

June X, 2021

The Honorable President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write ahead of your meeting with Vladimir Putin in Geneva on June 16 and implore you to put pressure on President Putin and Russia to fully support the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, specifically as it relates to a “Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition” in which President Bashar Assad steps down from power, as the resolution calls for.

UNSC Resolution 2254 was adopted by the Security Council over five years ago! The resolution, adopted on December 18, 2015, reiterates that the “only sustainable solution to the current crisis in Syria is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people...including through the establishment of an inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers, which shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent while ensuring continuity of governmental institutions.”

In fact, there has been little to no progress at all in the UN-facilitated negotiations with the Assad government on Syria’s political transition. And, you know as well as we do of the regime’s numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity, and their terrible effect on millions of Syrians. When the Assad regime was most vulnerable and the Syrian people’s uprising may have prevailed, Russia stepped in and secured Assad’s destiny with overwhelming military force. Since then, President Putin administration has done everything in his power to keep President Assad in place and this has been to the awful detriment of the Syrian people and the country’s future.

Russia has committed a long list of crimes in Syria including the indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas, including medical facilities and markets, compounds for internally displaced people and so much more. These actions run counter to everything America stands for and universal human rights, which put people first. Syria continues to suffer from Russia’s malign influence.

As we also very well know, the recent, sham elections in Syria have further delegitimized Assad’s role as the representative of the Syrian people. Your condemnation of him and his regime’s nefarious continuation of illegitimate power has been well-received by the Syrian-American community as we, in Congress, continue to fight for the Syrian peoples’ dignity and freedom.

Thank you for your decisive stance and for calling out the Syrian elections for what they are: “neither free nor fair.” When you meet President Putin later this month, we call on you to show leadership by standing up for the Syrian people who cannot do so alone.

The goal has been, and remains, a political transition in Syria, which Russia agreed to as a signatory of UN Security Council Resolution 2254. We call upon you, Mr. President, to hold the line on

Syria, and to represent the will of the Security Council and the broader international community in your talks with President Putin. It is the correct thing to do and very much in the US interest.

Sincerely yours,