



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 31 May 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Official complaint dated 31 May 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On the instructions of the Government of my country, the Syrian Arab Republic, which has sent more than 1,000 official letters to the United Nations since the terrorist aggression against Syria began in 2011, I should like to convey to you and Member States the following documented and urgent information. Furthermore, I request that you consider the present letter to be an official complaint against the Governments of certain Member States, most notably the American, British, French, Turkish and Israeli Governments, which have abandoned for some time the tactic of waging a proxy war by supporting, financing and arming transnational terrorist organizations of various names, as well as armed terrorist entities and separatist militias, and are now themselves waging war, engaging in military occupation, robbing, looting and destroying the natural resources and energy sources of Syria, imposing additional unilateral coercive economic sanctions and interfering in a grave and destructive manner in the political process being facilitated by the United Nations through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. Allow me to present you with some important facts and details in that regard.

First, since mid-May, the start of the wheat and barley harvesting season, the occupying American and Turkish forces have been burning harvested crops in the Jazirah region of Syria, in order to strip the country's breadbasket of its bounty. That crime, which constitutes a new form of economic terrorism and is tantamount to a war crime, is being committed against the Syrian people by the occupying forces with the assistance of their affiliated terrorist organizations and separatist militias, which continue to bombard cities and regions, destroy infrastructure, displace people from their homes, murder and abduct civilians and rob and plunder their property by force of arms. Now, in their latest criminal act, they have burned tens of thousands of hectares of wheat and barley and destroyed and looted power stations, even as they continue to plunder the natural resources of Syria, including its oil and gas.

The burning of crops by the occupying forces is a crime that is aimed not only at harming the Syrian economy, but also at coercing, terrorizing, impoverishing and displacing Syrian farmers and forcing them to sell their crops to terrorist organizations and separatist militias and smuggle the crops into Turkish territory. The



information available to the Syrian Government and its allies in the war on terrorism confirms that the crime of burning the wheat crop in Syria is an integral part of the ongoing American and Western campaign of economic terrorism against Syria, the aim of which is to prevent Syrian civilians from benefiting from the vast agricultural lands that were recovered from armed terrorist organizations and then reclaimed and cultivated with wheat and barley. That information furthermore confirms that the Americans took a premeditated decision to burn agricultural land in various parts of Syria, including in territory controlled by the Syrian State but where there are still sleeper terrorist cells that have ties with Israel and the illegal American military base at Tanf, from which they receive instructions and logistical support.

As harvest time for the wheat and barley crops in Syria approaches, Apache aircraft belonging to the occupying American forces recently fired decoy flares while flying at low altitude over agricultural fields, causing several fires to erupt in the wheat and barley fields of a number of villages near the city of Shaddadah, which lies south of Hasakah city. Meanwhile, groups of occupying Turkish mercenaries torched a number of wheat and barley fields in several villages near the towns of Tall Tamr and Abu Rasayn in the Hasakah countryside, with the fires consuming nearly 20,000 dunums of those fields. In addition, those mercenaries fired mortar shells at fields in the villages of Umm al-Kayf, Dardarah and Tawilah in the Tall Tamr countryside, and the villages of Manajir, Ahras, Amiriyah, Tall Atash and Arrat Abu Bakr in the area of Ra's al-Ayn, burning thousands of other dunums.

At the same time as the occupying Turkish forces and their mercenaries were setting those fires, they set about stealing the crops by putting pressure on the inhabitants to sell them at the lowest prices, after which they smuggled them to Turkey. On 26 May 2020, the terrorist organizations affiliated with the regime of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan brought in harvesters to the occupied area of Ra's al-Ayn in the northern Hasakah countryside and stole farmers' crops and smuggled them to Turkish territory. Moreover, they seized some of the crops by threatening to burn farmers' fields unless they did as they were told. Those actions are part and parcel of a policy that is aimed at systematically preventing those crops from being shipped to areas controlled by the Syrian State. I should like to note that the Government of the Turkish regime recently announced that the first turbine at the Ilisu Dam on the Tigris River had entered into service and that the dam's artificial reservoir had been filled. Those ominous developments will diminish the amount of water from the Tigris River that reaches Syrians and Iraqis.

Second, a few days ago, despite demands by the United Nations and the international community and the call by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Syria to lift the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on the Syrian people, so as to enable it to cope with the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Government and the European Union issued two executive orders by which they renewed and tightened the unilateral coercive economic measures that they have imposed on the Syrian people. Meanwhile, the United States enacted the Caesar Act, which establishes new punitive economic measures against Syrians and any third parties who seek to engage in economic, commercial, investment and service activities that benefit Syrian civilians in Syria.

It goes without saying that imposing a blockade on the Syrian people, an act that is tantamount to economic terrorism, is nothing new. From 1979 until the present day, successive American Administrations have imposed coercive measures on the Syrian economy and its essential and service sectors, including the health-care, electricity, water, agriculture, manufacturing, aviation, oil, communications, technology, import/export and banking sectors, as well as public and private companies. United States administrations have used spurious pretexts related to combating terrorism to justify the imposition of these illegal measures, which have been and continue to be

an integral part of the traditional, senseless and terroristic American policy of putting pressure on governments with which they disagree politically and of supporting the Israeli occupation of Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese territory.

