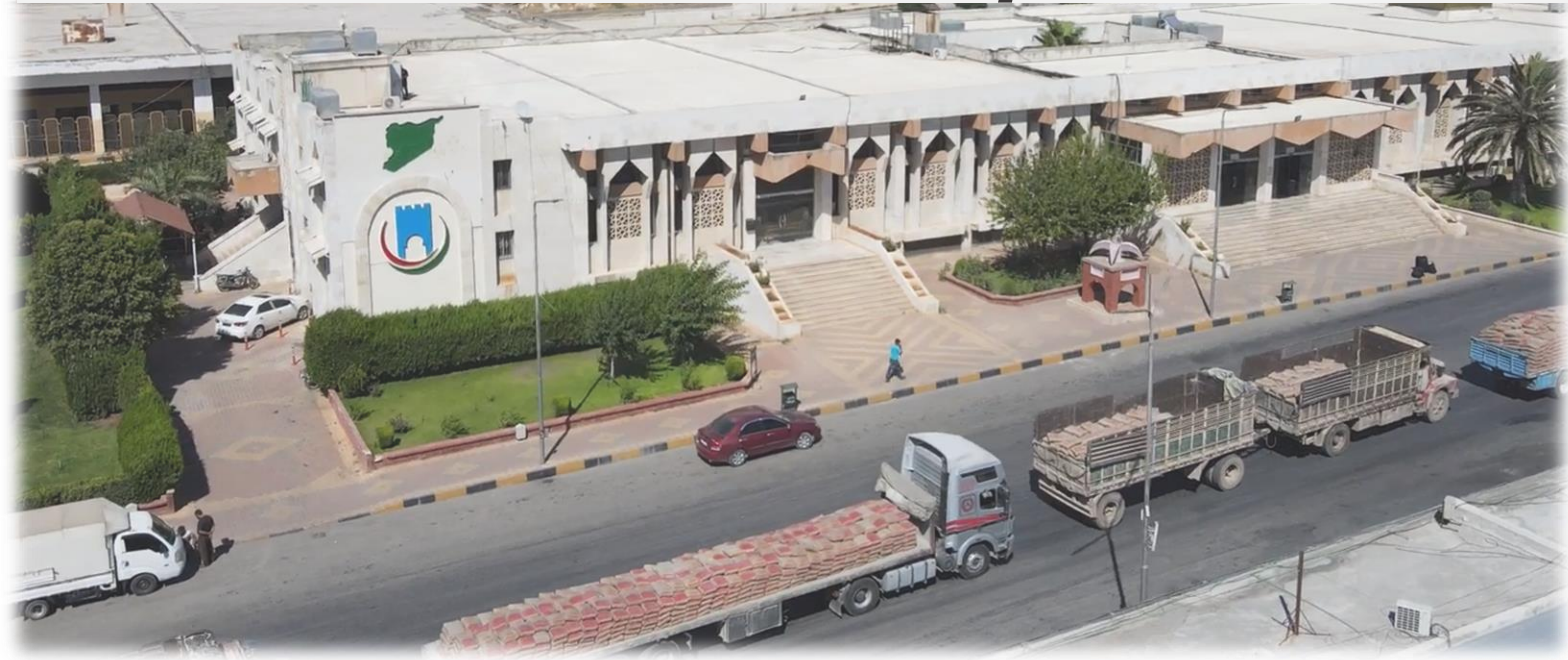




Position Paper



SNA Position Paper, regarding Syrian Regime’s Letter to grant the UN agencies permission to use BAH to deliver Humanitarian Aid in NW Syria. July 16, 2023.

Introduction:

Following the Syrian Regime being neither willing nor capable of delivering aid to those in need in areas outside of its control, the UN Security Council came together to adopt Resolution 2165 in 2014, giving the UN a mandate to use four border crossings to conduct humanitarian operations into Syria. This resolution helped to establish effective coordination by enabling the “Whole of Syria” architecture, which has allowed UN agencies, Syrian and international NGOs operating across borders, across conflict lines, and in Syria Regime-held areas to generate a comprehensive understanding of needs on the ground, coordinate their response and maximize the impact of aid throughout Syria while maintaining neutrality, independence, and impartiality. The coordination architecture facilitated by the resolution has enabled a more transparent, principled, and accountable humanitarian response, which is particularly important in a challenging operating environment such as Syria.

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However, and over the years, all other border crossings have not been authorized, with access from BAH only to NWS following the UN XB mandate. On July 10th, the UNSC members failed to reauthorize resolution 2672 despite the additional needs that arose from the earthquakes. Simultaneously, we have seen with concern a consent letter from Syrian Regime to grant the UN agencies permission to use Bab Al Hawa border crossing to deliver Humanitarian Aid to civilians in Northwest Syria for six months.

Syrian Regime has a long history of obstructing and impeding humanitarian aid efforts in Syria. It has consistently used access to vital supplies and assistance as a tool for political manipulation and control, besieging out of control area as they did in Rural Damascus, Madaya, Al-Zabadani, Homs and Daraa, prolonging the suffering of the Syrian people.

Our Position:

Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA), with the consent of its humanitarian NGO-members, believe and stress the following:

- The United Nations should refuse such an offer from Syrian Regime who was responsible for grave human rights abuses and atrocities against its citizens and should protect the Humanitarian Aid from being controlled by Syrian Regime.
- Syrian Regime's letter must be seen in the context of its ongoing violations of International Law and its failure to meet its obligations under Security Council resolutions, including the provision of unimpeded humanitarian access.
- Accepting this letter would not only reward Syrian Regime's past behavior but also enable them to further exploit the humanitarian situation for their own political advantage. It would undermine the principles of humanitarian action and jeopardize the safety and well-being of the Syrian people who are in dire need of assistance.
- We also emphasize that the seriousness of this paper lies in Syrian Regime's quest to fully control the humanitarian process for political gains and under his conditions that will destroy all efforts related to the humanitarian response of those in need.

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Furthermore, it is important to note that the Bab Al Hawa border crossing has been a critical lifeline for the delivery of humanitarian aid to millions of Syrians, providing access to food, medical supplies, and other essential resources. Allowing Syrian Regime to control this crucial humanitarian artery would endanger the independence and impartiality of aid operations, potentially subjecting aid workers and beneficiaries to further risk and harm.

The UN Monitoring Mechanism, also contingent on the resolution, adds an additional layer of security to a response where regulations, due diligence, and transparency of humanitarian activities are some of the most stringent in the world. The resolution also requires that the UNSG provides a report to the Council every 60 days with “detailed information on the humanitarian assistance delivered through UN humanitarian cross-border operations, including their transparency, the distribution mechanism, the number of beneficiaries, operating partners, locations of aid deliveries at district-level and the volume and nature of items delivered”.

Proposed Actions:

We call for:

- 1- The extension of the UNSCR reauthorizing Bab Al-Hawa for a period of 12 months by the Security Council. Even though, we believe that delivering humanitarian aid no longer needs a UNSC resolution.
- 2- Grant Syrian Regime no eligibility to make a decision pertaining the delivery of humanitarian aid to Northwest Syria.
- 3- The establishment of alternative, independent, and impartial mechanisms that ensure the safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need, bypassing the control of the Syrian Regime. It is essential to explore innovative solutions that uphold the principles of humanitarian action and prioritize the well-being of the Syrian people.

The End.

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