

In UN Address, Assad Regime Mischaracterizes the Nature of the Conflict While Denying its Fundamental Responsibilities to Help Bring Peace to Syria

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Press Statement
Syrian Coalition
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Today, the Syrian regime's Foreign Minister Walid al-Moualem addressed members of the UN General Assembly on the situation in Syria, in an attempt to hide from the world a totalitarian regime's systematic and indiscriminate attacks against its own people.

In March 2011 Syria's people began to engage in a popular and peaceful national uprising, calling for reform and democracy. Regime forces viciously attacked these protestors. Since then, the regime has escalated a campaign of extreme violence, using heavy weapons, artillery, ballistic and air power, to inflict untold suffering. Meanwhile, it has opened the door for extremists from around the world to come and fight against moderate forces in Syria. This conflict has resulted in the deaths of over 100,000 people, displaced over 4 million Syrians within the country, and created 2 million refugees.

In his speech, al-Moualem ignored this reality and denied the Assad regime's fundamental responsibility for creating and perpetuating this conflict. al-Moualem attempted to characterize anyone opposing his regime as an extremist terrorist by sensationalizing a few stories that the opposition has roundly condemned. The truth, which has been documented extensively by experts and institutions as well as journalists and social media, is that the Syrian people are a moderate, accepting population, and they are seeking a democratic future in which all have equal rights. The extremists and terrorists do not represent the opposition, as the Syrian Coalition has reiterated clearly and implemented on the ground. These extremists have infiltrated the country, and they only serve to wreak havoc on the population and fulfill the regime's narrative of sectarianism. The terrorists are doing the regime's work — they frighten local populations, directly and actively attack moderate leaders, and drive sectarian wedges to scare off efforts to support the moderates.

Just over one month ago, the Syrian regime committed one of the gravest war crimes of the past 25 years, by attacking its own people with chemical weapons. The regime's silence on this issue in today's speech is only further evidence of its lack of remorse and indifference to the pain it has caused our country.

The world will not be deceived by the regime's misleading rhetoric. Steps must be taken to ensure that the regime's commitment to participating in a future Geneva conference is sincere: it must accept the terms of the Geneva Communiqué which has now fully been endorsed by the Security Council, calling for the creation of a transitional government to pave the country's path to reconciliation, democracy, and rebuilding.

The Syrian regime has abandoned all responsibility to protect its people. Its only option remaining is to participate in a Geneva peace conference and allow our country to transition to democracy.

The Syrian Coalition calls on the Syrian 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.