

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
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To: H
Subject: Fw: UPDATED TRIP CLIP: US readies new sanctions on Syria as Clinton heads to Turkey for talks on post-Assad future

From: Nuland, Victoria J
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From: PA Clips [mailto:paclips@state.gov]
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Subject: UPDATED TRIP CLIP: US readies new sanctions on Syria as Clinton heads to Turkey for talks on post-Assad future

US readies new sanctions on Syria as Clinton heads to Turkey for talks on post-Assad future

By Associated Press, Updated: Friday, August 10, 8:18 AM

ACCRA, Ghana — The Obama administration is readying new sanctions on Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime and its allies as U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton heads to Turkey for weekend talks with top Turkish officials and Syrian opposition activists.

Senior U.S. officials traveling with Clinton as she wraps up a nine-nation Africa tour in Ghana and Benin before flying to Turkey on Friday said the fresh sanctions aimed at hastening Assad's ouster were imminent. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to preview the move.

The sanctions are expected to complement existing penalties, which have targeted Assad's inner circle, including his entire Cabinet, along with Iranian individuals and entities that have been providing support to the regime.

They come as Clinton prepares for Saturday's discussions in Istanbul that will focus on forming a "common operational picture" with the Turks and Syrians to guide a democratic transition in post-Assad Syria, the officials said.

Clinton will also boost humanitarian relief to tens of thousands of Syrians fleeing the country, they said. In Istanbul, Clinton is also expected to announce an additional \$5.5 million in U.S. humanitarian aid.

The new assistance will bring the total U.S. aid to \$82 million since the crisis began 17 months ago.

Coordinating support for the Syrian opposition will be a key agenda item, the officials said, adding that Clinton was keen to understand the Turkish position as conditions inside Syria deteriorate with rebel forces gaining strength and effectiveness.

The United States and its western allies are stopping short of providing lethal assistance to the opposition, but it has become an open secret that several Arab countries are supplying weapons and ammunition.

The officials said Clinton would take what she learns in Istanbul from the Turks and the Syrian activists she meets and begin to discuss points of agreement with European foreign ministers in the coming days in preparation for a new Friends of Syria meeting to be held in at an as-yet unscheduled date in late August or early September.

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