Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Small Group on Syria: foreign ministers' joint statement, November 2019

2019-11-15

The Foreign Ministers of the Small Group on Syria joint statement:

The Foreign Ministers of Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America strongly support the work of the UN Secretary-General and UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen to implement

UN Security Council Resolution 2254

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In recent weeks, the UN has opened a door to progress in the political process with the launching of the Constitutional Committee, which could be a first step towards a political solution. After more than 8 years of violence, there is no military solution that can bring stability to Syria, allow displaced Syrians to return safely and voluntarily to their homes, and defeat terrorism.

We remain committed to upholding the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and oppose forced demographic change. We particularly call upon all actors in the northeast to immediately implement a cease fire and to halt all military offensive operations. We commit to disburse no assistance for any resettlement of Syrian refugees into northeast Syria that is not the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of those refugees to their homes.

We also call for an immediate and genuine cessation of hostilities in Idlib, including an immediate halt to attacks against civilians. In addition, we stress the need to deal effectively with the terrorist threat emanating from Idlib and northwest Syria.

We also ask the international community to commit to support the UN on implementation of all aspects of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, notably a nationwide ceasefire, the creation of a genuine and representative Syrian constitution, the mass release of political prisoners, as well as UN-supervised elections that are free, fair and credible. Internally displaced persons, refugees and the diaspora must be able to participate in these elections in a safe and neutral environment. We continue to support efforts to ensure that all perpetrators of abuses and violations of international humanitarian and human rights law throughout Syria are identified and held accountable.

We encourage the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to all of Syria with the support of the UN agencies and stress the importance of ensuring safe and unhindered humanitarian access for all Syrians currently in need of it. We also support the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees to their homes.

Finally, we express our commitment to the enduring defeat of ISIS and other UN designated terrorist groups and remind the international community that a political settlement in Syria remains essential to sustainably achieving this shared goal.

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