



By Dr.A.M.Katme

UK and U.S. to offer brutal Syrian dictator Bashar Assad and British wife 'immunity from prosecution' despite massacres of women and children that's killed 14,000

- Diplomats say they would, in effect, be forgiven for role in crackdown
- More than 14,000 have died; hundreds of women and children massacred
- Could be offered safe passage to Switzerland for conference next week
- Plans to have 'Yemen-style' transition of power, to result in elections
- Assads may be allowed to flee to another country, maybe Russia or Iran
- Syrian MiG fighter jet lands in Jordan in first defection involving an aircraft
- Red Cross desperately trying to get into Homs amid renewed fighting

Brutal Syrian dictator Bashar Assad and his British-born wife Asma may be offered 'immunity from prosecution' if it resulted in the end of his regime, diplomats have claimed.

The staggering suggestion would, in effect, 'forgive' the man responsible for the deaths of more than 14,000 citizens as he viciously cracked down on a 15-month uprising.

Assad's troops have been blamed in recent weeks for the massacres of hundreds of women and children. Amnesty International said he is guilty of 'crimes against humanity'.

GRAPHIC CONTENT WARNING...



Saved? Syrian President Bashar Assad and British wife Asma could be offered immunity from prosecution if it paves the way for him to leave power



Killed: Severely disabled Abdullah, left, and twins Ghias, centre, and Firas right were all slaughtered in Houla

But U.S. and British diplomats said the move, to protect him from prosecution by the International Criminal Court, may be the only way to end the bloody conflict.

The United Nations last week said the country is descending into civil war.

It would also mean Assad could not be put on trial for war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity - and could allow him to flee to another country, possibly Russia or Iran.

Officials said they wanted to offer Syria's First Couple safe passage to a conference in Switzerland, which could be held as early as next week.



Anger: Britain and France have condemned the attack on children and pointed the fingers at Syrian troops



Terrible aftermath: A heartbreaking image of children said to have been killed in Houla by Assad's thugs

SYRIAN MiG FIGHTER JET PILOT DEFECTS TO JORDAN

A Syrian MiG 21 fighter jet landed in Jordan today in the first defection involving an aircraft since the start of the uprising.

'The plane landed at King Hussein Airbase at 11am,' a Jordanian security source said.

It is a military airport 50 miles northeast of the capital Amman.

Syrian state television said communication was lost with a plane of the same model at 10.34am. They said it was on a training mission near the southern border with Jordan.

Syrian regime and opposition leaders, the five permanent UN Security Council members and key regional powers such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia would also be invited.

It would focus on UN-Arab League special envoy Kofi Annan's six-point peace-plan, which called for a 'Syrian-led political process'.

They would talk about how to model Assad's exit to that of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh in February.

This would end in Assad leaving power and create a timetable of 18 to 24 months to establish a new government. Free elections would eventually be held.

The proposal, diplomats claimed, came after Barack Obama and David Cameron met individually with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the G20 in Mexico.

Officials from both the U.S. and Britain said they were convinced after the meetings with Putin that he was not 'wedded' to Assad remaining in power indefinitely.



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International attention: UN observers view bodies at a hospital morgue before the burial of the Houla dead



Outrage: Mourners attend a mass burial in Syria for more than 100 people, half of whom were children, killed in a massacre in the city of Houla last month

A senior British official told the Guardian: 'Those of us who had bilaterals thought there was just enough out of those meetings to make it worth pursuing the objective of negotiating a transitional process in Syria.'

'It is hard to see a negotiated solution in which one of the participants would be willing voluntarily to go off to the International Criminal Court.'

Saleh was granted immunity in February, despite the massacre of civilians during a popular uprising against his regime.

His Vice President Abdu Rabbo Mansour Hadi, to whom he ceded power, is drawing up a new Constitution.

Today, the International Committee of the Red Cross said it would try to evacuate wounded and sick civilians and those who want to leave rebel-held areas in the embattled central Syrian city of Homs.

Red Cross spokesman Rabab al-Rifai said that in addition to the planned evacuations, the ICRC will also distribute humanitarian goods such as medical kits in the neighborhoods that have endured shelling and clashes for the past 10 days.

Activists said the shelling in Homs continued today, killing two people.



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Wounded: A Syrian girl in the town of Dael is treated after being injured in cross-fire



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Tragic: The body of a child who was killed during the unrest in Daraa (left) and two dead children in Dael (right)

Homs, Syria's third largest city, has been one of the hardest hit regions since the uprising against President Bashar Assad's regime began 15 months ago.

Rebels control several neighborhoods, which government troops have attacked intensely over the past two weeks. Activists said conditions in the areas under siege are growing more dire by the day.

In some parts, there is barely any electricity or running water, telephone lines are unreliable and residents are forced to hide in shelters during daily shelling.

The International Committee of the Red Cross called on Syria's government and rebel groups yesterday to allow it to reach trapped civilians and evacuate the wounded and sick.

Khaled Erksoussi, head of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent's emergency operations, said Syrian authorities have approved the operation, which is supposed to begin later today.

'Hundreds of civilians are stuck in the old city of Homs, unable to leave and find refuge in safer areas, because of the ongoing armed confrontations,' said the ICRC's head of operations for the region, Beatrice Megevand-Roggo.



Activists: Syrian anti-regime fighters and citizens take a man from a pick-up truck who was wounded during the shelling by government forces in the city of Qusayr

Among the hundreds of civilians besieged in the neighborhoods are about 90 Christians. The Christians, who are trapped in Homs' Hamidiyeh and Bustan Diwan neighborhoods, include four children under the age of 10.

Three attempts to evacuate the neighborhoods' Christians over the past 10 days did not succeed and a priest in the city said the rebels appear to want to keep the civilians inside to use them in the future as a bargaining chip.

Thousands of Christians have fled Hamidiyeh and Bustan Diwan after they fell in rebel hands in February.

Christians, who make up about 10 per cent of Syria's population, say they are particularly vulnerable to the violence sweeping the country of 22 million people.



Destruction: A neighbourhood targeted by shelling

They are fearful that Syria will become another Iraq, with Christians caught in the crossfire between rival Islamic groups.

In other violence around Syria, activists said government troops shelling of the southern town of Inkhil killed at least nine people and wounded many others.

The Local Coordination Committees and the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said shells hit residential buildings in the town.

The LCC said 13 were killed, while the Observatory put the death toll at nine adding: 'There are reports of other martyrs who are still under the rubble.'

Inkhil is in the southern province of Daraa, where the uprising began in March last year.



Victim: The body of a man, who residents say was killed by shelling, lies in a makeshift hospital in Houla near Homs yesterday