

RÉPUBLIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE
ASSEMBLÉE DU PEUPLE
LE PRÉSIDENT



الجمهورية العربية السورية
مجلس الشعب
مكتب الرئيس

N° 382
Damascus 29 August 2013

Rt Hon John Bercow MP
Speaker's Office
House of Commons
Westminster
London SW1

Greetings,

Please find attached an urgent formal Open Letter from myself as Speaker of the Syrian Parliament. I am sending this on behalf of the Members of the Syrian Parliament, which institution has functioned continuously since its foundation in 1919.

The present Parliament's mandate comes from the election of 7/5/2012 and we greet our fellow Parliamentarians in Great Britain.

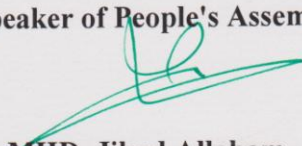
In view of today's crucial debate on a possible UK military attack on our country, it is vital that the attached letter be circulated immediately to every British Member of Parliament in advance of the debate.

In addition, we ask that you read out the letter during the opening stages of the debate in order to ensure that the Honourable Members are fully apprised of the situation in Syria and of the proposals contained within the attached letter, and in order to ensure that the full text of the letter is entered into the records of Hansard.

With the greatest respect, we feel it your duty as elected Parliamentarians to exhaust all such avenues of diplomacy before committing your nation to war.

Yours faithfully,

Speaker of People's Assembly



MHD. Jihad Allaham



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Rt Hon John Bercow MP
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An Open Letter to Our Fellow Parliamentarians of the British House of Commons

Dear Sirs and Madams

We write to you urgently as you debate launching an attack on Syria. We write to you as fellow Parliamentarians and representatives of our respective peoples.

More important still, we write to you as fathers and mothers, as members of families and communities really not so different to yours. We write to you as fellow human beings for, if you bomb us, shall we not bleed?

Despite our common humanity, we are divided by mutual suspicion. Such divisions have throughout history been the starting points for terrible conflicts – as we are reminded as time ticks away to the centenary of August 1914.

Local tragedies become regional wars that explode into global conflict because of breakdowns in communication. So we implore you to communicate through civilised dialogue rather than a monologue of blood and fire.

It was just such a propaganda monologue that led to so many British MPs being taken in by the dodgy dossier on chemical WMDs in Iraq. There are some who, despite the misery caused by that illegal meddling, now want yet another war. A war that could plunge secular Syria, and indeed the whole region, into a cataclysm of sectarian mass murder that will dwarf the terrible human suffering we have already seen.



Those who want to send others to fight will talk in the Commons of the casualties in the Syrian conflict. But before you rush over the cliffs of war, would it not be wise to pause? Remember the thousands of British soldiers killed and maimed in Afghanistan and Iraq, not to mention the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi dead, both in the war and in the continuing chaos.

That said, yours is a very old and well-established democracy that is a model for us. So we ask you not to bomb us but to work with us. We need your help as Parliamentarians to build a stable, just and fair secular democracy in Syria.

That is why we urge you come to Syria and find out more about what is going on here for yourselves. You need to come to Syria to measure the situation before you cut – especially when the scissors will cost your constituents £1 Million each, and the cloth they cut is human flesh.

Despite our current differences, we Syrians have great respect for your British institutions, particularly your Mother of Parliaments and your legal system. That is why we hereby:

- 1) Invite you, as fellow Parliamentarians, to come to our country, either en masse or by sending a delegation, at the earliest time convenient to you;
- 2) Suggest that it might be particularly appropriate for such a visit to coincide with the conclusion of the current United Nations' investigation into the chemical attack – which we condemn without reservation;
- 3) Invite you to bring your own experts with you to check for themselves the UN's conclusions.

As for our admiration of the English legal system, it is such that we are in the process of obtaining senior Counsel's opinion as to the grounds for our bringing action through your courts against those responsible should the UK government launch an attack on Syria.

We believe that such an aggressive and unprovoked act of war would be illegal because:



a) Syria is a sovereign state that does not pose any threat to the United Kingdom;

b) The United Nations Security Council has not sanctioned such an attack;

c) The UN Report into the terrible incident in a suburb of Damascus has not yet even been published. No-one can yet know whether it will conclude that there is enough evidence for any kind of prosecution, let alone acts of mass execution with your own Weapons of Mass Destruction;

d) The UN has, by contrast, already concluded that there is very strong evidence that Islamist terrorists from the al-Nusrah Front have used poison gas against Syrian soldiers and innocent civilians. To act against people who you regard, without legitimate evidence, as chemical weapons criminals, while aiding and abetting Wahhabi rebels who stand accused of precisely that crime by the United Nations, is surely in breach of your basic principle of Natural Justice.

Those, at least, will be the arguments laid before your courts, the European Court and in The Hague by injured and bereaved Syrians in the event of an attack by the UK government. Each and every British MP who encourages or orders such an attack will be held personally legally liable for all the losses and damages so suffered by Syrian individuals, families and society as a whole. We will be writing separately to your Attorney-General as soon as we have the formal opinion of Queen's Counsel.

Overall, however, we urge you to consider not so much the legal risk to yourselves but the potential human cost of firing Cruise missiles into the Middle East powder keg. Western meddling has already created one totally failed state in Iraq and Mr. Hague's adventurism has put Libya on the same downward spiral. If you do the same in Syria, then you will in due course also have on your hands the blood of untold thousands in Syria.

We appreciate your sharing our revulsion at the images of the chemical attack. We are not only co-operating fully with the UN Investigation Team, but are also putting together our own formal inquiry into what happened. You may not be aware that Syrian experts are also investigating the question of who carried out this atrocity against our people, but we



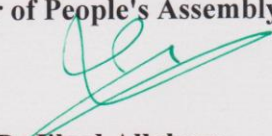
Parliamentarians are determined to get to the truth and to bring those responsible to justice, whoever they are.

In the meantime we ask you to stop the rush to reckless action. It is in your power today to turn Great Britain from the war path and back to the diplomatic road. We hope to meet you upon that road, and to talk, as civilised peoples should.

This is all the more important since, in reality, we face the same terrorist threat. By attacking and weakening Syrian targets and institutions you would automatically strengthen our common enemy, Al Qaida and its affiliates. Instead of fighting each other, we should be working together to implement fully UN Security Council Resolutions 1373 and 1624 against terror. Instead of being enemies, we should be allies, and walk the road to peace, truth and reconciliation together.

With Best Regards

Speaker of People's Assembly


MHD. Jihad Allaham