

*Confidential – Not for further circulation*

**Daily Consolidated Update on Syria (21 September 2012)**

*This update is limited to inputs received from the UN system by 2:00 p.m. Any information received after the cut-off time would be reported the following day.*

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**United Nations**

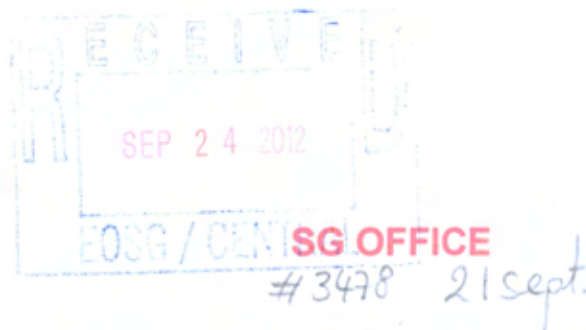
1. In an interview with al Arabiya TV, Joint Special Representative Brahimi said "I don't have a plan at the current time because I have only started my job 3 weeks ago, and I haven't even met all parties -- whether Syrian or regional. I am aware of and I appreciate people's sense of urgency". "Following the failure of Kofi Annan, I don't think [we] are capable of withstanding another failure." On his visit to Syria, Mr. Brahimi noted "This was the first visit, to get to know the grounds and the people. I did not expect any groundbreaking development in this complicated crisis." He added that people do not want reforms, but rather real change, and that this not only applied to Syria but to the rest of the Arab world. He stressed that the Syrian government had the primary responsibility to stop the violence, adding "They have no right to say that there is equality [between the regime and the opposition]. There is no equality between the victim and the assailant." Asked about Iran's role, Mr. Brahimi said "I don't use this phrase very often but if you insist, let's just say that whomever is part of a problem must convert to being a part of the solution, otherwise how will we reach a resolution? Our region has interrelations, interests and greed...But we now have to look to Syria and help the Syrian people. Everyone must cooperate". "The situation in Syria cannot be restricted within the country to the point of no return. If it continued, it would spread onto its neighbors and turn into a global problem. The problem has already spilt into Lebanon -- it has also started to spill into Turkey and Jordan in the form of refugees," he concluded.

2. A draft resolution on Syria was tabled today at the Human Rights Council by Morocco, Qatar, Jordan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Kuwait and over 50 additional cosponsors. The draft strongly condemns the continued violations of human rights by the authorities and pro-Government militias; condemns the massacre of El-Houleh and stresses the need for accountability; calls upon the authorities to meet their responsibility to protect the Syrian population; stresses the need to conduct an international, transparent, independent and prompt investigation into abuses and violations of international law and notes the potential relevance of international justice, while underscoring that the Syrian people should determine, within the framework provided by international law, the process and mechanisms to achieve reconciliation, truth, and accountability as well as reparations and effective remedies for the victims. The Council also decides to extend the mandate of the CoI. The Council also decides to transmit all reports and oral updates of the CoI to all relevant bodies of the UN and the Secretary-General. The draft is expected to be voted next week.

3. USG Feltman met with the Syrian Permanent representative today to initiate a standard exchange of letters on the establishment of Joint Special Representative's office in Damascus.

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### **Situation on the ground**

4. Anti-government protests were reported today throughout the country. This week's slogan for protests was "the beloved of the Prophet in Syria are being massacred", reflecting protests in other states over the movie "Innocence of Muslims". In Aleppo, the aerial bombing of town of Atareb allegedly targeting an anti-government protest resulted in several people killed and injured. According to opposition activists, fighting erupted overnight near the Hanano army barracks. Clashes were also reported in parts of Aleppo city today. In Damascus, opposition activists reported shelling and gunfire in southern neighborhoods, particularly in al-Hajar al-Aswad and Barzeh today. In the former neighborhood, activists said Syrian forces were looting and setting fire to houses. The State news agency SANA said the army unearthed the bodies of 25 people in the Qadam district and blamed "armed terrorist groups" for their execution. Meanwhile, opposition activists alleged that 17 people were summarily executed in al-Bouwayda in Rif Damascus. Shelling of Qaboun, Mesraba and Jdeidat Artouz was also reported. In Raqqqa province, activists said Syrian regime forces shelled several towns near the Turkish border, killing and injuring civilians. Clashes in the area continued. Stray bullets reportedly flew into the town of Akçakale in Turkey. In Hama province, activists said the Syrian army closed all exits to the city of Hama with armored vehicles and carried out raid and arrest campaigns. They also reported shelling of Arba'ein neighborhood. In al-Hassaka province, opposition activists said a masked gunman on a motorbike shot dead prominent Kurdish activist Mahmoud Wali, known as Abu Ghandi, in Ras al-Ain. Wali was a leading figure in the Kurdish National Council (KNC) and the Kurdish Revolutionary Youth Movement.

### **Death toll**

5. Activists put today's death toll at 100. The final death toll from yesterday, according to activists, was 250 – initially reported as 203. These figures cannot be independently verified.

### **Humanitarian situation and response inside Syria**

6. WFP yesterday dispatched food rations for 154,000 beneficiaries to the governorates of Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh (Qamishli), Al-Raqqqa, Damascus, rural Damascus, Dera'a, Hama, Homs, Idlib, and Tartous. Since the start of the current food distribution cycle on 7 September, WFP has dispatched a total of 91,680 rations, covering 458,400 people (30.6 per cent of the 1.5 million target population).

