

We are a group of organisations and civil society groups expressing our continued horror at the ongoing situation in Syria. We stress the need for urgent and robust action to address the situation from its root – namely through civilian protection.

The overwhelming humanitarian responses of individuals, organisations, and governments around the world have helped to bring aid and comfort to Syrians in need both inside and outside Syria. At the same time, however, aid alone is not enough. Aid does not protect civilians from Assad and Russia's indiscriminate and illegal double-tap manoeuvres on hospitals, schools, bakeries, and homes. It does not prevent civilians from fleeing their country and becoming refugees. It does not provide political stability for those remaining in Syria. It does not provide security from the brutality of ISIS or prevent the spread of terrorism. Ultimately, aid is an important immediate response, but it is not the solution. The solution, as Syrians have been saying loud and clear, is to **#SaveMeInSyria**.

We note the international community's commitment to the political process as a means of achieving a political transition in Syria. However, we must recognise that the negotiated initiatives for Syria – including the seemingly endless rounds of Geneva talks – have failed because of a lack of enforcement. If we are to continue to insist on the political track, we must be able to enforce the resulting agreements.

We are tired of the endless political negotiations which we know will fail because of Assad and his allies' contempt for such processes and for international law more generally. We are frustrated that endless amounts of humanitarian aid are being doled out to Syria although we have not been able to end the humanitarian crisis itself. We therefore call upon the international community to implement immediate and enforceable measures – with a defined scope and purpose of civilian protection and in compliance with international humanitarian law – to address the root issue in Syria, namely civilian protection from the Assad and Russian killing machine.

We are not without options. Conducting aid drops to besieged areas can deny the Assad regime its use of siege warfare as a means of effectuating control. Economic sanctions against Russia can send a clear signal that its support of a criminal regime is unacceptable. The pursuit of an Emergency Special Session at the UN General Assembly can help to shame and to overcome Russia's abuse of its veto power in the UN Security Council. Military options, including a no-bombing zone, should not be off the table if they are deemed necessary and proportional.

Whatever route the international community chooses to follow, it must make civilian protection the heart of its policy on Syria. A failure to do so will only mean that the resulting humanitarian, refugee, and terrorism crises will continue. Syrians have been saying loud and clear that they want protection in Syria. They have been telling us, **#SaveMeInSyria**.