

RELEASE IN FULL

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**SUBJECT: Guidance for the August 30 UNSC Ministerial on Syria**

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, UNSC, SY, JO, TU, LE, IZ

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1. (U) This is an action request. USUN is authorized to draw from elements in paragraph two at the August 30 UNSC ministerial on Syria.

2. (SBU) BEGIN ELEMENTS:

Thank you, Foreign Minister Fabius, for convening this important meeting. We gather at a somber hour—less than a week after some of the bloodiest days since the Syrian regime began its crackdown almost 18 months ago. The United States is outraged by the summary executions and shelling that killed hundreds of Syrians in Daraya late last week and by the aerial attacks on hospitals, bakeries, and breadlines in Aleppo. For a year and a half, this regime has waged a vicious, unrelenting campaign of terror and bloodshed against its suffering people. Bashar al-Asad and those who still stand by him are now responsible for the deaths of more than 20,000 Syrians and the wounding of tens of thousands more. They have forced hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee for their lives.

Despite the appalling environment on the ground and the clear obstruction by the Syrian government, we are working with others to minimize the agony of the Syrian people. The United Nations, international organizations, the United States, many countries around the world, and Syrian and other humanitarian organizations are rushing vital aid to hundreds of thousands of civilians in urgent need. We commend the humanitarian workers who are risking their own lives to save others, and we grieve for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. All parties, especially the Syrian government, must allow safe, full, and unfettered access for humanitarian workers so they can save lives that today hang in the balance.

The United States strongly supports the full and immediate implementation of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan, which was agreed by OCHA and the Government of Syria. Less than half of the \$180 million needed to address humanitarian needs within Syria has been provided. The UN's Revised Syria Regional Response Plan, which assists neighboring countries hosting refugees, is underfunded as well. My government is pursuing every avenue to provide humanitarian relief to those affected by the violence in Syria. Just this year, the United States has provided nearly \$82 million to the UN and other relief agencies for the Syria humanitarian crisis. Our aid has fed the hungry and bound up the wounds of Asad's victims. We are helping protect internally displaced people and refugees, working to save children from malnutrition and disease, and helping ensure adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene. Our assistance is also enabling humanitarian coordination and logistics support to relief agencies.

We are deeply grateful to fellow member states that have already made important donations, and we urge all members to increase their contributions to meet the shortfalls. We also urge Member States to coordinate closely with the UN to avoid creating parallel humanitarian response systems. We appreciate especially the generosity of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and other countries that have opened their borders to civilians fleeing violence and persecution, and we

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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stand ready to continue to provide support as needed. We call on all countries to facilitate safe passage for those seeking to flee. The United States is deeply concerned about the spillover of Syria's violence to its neighbors, especially Lebanon, where the Lebanese government and security forces are working to manage outbreaks of violence.

But this is not, at root, a humanitarian crisis. It is a political crisis caused by the cruelty and callousness of the Asad regime. No amount of humanitarian assistance will end the bloodshed and suffering. That day will come only once Asad has departed and a peaceful, Syrian-led transition to democracy has begun. This remains our goal—and should be the goal of all nations of good will. We welcome the appointment of Joint Special Representative Brahimi and fully support his efforts to end the violence and pave the way for a political transition.

In parallel, the United States and our partners will continue to work with the Syrian opposition and engage all segments of society to help the Syrian people achieve a government that represents all of its citizens, promotes their human rights, respects the rule of law, and responds to its people's aspirations. We are proud to help train civil society activists and to provide Syrians with equipment that lets them communicate securely with one another, to reach out to the outside world, and to document the regime's atrocities. We encourage the opposition's efforts to unite the population behind a common transition plan that offers a viable and safe future for all Syrians. We will continue to expand and intensify these efforts and we will not rest until the Syrian people are free to realize their aspirations to govern themselves and live without fear.

Even as the conflict rages, we condemn in the strongest terms unlawful killings by any side. We cannot and will not turn away from atrocities and systematic violations of international law. Those responsible for massacres of civilians will be held accountable. We welcome pledges by Free Syrian Army leaders that forbid their soldiers from harming civilians, mistreating prisoners, or killing captured combatants, and we will watch to see that these admirable promises are implemented. We also reiterate our demand that the Syrian Government refrain from using or transferring any chemical or biological weapons. It is incumbent upon the Syrian Government to ensure the safety and security of all such weapons and stockpiles.

Mr. President, we have heard today about the suffering of the innocent and the cruelty of the guilty. My country was founded on the belief that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. The Asad regime has manifestly lost whatever consent, if any, it ever had. The question is not whether it will fall; the question is when, and at what price.

The primary responsibility for ending the carnage rests with Asad and the clique around him. But the rest of the international community, and especially our fellow Council members, have responsibilities of their own. Unfortunately, a few members of the Security Council continue to prevent this body from responding effectively. This is reprehensible. Yet, even at this tragically late hour, it does not have to remain this way. The Syrian people fully understand which countries have rallied to their legitimate cause and which countries have protected a doomed and desperate regime. It may not be too late to chart a wiser course—one that limits the harm to regional security, staves off the risk of civil strife, and produces a new, responsible Syrian government that will defend all of its citizens. Indeed, one day not far away, Asad will lose his

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bloody grip on the Syrian people and this Council will have to step up to help the Syrian people heal the wounds of war and rebuild their battered country.

END ELEMENTS.

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