

Secretary-General, Expressing Intention to Thoroughly Investigate Alleged Chemical Weapons Use in Syria, Urges Government's Prompt Cooperation with UN Mission

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The following statement was issued today by the Spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon:

The Secretary-General is giving his utmost attention to the tragic situation related to the attacks on the suburbs of Damascus on 21 August. It is his intention to conduct a thorough, impartial and prompt investigation on the reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons during these attacks.

To this end, the United Nations has already written to the Syrian Government to urgently confirm that it is prepared to provide its cooperation to the UN mission already on the ground, on the basis of the modalities of cooperation set out and mutually agreed on 13 August 2013. The Secretary-General has also instructed Under-Secretary-General Angela Kane to travel to Damascus, where she is expected tomorrow.

The Secretary-General urges the Syrian authorities to respond positively and promptly to his request without delay, taking into account, in particular, that the Syrian Government has publicly expressed its own concerns regarding these events.

The Secretary-General also calls on the Syrian opposition to cooperate with the UN mission to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons in this most recent tragic event. It is of paramount importance that all those who share the concern and urgency of investigating these allegations, equally share the responsibility of cooperating in generating a safe environment for the mission to do its job.

The Secretary-General further calls on all those Member States with interest and influence to equally exert their utmost for the provision of a safe and secure environment for the mission to engage in its work.

The humanitarian need in Syria is great. The need to provide humanitarian assistance to all victims of violence, including the latest ones, is imperative. In this context, the Secretary-General calls for a cessation of hostilities both in this particular area, and in the country.

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