

Coalition delegation meets Secretary John Kerry

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Press Release
Syrian Coalition
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The President of the Syrian Coalition met on Tuesday, 24 September 2013 with Secretary of State Kerry to discuss the situation in Syria. Speaking after the meeting, Ahmad al-Jarba, President of the Syrian Coalition, said:

We had a constructive discussion on how to eliminate the Syrian regime's ability to use both chemical and conventional weapons against innocent civilians, and the necessary steps required to stop this conflict. We also expressed our appreciation of US political support for the Coalition and the renewed US commitment of additional funds for the benefit of the Syrian people.

I delivered three messages to the Secretary during our meeting:

1. We are at a crucial moment in the discussion of the terrible crisis in Syria, which the Assad regime is responsible for prolonging. We must seize this moment to bring this war against the Syrian people to an end and bring the criminal regime to justice. The Syrian Coalition wants to ensure that the process of chemical weapons disarmament will not drag on for years, as the regime has every interest in delaying the process indefinitely. Meanwhile, Assad's atrocities will continue with conventional weapons. Thus, the priority of the international community should be to stop the mass atrocities happening within Syria now rather than waiting for diplomacy to run its course.

2. The only way to end this war is if the regime steps aside to allow democracy. This is only achievable if the international community forces the regime to do so. The US should therefore declare the necessity of an immediate peace conference – Geneva II – based on one fundamental understanding: All parties must commit to a process of transition to democracy, including an immediate cessation of attacks on civilian populations by Assad forces, the establishment of a transitional government with full executive powers, a clear timetable, and an agreement that those responsible for war crimes against innocent civilians within the Assad regime must be held accountable and will not be a part of a future democratic Syria. The Assad regime and its allies must confirm their attendance on this basis. If they do not agree, then it will be clear who is blocking peace and the will of the world for peace and democracy in Syria. Then let's put it this way: If a conference were to take place outside of this already agreed basis, it would be ineffective in stopping the killing of Syrians and would be a diversion from the ultimate goal of transition to democracy.
3. When we talk about a Geneva process we must make the purpose of the conference absolutely clear – the formation of a transitional government with full executive powers to transition the country into a democratic future. We need American leadership now. We need the US to help bring this war to an end.

I also repeated to Secretary Kerry the Syrian Coalition's steadfast commitment to an inclusive democracy for all Syrians. I condemned the extremist groups that have sought to exploit the conflict and explained that US support is vital to ensuring that they have no place in a future democratic Syria."

Note for the press: the President and the delegation of the Syrian Coalition will be available for a press conference on Thursday 26 September at 11am at the UN Correspondents Association.