In the last decade, the Americans and Europeans have found a common interest in imposing coercive economic sanctions on the Syrian people, in order to support a destructive and dangerous policy that is being pursued by both sides. That policy has been and continues to be founded on supporting armed terrorist organizations and separatist militias in Syria, and engaging in economic extortion and terrorism against Syria and its allies, in order to spread chaos and instability, even if that means threatening the security and stability of the region and the world.

What is important for the Syrian Arab Republic today is that the United Nations, in particular its Secretary-General and his Special Envoy and those in the Security Council who are charged with maintaining international peace and security, should take a clear position that is then translated into practical measures aimed at ending hostile American and Western interference in the peace and humanitarian processes in Syria. The United Nations must also take practical measures that curb the effects of these coercive unilateral economic policies and measures on the Syrian people. It is important to remember that any brave and forthright position that the Organization takes with respect to this issue would be based on the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in all of which the Council maintains the right of the Syrian people to pursue a Syrian-led political process without foreign interference and free from the political, economic and terroristic pressure that continues to be organized and exerted by the Governments of States that are permanent members of the Security Council and supposedly responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

Third, I would like to point out that, over the past two months, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic has addressed several official letters to the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, some of which have been issued as United Nations documents, including [A/74/775-S/2020/259](#), [A/74/802-S/2020/297](#), [A/74/844-S/2020/368](#) and [S/2020/419](#). Those letters set out in detail, with numbers and documented information, the various profoundly negative impacts those unilateral coercive actions have had on the lives of the Syrian people, particularly in view of the global health, economic and social crises that have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the most recent of those letters, we presented documented information about the sabotage, looting and smuggling of Syrian power plants, one of which, the Zayzun thermal plant, is valued at \$660 million, by armed terrorist groups that are linked to Al-Qaida and receive support, funding and arms from Turkish officials. In addition, Turkish army and security forces facilitate the movement of those terrorist groups' members across the Syrian-Turkish border. In our letters, we have refuted the brazen and false claims made by the Americans and Europeans that those sanctions have no effect on Syrian civilians and that exemptions from those coercive unilateral economic sanctions have been provided and licenses issued for importing food and medical supplies into Syria. I should like to remind you and Member States that it is the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France that are preventing the United Nations development system from launching redevelopment and recovery projects in Syria, while at the same time they and others impose a suffocating economic blockade against the Syrian people. Such conduct exposes the hypocrisy of their political discourse, both in and outside the Security Council.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic formally requests the Secretary-General to instruct the competent legal officials of the Secretariat to prepare, as soon as possible, a report that assesses the extent to which the laws adopted and the executive decisions issued by the United States Government and the European Union

in order to impose an economic blockade on the Syrian people are compatible with the provisions of the Charter and the relevant Security Council resolutions, and that addresses the profoundly negative impact that they have had on the lives of the Syrian people. In preparing that report, they should take into account the fair and balanced positions that have been expressed recently by the Secretary-General and the representatives of more than 40 United Nations organizations and international bodies, and their clear demands for the lifting of the unilateral coercive economic measures that have been imposed on the Syrian people and the peoples of several countries around the world.

The Syrian State is absolutely confident that any impartial and transparent assessment by the United Nations will unambiguously acknowledge the profoundly negative impacts of those sanctions on the Syrian people and the unlawfulness and illegality of the granting by those government to their national legislative or judicial authorities of hypothetical and fictitious universal jurisdiction so that they can issue punitive laws that are effective beyond American and European territory and affect external parties, namely, the States targeted by the sanctions, as well as third parties that conclude contracts or enter into economic and commercial relations with the sanctioned States, in order to be able to threaten them with financial, banking and commercial penalties if they should conduct business with public or private entities in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In conclusion, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the practices of and crimes committed by the Governments of those States are tantamount to war crimes. Moreover, they violate the provisions and purposes of the Charter and the principles of international law, and they constitute a direct attack against the sovereignty, safety, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. Accordingly, the Secretary-General, by virtue of his position and mandate and in his capacity as facilitator of the political process in the Syrian Arab Republic, must adopt a clear and unequivocal position and take measures to ensure that all States, both within and outside the Security Council, honour their obligations under the Charter, international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions and refrain from any conduct that limits the independence and impedes the course of the political process, including the imposition of conditions that exceed those States' powers under international law and are aimed at changing and distorting the Syrian national identity and undermining the nature of relations between Syria and its neighbours and regional and international parties to the detriment of the country's sovereign interests and rights and the aspirations of its people for security and prosperity, and to the detriment of regional and global security and stability, and with a view to redrawing the map of the region in a manner that is reminiscent of the grave mistakes the League of Nations and the colonial powers committed a century ago that led to the demise of the League.

I ask that you treat this letter and the information set out herein as a formal complaint. Therefore, the Security Council and the Secretary-General, in accordance with their respective mandates, must investigate and take immediate action against the perpetrators. I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Bashar Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative