

Can the UN Still Save Syria?

Views from a Former Special Envoy

by [Staffan de Mistura \(/experts/staffan-de-mistura\)](/experts/staffan-de-mistura)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Staffan de Mistura is the former UN Special Envoy for Syria (2014-2019). A veteran diplomat with a forty-year career at the UN, he previously served as Italy's deputy foreign minister.



Brief Analysis

Is it too late for the UN to counter the Assad regime and its allies on their abuses or to salvage cross-border mechanisms for humanitarian aid? Former UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura joined a virtual Policy Forum to probe the prospects.

Even as UN agencies coordinate indispensable daily assistance to millions of Syrians under the shadow of COVID-19, the war's political outcome remains deadlocked. The Security Council has been paralyzed over the issue for years, exacerbating its global legitimacy crisis and creating opportunities for actors like Russia and Iran to establish alternative tracks. Can the UN confront the Assad regime and its allies on looming issues such as chemical weapons and the abuse of deconfliction channels to attack health facilities, or salvage the cross-border mechanism for humanitarian assistance? And how can the UN special envoy save the most crucial portions of the peace process he was tasked with leading?

To discuss these questions, The Washington Institute hosted a virtual Policy Forum with Staffan de Mistura. Institute visiting fellow and career French diplomat Charles Thepaut will moderate the conversation.

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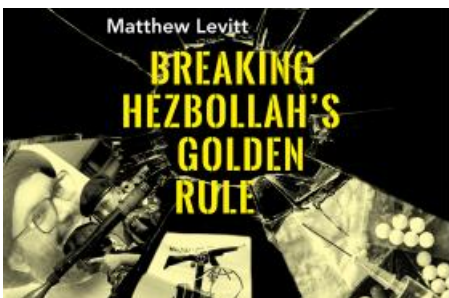
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