

Dear

I am very concerned about the conflict in Syria and the surrounding region. I have been heartened to read that peace talks have begun in Vienna with representatives from countries involved in supporting different sides in this conflict. However, it seems that neither the Syrian Government nor opposition have been invited to these talks.

Of greater concern to me is the absence of representation from Civil Society, and in particular the fact that women are not present at these negotiations. You will be aware of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, 'Women Peace and Security', which obliges member states of the United Nations to include women in all peace negotiations. I know, through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which is in contact with Syrian women's organisations that Syrian women are ready to attend peace talks, preferably as participants, or simply as observers. Not only are the Syrian women able to provide an understanding of the gendered effects of war on women and children: they are keen to contribute toward peace-building under international commitments to UNSCR1325.

We know that families are risking their children's lives when they attempt to escape this conflict. Only a negotiated peace will stop this flow of refugees.

Can you please tell me what the British Government is doing to bring an end to the Syrian conflict? In particular I wish to be reassured that Parliament will not be asked to agree to UK bombing Syria, and no such bombing will take place without the authority of Parliament.

Members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom would be pleased to discuss this issue with you.