



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 15 February 2021 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my country's Government, I should like to convey to you the following information.

On 24 September 2014, more than six years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution [2178 \(2014\)](#) at its summit-level meeting, in order to address the problem of foreign terrorist fighters. The adoption of that resolution was an important development in the evolution of international counter-terrorism instruments and gave hope that international efforts to address this problem, which poses a serious threat to national, regional and international peace and security, could be strengthened and coordinated.

As everyone is aware, the Council, in that resolution, calls upon all States Members of the United Nations, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to cooperate in efforts to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters through various means, including by preventing the radicalization to terrorism and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, including children, preventing foreign terrorist fighters from crossing their borders, disrupting and preventing financial support to foreign terrorist fighters, and developing and implementing prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for returning foreign terrorist fighters.

Although so many years have passed since, foreign terrorist fighters continue to pose a major global threat, as the Secretary-General confirmed in his twelfth report on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat ([S/2021/98](#)). That threat remains in place primarily because the Governments of Western States of which the foreign terrorists are nationals have not fulfilled their responsibilities. They have implemented the requirements of resolution [2178 \(2014\)](#) in a very selective manner, sidestepped their legal obligations and pursued their narrow, selfish interests at the expense of the millions of people who have bled and suffered in the States that have been afflicted by terrorism and in which transnational foreign terrorists have engaged in looting and spread death and destruction. My country is one of those States.

My country, Syria, has been the victim of a terrorist war waged by the Governments of States that are known to all, a war in which they have employed thousands of foreign terrorists. Those Governments have recruited and summoned



these terrorists from around the world and provided them with military, financial, political and media support. Over the years, we have repeatedly called upon the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security and to hold accountable States that sponsor terrorism and compel them to stop supporting terrorism and repatriate the foreign terrorist fighters who are their nationals. Nonetheless, the Governments of Western States have sought to politicize the issue, avoid their responsibilities and procrastinate. In fact, the Governments of certain Western States have taken domestic measures that prevent terrorists who are nationals of those States from returning. Those measures include invalidating passports and prohibiting entry, as the United Kingdom has done, or allowing only the children of foreign terrorists to enter after separating them from their parents or families, as Belgium had done.

On the other hand, certain States that believe in international law and the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations have reached out to the Syrian Government in order to repatriate foreign terrorists, and their children, who are nationals of those States, with a view to holding accountable those who have perpetrated crimes and to rehabilitating and reintegrating their families and children. As a result of such cooperation with the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, several Central Asian States and other States, the families of hundreds of foreign terrorists have returned to their countries.

The Syrian Government expresses its appreciation to the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan for their constructive involvement and for having organized on 29 January 2021 an Arria-formula meeting of the Security Council under the theme “Children and armed conflict: repatriation of children from conflict zones”. My country regrets that the representatives of certain Western States, such as the United Kingdom and Ireland, tried to hijack that meeting, took hostile positions and put forth unrealistic and unfounded allegations.

The Syrian Arab Republic would like to remind you that it has repeatedly stated that it is prepared and willing to cooperate with all serious Governments and humanitarian organizations to repatriate foreign nationals in accordance with international law. Syria reiterates that foreign terrorist fighters and their families must be repatriated in full cooperation and advance coordination with the Syrian Government. It also reiterates that communicating with, funding or offering bribes to terrorist groups and separatist militias in order to smuggle their families to neighbouring countries and the dispatching by certain Governments of representatives to meet with those groups and militias constitute a violation of international law, the Charter and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in which the Council reiterates its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial unity and integrity of Syria.

In that connection, we should like to draw your attention to the letter dated 27 January 2021 that we addressed to you (S/2021/89). In that letter, we note that Western delegations have clandestinely and illegally entered parts of north-eastern Syria, that is to say without the prior approval of the Syrian Government. We should also like to draw your attention to the fact that coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic-related travel restrictions and the other challenges to which the Secretary-General referred in paragraph 44 of his aforementioned report (S/2021/98) have not deterred such Western delegations from entering clandestinely. Such conduct confirms the ill intentions of those delegations and their Governments, which continue to violate the sovereignty of Syria. In view of that, we reiterate that the principles of international law, the provisions of the Charter, the counter-terrorism instruments, including Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2253 (2015), and the principles governing friendly relations and cooperation between

States must be upheld, and that such violations must be brought to an end and their perpetrators held accountable.

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

(*Signed*) Koussay **Aldabbak**
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
