

*Opening Statement to Press in Damascus by General Robert Mood, Head of UN
Supervision Mission in Syria*

UN Supervision Mission in Syria – Six weeks in

The United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) was established by Security Council resolution 2043 as part of the Joint Special Envoy's Six-Point Proposal that was endorsed by the Syrian Government and opposition as the best way forward. Comprised of up to 300 unarmed military observers as well as an appropriate civilian component, UNSMIS was set up for an initial 90-day period, to monitor a cessation, not to stop, armed violence "in all its forms by all parties" as well as support and monitor the full implementation of the six-point plan by the parties.

The Mission officially began on April 29. The deployment was carried out at record speed. Initially there was a lull in violence, brought about willingly by the parties, and UNSMIS began to engage with the local population, establishing trust and building bridges between the local authorities and opposition groups.

Violence, over the past 10 days, has been intensifying, again willingly by the both parties, with losses on both sides and significant risks to our observers. The Syrian population, civilians, are suffering and in some locations, civilians have been trapped by ongoing operations.

The Mission established itself as the factual voice on the ground, to ensure that the pain and the suffering of the Syrian people is recognized and addressed. But the escalating violence is now limiting our ability to observe, verify, report as well as assist in local dialogue and stability projects.

The Six-Point Plan does not belong to Kofi Annan, it does not belong to UNSMIS. It belongs to the Syrian parties that have accepted it and the international community that has endorsed it. There is no other plan on the table yet it is not being implemented.

There appears to be a lack of willingness to seek a peaceful transition. Instead there is a push towards advancing military positions.

This is not a static Mission. The review by the Security Council on the Mission and its mandate will commence in the coming days and weeks. It is important that the parties give this Mission a chance and the international community gives this Mission a role that best serves the aspirations and welfare of the Syrian people.

Damascus, 15 June 2012

