

Foreign Minister Steinmeier on the situation in Syria

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14.08.2016 - Press release 

Foreign Minister Steinmeier issued the following statement to the newspaper “Welt am Sonntag” today (14 August) on the situation in Syria :

What is currently happening in Aleppo is a new level of escalation in the five-and-a-half years of the Syrian civil war. We are now receiving reports once again on the use of chlorine gas against innocent men, women and children. We condemn the use of internationally banned weapons – be they chemical weapons or barrel bombs – in the strongest possible terms and call on all parties to the conflict to do their utmost to protect the civilian population in Syria.

However, the people in Aleppo are not only suffering as a result of the daily air raids – the situation as regards the supply of food, drinking water and medicines is becoming more disastrous from one day to the next.

We are in talks with the United Nations, the United States and Russia on how the so urgently needed humanitarian aid can be delivered to Aleppo under the supervision of the United Nations, that is, on how humanitarian access can be created. I will also discuss this with my Russian counterpart in Yekaterinburg on Monday.

The Syria contact group has already agreed that air drops can be considered as an option in cases of systematic refusal to provide humanitarian aid. It already proved necessary to deliver supplies to the people in the Syrian city of Deir ez-Zor via airlifts because of the situation on the ground. If it remains impossible to supply adequate humanitarian aid to both parts of Aleppo, we should also consider the option of airdrops, particularly of medical products.

Aside from the situation in Aleppo, it is obvious that we need a solution for Syria as a whole. There must be a ceasefire – for the people in Syria, but also so that we create a better starting point for a new round of talks in Geneva. The fact is that what has brought us to this tragic pass is not the attempt to resolve the conflict through negotiations, but rather the illusion that it can be resolved by military means.

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Keywords

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