

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 16 December 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 14 December 2015 from Najib Ghadbian, Special Representative of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and circulated as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Alya Ahmed S. **Al-Thani**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



## **Annex to the letter dated 16 December 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

It is with great urgency that I draw your attention to the horrific indiscriminate attacks that took place in Eastern Ghouta over the weekend, killing at least 45 civilians and wounding at least 100 others.

On Sunday, 13 December, the towns of Douma, Harasta, Saqba and Arbin were hit by a lethal combination of Syrian regime missiles and air strikes. Among the targets of the attacks were a school and residential homes. Among the dead were at least 10 children, four women and the principal of Douma's primary school. Video coverage of the attacks show fathers desperately grasping their infants, streets littered with the bodies of children, and buildings filled with debris and broken glass.

Sunday's attacks amount to a war crime. They were indiscriminate and disproportionate and violate international humanitarian law, including Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), in which the Council demanded "that all parties immediately cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas". The illegal, indiscriminate attacks on Eastern Ghouta can and must be stopped. And yet, like so many of the attacks witnessed across Syria thus far, the attacks on Eastern Ghouta have failed to propel the international community to collective outrage, let alone collective action.

Sunday's attacks took place in full view of the international community, including the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, who was in Damascus at the time of the attacks, just kilometres away from this gruesome crime scene. That the Syrian regime dared to commit this blatant atrocity in full view of United Nations authorities demonstrates just how little it fears international retaliation or accountability.

Enough is enough. It is time to end the vicious cycle of impunity and to provide the protection the Syrian people need. Syrians can take no more bloodshed, and no more atrocities. They need the killing to end. They need the Security Council to enforce existing resolutions, and to provide civilian protection. On behalf of the Syrian people, I therefore appeal to the Council to:

1. Protect Syrian civilians in Eastern Ghouta and elsewhere by enforcing a no-bombing zone to stop the number-one killer of Syrian civilians — indiscriminate aerial bombardment.
2. Take the necessary steps to pursue a political solution based on the Geneva communiqué, which will establish a transitional governing body, based on mutual consent, to lead the transitional process, as required under Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).
3. Refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court so that all parties responsible for war crimes can be held to account.

Over the course of the Syrian crisis, the people of Eastern Ghouta have been living a nightmare. They have been subjected to sarin gas attacks which have killed over 1,400 civilians, air strikes against marketplaces and, now, missile attacks on schools. Through it all, the people of Eastern Ghouta — like all the innocent people

of Syria — have been clear: they need and want civilian protection. Yet, without exception, their desperate cries have gone unanswered. As 2015 draws to a close, it is time to heed the calls of the Syrian people. Civilian protection is what Syrians want, and it is what international law requires.

*(Signed)* **Najib Ghadbian**  
Special Representative to the United Nations

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