deny the regime's ability to kill by air. A no-fly zone is the best way to do so. Should the Security Council fail to reach the consensus needed to authorize a safe zone, then I urge Member States to act on their own legal and moral authority to save lives in Syria and take the steps necessary to provide protection to our people.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Dr. Najib Ghadbian
Special Representative to the United Nations

Annex I: Reported cases of chemical weapons attacks in Idlib and Hama, Syria

16 April – 3 May 2015

- 3 May 2015** Barrel bombs containing chemical gases were dropped on Eblen and in Jabalpur Zawayeh, Idlib.
- 2 May 2015** Two barrel bombs filled with chlorine gas were dropped on the villages of Sarqb and Nairab, Idlib. At least 40 civilians, including children, suffered respiratory problems following the attacks, including baby Mustafa Haj Ali who died of suffocation.
- 1 May 2015** Barrel bombs containing toxic chemical gas were launched in Sarqb, Idlib. More than 70 civilians suffered injuries and suffocation, including 2-year old Mutee Jalal who suffocated to death.
- 1 May 2015** Five barrel bombs equipped with chlorine gas were dropped by regime helicopters on Qulaydin village in Ghab plain, Idlib.
- 29 April 2015** Two barrel bombs containing deadly chlorine gas hit a medical clinic in Sarqb, a suburb of Idlib, at 3:00am local time. The 12 victims present at the site—including two children—suffered symptoms including suffocation and required immediate medical attention.
- 29 April 2015** Two bombs carrying chlorine gas were deployed in the western countryside of Hama.
- 28 April 2015** Barrel bombs loaded toxic chemical gas fell on Karsa'a, a village in the countryside of Idlib. 10 suffocation cases were reported in Karsa'a, and 3 suffocation victims were reported in Korin.
- 26 April 2015** Barrel bombs carrying chlorine gas were deployed in the Hwash village of the Hama countryside at approximately 10:00 pm. 26 civilians sustained injuries, including one two-year old.
- 16 April 2015** Two barrel bombs were deployed in Idlib city's Al Dbeyt area, resulting in seven victims, among them four children.