



June 30, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write on behalf of 10 non-governmental organizations with experience and expertise on the ongoing crisis in Syria regarding your upcoming meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin during the G20 meeting in Hamburg on July 7-8, 2017. During your meeting, we ask that you address the gross violation of humanitarian norms that has characterized the violence in Syria, a conflict which now has killed and displaced millions of civilians, creating the largest flow of refugees since the Second World War.

Throughout the conflict in Syria, our organizations have documented widespread violations of International Humanitarian Law, including attacks on and besiegement of civilians, the targeting of medical personnel and facilities, deliberate blocking of humanitarian aid, and the use of chemical weapons. Where the U.N. Security Council has sought to advance justice and accountability for these attacks, even in limited ways, these attempts have been systematically blocked by Russia, at times joined by China. In April this year, Russia used its Security Council veto for the eighth time with regard to the conflict in Syria, this time to block independent investigation of the Khan Sheikhoun chemical attack.

As we near the reopening of U.N.-sponsored peace talks in Geneva, it is paramount that all parties to the conflict ensure the following:

- No blocking, restriction, or delaying of access to humanitarian aid convoys so that all people in need receive all aid in an immediate, unhindered, and sustained manner through the most direct routes, as required by international law and U.N. Security Council Resolutions 2165, 2191, 2285, and 2332.
- Lifting of all sieges and allowing freedom of movement for all civilians, including medical personnel, in, out, and across all towns.
- Facilitating medical evacuations for all in need, with a priority for those most in need in besieged and hard-to-reach areas.
- Immediately ceasing all attacks on medical facilities and personnel and developing effective measures to prevent and address acts of violence, attacks, and threats against medical personnel and facilities, in accordance with international law and Security Council Resolution 2286.
- Facilitating access by independent monitors who are mandated and empowered to report violations of international humanitarian law by any party, including attacks on civilians, health facilities, and humanitarian workers.

Until these basic standards of international law are upheld, there can be no political resolution to the Syrian conflict – itself a precondition for peace. Your meeting with President Putin offers an important opportunity to make clear that the United States is deeply committed to the rule of law in the international sphere. Sustained U.S. leadership must be employed to bring an end to the war crimes and crimes against humanity occurring in Syria.

We thank you for your careful consideration of these matters.

Sincerely,

CARE

Center for Civilians in Conflict

Doctors of the World

Global Responsibility to Protect

Human Rights First

Physicians for Human Rights

Refugees International

Syrian American Medical Society

Syria Relief and Development (SRD)

The Syria Campaign

CC:

Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State

The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Dina Powell
Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategy

The Honorable Nikki Haley
U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations