



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

(For immediate press release)

**STATEMENT BY
THE HON. MR. HAMZAH ZAINUDIN
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL BRIEFING
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTIONS 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) AND 2191 (2014)**

24 APRIL 2015

Mr. President,

I wish to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his monthly report to the Council and also to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Baronnes Valerie Amos for her briefing to the Council on the humanitarian situation and implementation of the Security Council resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191 regarding humanitarian assistance and access into Syria. I also thank the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Ms. Ertharin Cousin for her briefing on the work of the WFP and its partners regarding its monthly food assistance programme in Syria.

2. I further thank the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Antonio Guterres for his updates to the Council on the situation of Syrian refugees in the neighbouring countries. We are also very privileged to have listened to the briefing by Ms. Angelina Jolie, the UNHCR Special Envoy who has devoted much effort to raise the international community's awareness on the plight of the Syrian refugees. We share Ms Jolie's concerns that too many innocent people are paying the price of the conflict in Syria and that the international community has to step up and do more.

Mr. President,

3. Despite the international community's efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people, we deeply regret that the on-the-ground humanitarian situation has deteriorated significantly. Indiscriminate attacks and the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure by both government and armed opposition forces have continued without respite. We are perplexed that the parties to the conflict, each claiming to be representing or fighting for the Syrian people, are seemingly oblivious to the suffering and destruction that they are inflicting onto the Syrian people.

4. The ever-increasing numbers of civilian deaths and injuries, displaced persons and refugees are evident of the destructive toll inflicted by this conflict. While the

humanitarian statistics may speak for itself, this Council must continue to speak for the victims of this conflict, namely the millions of Syrians who continue to suffer.

5. The siege and starve strategy onto whole cities by the parties to the conflict to ensure the submission and surrender of whole populations has added another horrifying dimension to the Syrian conflict. It is appalling that the besieging of cities and starving of whole populations have been increasingly employed as a strategy of war by the parties to the conflict. We unequivocally condemn the besieging of whole cities and starving of populations as a strategy of war.

Mr. President,

6. The barbarity of such a strategy is unprecedented and unparalleled in modern history. Whole populations not only face death and injury, they are also subjected to inhumane and horrific conditions in the course of their daily survival. Physically trapped and besieged in the cities and deprived and denied of basic essentials such as food, water, healthcare and medicines, it is beyond our imagination to understand the daily struggle and hardship that they have to go through in order to survive.

7. Despite the adoption of resolutions 2139, 2165 and 2191, we are deeply concerned that the delivery of humanitarian aid, especially cross-line access continues to face security and administrative obstacles. While we acknowledge the cooperation of the Syrian government in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid, we are of the view that the continued administrative obstacles placed by the Government of Syria on life-saving humanitarian aid are becoming increasingly unsustainable.

8. The prohibition of medical and surgical supplies intended for the treatment of the already suffering Syrian population is unacceptable. The international community cannot tolerate the imposition of such obstacles any longer. These humanitarian aid and supplies must be allowed to reach their intended destinations and recipients.

9. We commend the work of the UN humanitarian agencies and other humanitarian partners, in the face of the extremely challenging security environment, to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people. The dedication and commitment of these humanitarian personnel is indeed highly admirable.

10. In light of the obstacles placed onto the delivery of humanitarian aid and relief, intended or otherwise, we are of the view that the international community's concerns ought to be reflected by this Council's continuous monitoring and ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people. The Council can ill-afford to sit back and simply hope for the parties to the conflict to respect international law, international humanitarian law and the provisions of the relevant resolutions.

11. The escalation of the situation in and the siege of Yarmouk, near Damascus has further sensitised the international community of the humanitarian situation of the people in besieged cities. Once a refuge and safe haven for more than 160,000

Palestinian refugees, the worsening conflict has now trapped the remaining approximate 18,000 Palestinians in Yarmouk. It is deeply disheartening for the Palestinian refugees who had sought refuge in Syria are now embroiled in and directly affected by the conflict.

12. Nevertheless, the situation is not unique to Yarmouk. Many other cities throughout Syria are faced with a similar situation. We cannot in good conscience continue to allow the suffering of the people in these besieged cities, whether in Yarmouk, Aleppo, Homs or elsewhere in Syria, to continue. We recognise that the Government of Syria has the primary responsibility regarding the protection of its people.

13. We however hold the view that, in light of the continued inability, unwillingness or failure of the Government in fulfilling its obligations, this Council has a an imperative to ensure the protection of civilians and that efforts are undertaken to enable humanitarian pauses for the delivery of aid, to establish humanitarian corridors and to allow the safe passage of civilians out of these besieged areas.

Mr. President,

14. We fully acknowledge that the humanitarian situation in Syria is intrinsically linked to the political resolution of the conflict. We therefore remain hopeful that the parties to the conflict would positively consider the freeze proposal by Mr. Staffan de Mistura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Syria. Nevertheless, there is mounting frustration among the international community that, despite its efforts, the parties to the conflict have remained obstinate towards finding a sustainable solution to the conflict.

15. Malaysia reiterates its view that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict. Malaysia firmly believes that the future of Syria should be determined through a Syrian-led political process by the Syrian people themselves. We are, in this regard, supportive of efforts to support, promote, encourage and facilitate an inclusive political transitional process aimed at fostering national reconciliation in Syria.

Mr. President,

16. We cannot allow our humanity to be lulled or desensitised by the horrors of the Syrian conflict. Neither can we allow our humanity to be corrupted by accepting that such horrors are corollary to or expected in the course of the conflict. In light of the continued and worsening humanitarian situation in Syria, we have an imperative, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure that international law, international humanitarian law and the relevant resolutions are respected by the parties to the conflict.

Thank you, Mr. President.