7. IOM, in close liaison with relevant embassies and partners in Syria, is providing assistance to third country nationals (TCNs) affected by the crisis. To date, IOM has assisted in the evacuation of 1,493 TCNs. An estimated 5,155 TCNs are still in need of assistance.

8. Syrian state news agency SANA said Russia flew in almost 80 tons of food aid to Syria.

### **Syrian refugees**

9. 11. The total number of refugees reported as registered and/or assisted in neighboring countries reached over 280,000 as of yesterday. This is an increase of over 53,000 people since the beginning of the month.

### **Syrian government**

10. In another excerpt of his interview with al-Ahram al-Arabi released today, President Assad said "I welcome dialogue with the national opposition but those who choose arms have put themselves in confrontation with the Syrian Arab army...[b]oth sides of the equation are equal



and political dialogue is the only solution. Violence, however, is not allowed ... and the state will not stand with its hands tied in the face of those who bear arms against it," Assad was quoted as saying.

11. Syria's information minister, Omran al-Zoubi, denied that Assad had granted an interview to al-Ahram al-Arabi. According to Iran's Mehrnews, Al-Zoubi also told Syrian TV that the situation in Syria is at its best since the start of the current crisis in that the identity of those who are to blame for the crisis and their international supporters are now clear to the world. He blamed Qatar for funding and arming "terrorists" in Syria, including al-Qaeda and called it a "tool of the Zionist project in the Middle East". He also urged Saudi Arabia and Turkey to stop supporting "terrorists" in Syria.

### **Syrian opposition**

12. The National Coordination Committee (NCC) issued a statement denouncing the arrest of three of its members by the Syrian authorities. The arrest comes two days prior to the salvation of Syria conference which is organized by the NCC and immediately after their arrival to Damascus airport from China, where they held talks with Government officials. The NCC also stated that Haitham Manna (prominent opposition figure in exile) will not be attending the opposition conference due to lack of protection. Meanwhile, the LCCs reported that Dr Tarek Rajaa al-Nasser, the son of NCC secretary Rajaa al-Nasser, was killed in the shelling of A'zaz in Aleppo province today.

13. An armed group announced the formation of a new military revolutionary council in Eastern Ghouta in Rif Damascus. According to the announcement, the council will be headed by Colonel Abdel Nasser Shmeir and will have no affiliation with any political party. The leadership of the original FSA military council for Damascus and Rif Damascus indicated that the armed units operating in the area have no knowledge of the new council and its commander. It was also noted that there was no prior coordination with the FSA leadership and that another council was also established in the same way before.

### **Regional developments**

#### *Iraq*

14. The Prime Minister's spokesperson said Iraq denied permission for a North Korean aircraft to cross its airspace on its way to Syria over suspicions it was carrying arms and advisers. He added that "Iraq has again officially informed Iran that it will randomly stop some flights to make sure of their cargo."

#### *Turkey*

15. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has canceled a planned trip to the US to attend the General Assembly, amid speculation that his frustration with the Security Council's inaction on Syria was behind his decision. In remarks published in The Washington Post, Erdoğan said Turkey would not consider playing a stronger unilateral role in the Syrian crisis, insisting on international action. Erdoğan was asked whether Turkey, "which has a strong army," would take unilateral action, particularly regarding imposing a no-fly zone. The Prime Minister said "no." "If there is an attack on our country, then we would do what is required. But this situation has an international dimension and a dimension that concerns the Islamic world. So the UN and also the Arab League should be involved with respect to Syria," he said. He underlined that "the decision of the UN Security Council would be important in that case."

16. Five people, including two Syrians, accused of passing information to Syria on military defectors and of trying to abduct a Syrian army lieutenant, are on trial in Turkey. Five other Turks, including a former intelligence official, are awaiting trial in a separate case for allegedly abducting Lieutenant Colonel Hussein Harmoush and handing him over to Syria.

#### *Lebanon*

17. Several shells from Syria reportedly fell on the outskirts of Lebanese border towns in the Akkar district yesterday. There were no reports of injuries. Arrest warrants were served today on the Miqdad clan's spokesperson, Maher Miqdad, and two other men already in custody, on charges that they had kidnapped Syrian nationals and formed an armed group in possession of illegal weapons.

#### **International reactions**

18. NATO does not believe that military intervention in Syria would bring any improvement in the security situation there, a senior alliance official said today. Germany's Manfred Lange, chief of staff of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) said the military was telling leaders that there was no good case for military action and the political process had to be pursued.

19. The US has demanded that Iraq take action to stop Iran supplying arms to Syria over Iraqi airspace. Vice President Joe Biden also pressed Iraq's Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in a telephone call Friday to bar the passage of weapons shipments to Syria through Iraqi airspace, the White House said.

20. The Swiss authorities said today that "inquiries have shown that Swiss hand grenades delivered to UAE in 2003 and 2004 reached Syria". Switzerland and the UAE launched an investigation after Swiss media published a photograph of a Swiss-made hand grenade taken by a reporter north of Aleppo at the end of June. The probe found that the UAE gave "part" of its munitions delivery to Jordan "to help the country in its fight against terrorism." "From Jordan, the hand grenades clearly surfaced in Syria," the Swiss authorities said, adding that the UAE had provided a written guarantee that no other munitions were involved. With the joint Swiss-UAE investigation over, Switzerland would resume its arms exports to the UAE after a temporary freeze. But future exports will take place on a stricter footing to ensure that no other weapons shipments go astray.

**DPA**