

Press Releases: Assad Regime Intentions in the Southwest De- escalation Zone

Press Statement
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The United States is concerned by reports of an impending Assad regime operation in southwest Syria within the boundaries of the de-escalation zone negotiated between the United States, Jordan, and the Russian Federation last year and reaffirmed between Presidents Trump and Putin in Da Nang, Vietnam in November. The United States remains committed to maintaining the stability of the southwest de-escalation zone and to the ceasefire underpinning it. We also caution the Syrian regime against any actions that risk broadening the conflict or jeopardize the ceasefire. As a guarantor of this de-escalation area with Russia and Jordan, the United States will take firm and appropriate measures in response to Assad regime violations.

The Presidents of the United States and Russia agreed in Da Nang to de-escalate the conflict. This agreement must be enforced and respected. Russia has declared to the world and to the UNSC that it will “guarantee” ceasefires in its self-declared de-escalation zones. Unfortunately, the Assad regime, with the support of Russia and Iran, has repeatedly violated these de-escalation zones, most recently in its brutal assault on East Ghouta. The Assad regime and its allies continue to prolong the conflict by ignoring their own de-escalation agreements and stonewalling the Geneva process.

Russia is duly responsible as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to use its diplomatic and military advantage over the Assad regime to stop attacks and compel the Assad regime to cease further military offensives. Russia has blocked UN Security Council actions that would have held Assad accountable for the use of chemical weapons and possibly saved innocent lives in Syria 11 times so far in this conflict. Six of those vetoes related to the use of chemical weapons, and others were providing humanitarian access and aid, and ceasing attacks against civilians. Russia should live up to its self-professed commitments in accordance with UNSCR 2254 and the southwest ceasefire, embodied in the Da Nang Statement issued by Presidents Trump and

Putin.

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