



Dear Syrian People, A Salaam aleikum!

I want to express my profound sympathy with you - the men, women and children of Syria. The suffering and the destruction that you are enduring is the greatest injustice of this crisis. I wish I had the power to stop it, but I have not. Only those pulling the triggers have the power to stop the violence, and they should!

On 29 April 2012, I accepted to become the Head of the UN Supervision Mission here in Syria, a country that I know well and in which I have been met with warmth and hospitality before. If any people deserve a peaceful way forward in line with its aspirations - it is you!

The United Nations Security Council deployed UNSMIS to Syria not to STOP the violence or to observe an escalation; we were deployed to MONITOR and ASSIST a cessation of violence implemented by the parties. This has not happened, and for that the responsibility lies with the parties and those feeding the violence.

UNSMIS operations focused in and around population centres, in relation to both military monitoring and civilian interactions. The Mission conducted visits to conflict-prone and incident-specific areas for fact-finding and tension-defusing purposes. A system of transparent violation reporting was put in place and was shared with both Government and opposition representatives for their action.

The Mission also engaged with the local populations in Government and opposition areas, building a network of community contacts to facilitate stability where signs of cooperation encouraged it. These engagements sought to mediate technical issues between the sides for restoration of critical services and were seen as a step in confidence-building for conflict reduction.

More importantly, UN observers played a valuable role in establishing the facts in Syria, and reporting clearly and objectively to the international community. We established ourselves as the factual voice on the ground, ensuring that the pain and the suffering of the Syrian people are recognized and addressed.

However, by the third week of May a return to unrestrained hostilities was seen, to the extent that by 15 June 2012, I decided to suspend all UNSMIS mandated activities. Absent a demonstrable recommitment to a sustained cessation of violence and a viable political process, the Mission's continued implementation of its mandated tasks will be limited.

Understanding the sense of urgency, members of the Action Group met in Geneva on 30 June 2012, to lay out a path that ends the killing of innocent civilians. They called on all parties to re-commit to a sustained cessation of armed violence WITHOUT waiting for the actions of others. They emphasized that the conflict in Syria must be solved through peaceful dialogue and that it is now for the Syrian people to come to a political agreement. To that end, the Mission is here and is ready to engage and support the Parties in Syria to take the needed steps towards this goal.

For that, on Thursday, 5 July 2012, I announced a reorganization of the Mission that will better enable us to support the Syrian people in the coming days. We will reinforce our presence into Regional Team Sites to give us, once our operations resume the flexibility to effectively respond to current and future mandate implementation requirements.

Let me assure you, UNSMIS is not a static Mission. It will continually adapt and reconfigure to best serve the needs and aspirations of the Syrian people. The Security Council will make an assessment as to the future of the mission in the next days or weeks. The assessment will be based on subsequent developments in Syria and the response to the 30 June 2012 Action Group communiqué.

Whatever the decision maybe, the international community's continued responsibility to Syria is a moral and political obligation. We cannot and will not turn our eyes and ears away from your plight and will continue to work together, with you, to find new paths to political dialogue and peaceful resolution to the crisis.

You, the people of Syria have the power to influence those having their fingers on the triggers.

Sincerely,

Robert Mood  
Major General  
Head of Mission / Chief Military Observer