

Press Conference Remarks – 27 September 2013

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Press Conference Remarks
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Thank you all for coming to today's press conference.

I want to update you on the Coalition's activities during UNGA week and share our assessment of the situation in Syria.

Our delegation has met with the US Secretary of State, the Foreign Ministers of the Arab League, JSR Brahimi, the EU High Representative, the London Group of 11 and a number of Foreign Ministers.

In all of these meetings, we have had three overriding messages:

First, the Syrian Coalition remains committed to achieving a future Syria that is inclusive, democratic, free and fair.

Second, we have rejected the presence of all extremist actors in Syria, including the majority comprising Hezbollah, Iranian Revolutionary guards and terrorist organizations.

Third, we have reiterated our commitment to the Geneva Communiqué and reaffirmed our willingness to participate in a future Geneva Conference. We have made it clear, that for such a conference to be successful it must have one fundamental basis: Assad stepping aside to allow for the creation of a transition government with full executive powers, including control of the military and security forces.

Yesterday, the Coalition addressed a Ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Syria at the United Nations with over 100 countries represented.

These points were welcomed by all attendees. The international society reaffirmed its support of our pursuit of the aspirations of the Syrian people in achieving freedom and dignity.

Now is the time to translate this support into action.

The international community must intensify its efforts to put pressure on the regime to accept the need to step aside and allow for a transition to democracy.

As a first step, the Syrian Coalition welcomes the imminent agreement by the Security Council to disarm Syria's chemical weapons programme.

This is the first time that the Security Council has proven itself able to act to address the brutal campaign of violence waged by the regime on our people.

We have repeatedly demanded that the regime never again be allowed to commit the atrocities of 21 August against its own people.

The international community must now vigilantly monitor the enforcement of the resolution.

Swift and firm action must be taken to address any non-compliance by the regime. The standard must be full cooperation.

We will continue to insist that those who have perpetrated war crimes and crimes against humanity must be held accountable.

Syria must be referred to the ICC so we can hold the criminals responsible who committed the heinous attacks on 21 August, using chemical weapons, which indiscriminately killed over 1,400 civilians.

This crisis is not simply about chemical weapons. Efforts must be intensified to stop the regime from using its conventional arsenal of weapons to use excessive and indiscriminate violence against the Syrian people.

As weapons inspectors enter Syria, the regime must respond to the critical humanitarian situation in the country.

Now is the time for the regime to demonstrate its true willingness to cooperate with the world by ending its sieges of cities and villages such as Ghouta, Homs and Dayr al-zour and by allowing humanitarian workers to serve the needs of the millions of Syrians in

critical need.

The regime has done little to show that it is committed to supporting a political solution that will end the conflict in Syria. Providing humanitarian access is a chance the regime should not waste.

Our first and foremost priority is to stop the bloodshed in Syria in order to create circumstances in which a transition to democracy can take place.

We call on the international community to support that vision.