



Security Council

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Letter dated 7 January 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The illegal so-called international coalition was established in August 2014, ostensibly to combat the terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Since then, led by the United States, it has unremittingly attacked Syrian soil. Warplanes of the so-called coalition have continued to commit crimes against Syrian civilians. Most recently, on 4 January 2019, the air force of the so-called coalition committed another massacre of civilians in the village of Kushkiyah, in the countryside of south-eastern Dayr al-Zawr governorate, killing ten civilians, four of whom were children.

That massacre took place less than a day after the previous one, in which 11 Syrian civilians were killed and extensive damage was caused to homes in the village of Sha‘fah.

Led by the United States, the members of the coalition have continued to massacre Syrian civilians and destroy their homes and livelihoods and to ignore the Charter and the authority of the Security Council. In so doing, they have confirmed a point that the Syrian Arab Republic has made in dozens of letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council regarding those atrocities, namely that it is essential to confront the so-called coalition’s growing disdain for the Charter, the Security Council and all the provisions of international law, particularly the four Geneva Conventions relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. This situation also underscores the hypocrisy and duplicity of the States involved. Their military operations are not targeting the compounds of the terrorist organization ISIL in the Dayr al-Zawr area. On the contrary, they are aimed specifically at residential areas that are densely populated with innocent Syrian civilians. It goes without saying that, since its establishment, all the actions of the so-called coalition have merely been creating the appropriate conditions to allow that criminal terrorist organization to survive and expand again.

A few days ago, the coalition made a formal statement recognizing that it had killed over 1,500 Syrian civilians in its operations in eastern Syria. This is the most significant piece of evidence that it has killed innocent women and children, even though the true number of innocent Syrian victims is many times greater. The States members of the criminal coalition — which claim to comply with the Charter, to respect human rights and to spare the lives of the innocent — must therefore withdraw immediately from the coalition, expose its true goals, dissolve it and refuse to legitimize it. By so doing, they could bring an end to the killing machine that the coalition wields on behalf of all its members. Syria urges the countries from which



the aircraft of the criminal coalition take off to avoid being complicit in the murder of innocent Syrian citizens.

The Syrian Arab Republic demands once again that the Security Council assume its responsibilities by acting swiftly and decisively to put an end to these crimes, attacks and massacres and the systematic destruction of infrastructure in Syria. The Council must take the appropriate action to establish an independent and impartial international mechanism to investigate these crimes, prosecute and punish their perpetrators and compensate the victims' families. The Security Council has a responsibility to maintain international peace and security and to prevent war crimes, crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. The coalition is committing such crimes daily in cold blood, with no pangs of conscience and no respect for international humanitarian or legal values. By continuing to ignore that responsibility and remaining silent regarding the attacks and their perpetrators, the Security Council would entrench a culture of impunity in an extremely worrying manner. It would thereby undermine the prestige and authority of the Council and the General Assembly, leaving them ill-placed to fulfil any of the responsibilities entrusted to the United Nations and its main organs under the Charter.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Bashar Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
