

The European Union must act over Assad's deadly offensive in Zabadani

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Commenting on the ongoing joint-offensive by the Assad regime and Hezbollah in the city of Zabadani, the Syrian National Coalition's representative to the Benelux and European Union, Mouaffaq Nyrabia said:

“Assad's military forces supported by the terrorist militia Hezbollah are intensifying their brutal and indiscriminate assault on Zabadani. This includes credible reports on the use of napalm and the unlawful use of deadly barrel bombs by the regime. According to monitoring groups, Assad's helicopters dropped a further 12 barrel bombs on Zabadani this morning, bringing the total to approximately 1000 since the start of this offensive a month ago. The regime's scorched earth strategy in Zabadani is deliberately targeting residential areas in order to displace civilians, and allow its militias to advance further into the city. I call on the European Union to unconditionally condemn the Assad regime and its militias responsible for this brutal assault.

The role of the Hezbollah in Syria has been decisive in enabling the regime's continued pursuit of an all-out military victory and continued human rights crimes committed against the Syrian people. The EU must take steps to cut off the proscribed terrorist organisation's ongoing support for the Assad regime – including targeted sanctions against senior Hezbollah figures facilitating the supply of arms and fighters onto Syrian soil. On behalf of the Syrian National Coalition, I reiterate serious concerns that the lifting of sanctions under the Nuclear Deal with Iran will only further enable increased financial and military support to the Assad regime and Hezbollah across Syria.

These latest events in Zabadani reaffirm the urgent need for protection for all Syrians from the Assad regime's indiscriminate and illegal weaponry. Barrel Bombs now account for the largest share of civilian deaths in this conflict – and represent a policy evident across Syria of the deliberate targeting of civilians by the regime. I call on the EU to reinforce its support for a political solution in Syria with practical steps, and take seriously the need for all necessary measures to protect civilians in order to save lives, facilitate urgent humanitarian assistance to those in need and the gradual return of Syrian refugees.”