

## **Final Communiqué of the Expanded Conference for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces** **Riyadh 22-23 November 2017**

On 22-23 November, the second conference for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces was held in Riyadh. The participants included representatives of the opposition and revolutionary bodies, independents, military forces, figures from civil society, and local and community councils from all components of the Syrian people.

The conference aimed to unite Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition forces in a common vision for a political solution based on the Geneva Communiqué (2012), Security Council resolutions 2118 and 2254, and all relevant international resolutions to establish a transitional period that leads the country to a civil, democratic, and pluralistic political system that achieves justice, considers all citizens equal under the law, delivers justice to the victims of tyranny and war crimes, and brings all Syrians together again in their homeland, which guarantees their freedoms, preserves their dignity, and unites them against the forces of tyranny, extremism, and terrorism so that safety prevails and peace is secured for all people of the one homeland.

The political process to-date was reviewed. It did not achieve its desired goal due to ongoing violations of international law by the Syrian regime and the failure to implement Security Council resolutions pertaining to the protection of Syrian civilians, lifting of the sieges inflicted on them, delivery of relief and humanitarian aid to all areas in need, release of all detainees, and revealing the fates of the missing and forcibly disappeared persons. These issues are among the fundamental principles of international confidence-building measures for launching serious and meaningful negotiations.

The participants discussed the issues on the agenda and exchanged views in an atmosphere of mutual respect and a deep sense of their historical responsibility towards the unfaltering Syrian people, and reached consensus on the crucial issues facing Syria.

The participants stressed their commitment to the unity and integrity of the Syrian territories, the sovereignty of the desired state throughout its entire territory without cutting off or giving up any part of it. They also expressed their commitment to a Syria that is a multiethnic and multicultural state, with a constitution that guarantees the national rights of all the Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians and others. Their cultures and languages are considered national languages and cultures representing the essence of Syria's history and civilization. The Kurdish issue will be considered as part of the Syrian national cause. All discriminatory and prejudiced policies that have been exercised against them must be abolished. Citizenship must be given back to those who were deprived of it as well as to their children who were rid of citizenship and left disenfranchised.

The participants also expressed their commitment that Syria will be a state with a democratic governing system based on the principle of administrative decentralization, rich in its national, religious and sectarian diversity, respectful of international conventions and human rights, which adheres to the principles of equal citizenship and has a system of government that represents all spectra of the Syrian people without distinction or exclusion on the basis of gender, religion, ethnicity or sect. It will be based on the principles of citizenship, human rights, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

The participants pledged to preserve and reform the institutions of the Syrian state. Its security and military institutions must be restructured while guaranteeing the rights of its employees. They stressed that the legitimate institutions of the Syrian state alone chosen by the Syrian people through free and fair elections, hold the exclusive rights to the possession and use of arms.

They also stressed their rejection of and their commitment to the fight against extremism and terrorism in all its forms and sources as well as regional and international interventions, in particular the role of Iran in destabilizing the security and stability of the region, making demographic changes and spreading terrorism including state terrorism and its foreign and sectarian militias. The participants also renewed their rejection of the presence of all foreign fighters on Syrian territory, and demanded the removal of all foreign forces.

The meeting emphasized that the solution to the Syrian crisis is political, in accordance with relevant UN resolutions. It will be imperative to have international guarantees that include deterrence measures and enforcement mechanisms for these resolutions, which will guarantee the commitment of all parties and guarantee that the political transition process is the responsibility of Syrians and the international community.

The participants stressed the principle of accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against Syrians in accordance with the principles of transitional justice.

The participants agreed that the goal of the political settlement is to establish a democratic state based on the principle of equal citizenship, which enables Syrians to draft their constitution without interference and to choose their leaders through free, fair, and transparent elections in which Syrians inside and outside Syria participate under the auspices and supervision of the United Nations. The elections must be carried out through a mechanism that guarantees the right of the people to hold the elected leadership to account in order to achieve a radical political transition, in which women participate with a minimum of 30 percent representation. Persons convicted of having participated in crimes against Syrians will not be eligible to participate in any future political arrangements.

The participants stressed that direct and unconditional negotiations mean that all issues must be raised and discussed at the negotiation table. No party has the right to set preconditions. The demand to implement the provisions of international resolutions is not a precondition. No party has the right to block the introduction or discussion of any subject, including the form of government, its systems, powers and responsibilities as well as the position of the country's president, government and other issues.

The meeting also stressed the importance of upholding the objectives of the Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces set by the sacrifices of the Syrian people, which cannot be compromised at all, as stipulated in the Geneva Communiqué (2012) on "the establishment of a transitional governing body which can establish a neutral environment in which the transition can take place"; and that "it is essential to ensure that the transition can be implemented in a way that assures the safety of all in an atmosphere of stability and calm". It was also stressed that this will not happen without the departure of Bashar al-Assad, his clique and the system of repression and tyranny at the start of the transitional phase.

Despite this, the participants called upon the United Nations, through its special representative, to take the immediate steps necessary to activate the political process and to recalibrate the Geneva negotiation process by calling for direct and unconditional negotiations between the delegation of the united Revolutionary and Opposition Forces on the one hand and the delegation of the Syrian regime's representatives on the other, in order to develop an agenda based on the Geneva Communiqué issued on 30 June 2012 and all relevant international resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 2118 and 2254, and General Assembly resolution 67/262. These resolutions are considered the sole bases for the negotiations, under the auspices and guarantee of the United Nations.

The participants called on the United Nations and the international community to implement the provisions of Security Council resolutions and to take immediate and serious action to implement the resolutions on the release of prisoners and detainees, to lift the siege on besieged areas, to allow humanitarian convoys to untethered to access to those in need, to enable refugees and displaced persons to return if they so wish to their homes and land from which they were forcibly displaced, to implement the “de-escalation zones” agreements in an effective and full manner, and to stop the violations committed by the regime and its allies. They also stressed that those agreements, if not accompanied by serious efforts to reach a just political solution, will cause the conflict to develop and take on more dangerous forms, which will lead to the return and spread of terrorism in the region.

The participants agreed that the second conference in Riyadh and its Final Communiqué is the sole basis for the Syrian Negotiations Committee. The Syrian Negotiations Committee will form a delegation that is unified in its structure and positions to negotiate with the representatives of the regime. Members of the negotiating body relinquish their right to participate in the transitional governing body or any institutions that emanate from it.

The participants expressed their acceptance and support for the role of the United Nations and the international community to supervise the ceasefire, peacekeeping, and in conducting the political process and called on them to provide increased unfettered humanitarian assistance as needed.

At the end of the meeting, the participants endorsed the organizational structure and the internal by-laws of the Syrian Negotiations Committee. They nominated their representatives in its current cycle to assume the tasks of selecting the negotiating delegation; the basis for the negotiators will be determined in accordance with the parameters agreed by the participants.

The participants thanked the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud - may God protect them - as well as the Government and people of the Kingdom for hosting the conference and for their continuous effort and constant support for the Syrian people to realize their hopes and aspirations of freedom and dignity.

Peace and Mercy on the martyrs, freedom for the detainees, speedy recovery for the wounded and victory for our blessed revolution.