

Joint Statement on the Latest Developments and Implications of the Political Process in Syria

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Syrian Coalition
Political Committee
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Political offices of the undersigned rebel factions and the Syrian Coalition’s political committee held a meeting and thoroughly studied the proposals put forward by the UN envoy Staffan de Mistura, namely the “Working groups” initiative. After in-depth reviewing of the regional and international reality engulfing the Syrian arena as well as recent sensitive developments with profound field and political influence, and out of our concern for the possibility of launching a new failed political process costing Syrians even more thousands of lives, and more destruction to the remnants of the country’s infrastructure, we affirm the following points:

First: Participants in the meeting emphasize their commitment to reaching a political solution to achieve the goals of the revolution, preserve the identity of the Syrian people and end their suffering. This political process however must ensure that the current regime is not reproduced or that its head and pillars, whose hands are stained with the blood of Syrians, are given any role in the transitional political process or in Syria’s future.

Second: While forces of the revolution and the opposition have always dealt fully positive with the UN envoy despite the absence of any practical results on the ground, they emphasize they will continue to positively deal with the United Nations in order to achieve the interests of the Syrian people.

Third: The Syrian people have completely lost confidence in the ability of the international community to support their cause after five years of regime crimes committed against them with Iranian military support, Russian political coverage and a legitimacy that the international community still insists on providing to the murderous regime. The current popular outrage must be taken into account in any political process which must be preceded by real steps to win the confidence of the Syrian people. The most important of these steps is to explicitly declare that the head of the regime and its pillars cannot be given any role to play in the political process.

Fourth: Bashar al-Assad has no place in any political process depending on the following legal and practical reasons:

- Bashar al-Assad inherited power in an entirely illegal way.

- Bashar al-Assad became a war criminal the moment he began killing Syrians who peacefully demanded their rights. He used illegal chemical weapons against innocent civilians. These crimes have been documented by neutral international organizations to prevent any doubt in the matter.
- Bashar al-Assad and his regime have shown utmost reluctance to engage in any political process, have not abided by any declared truces, and have shown non-cooperation with the international community purely with humanitarian issues. All of this has left him with no credibility or confidence.
- While Bashar al-Assad and his regime have failed in their alleged war against ISIS or to achieve any intellectual or field victory against this extremist organization, there is compelling evidence on full coordination between the two sides and the role Assad's regime plays in the emergence of ISIS.
- Bashar al-Assad has opened the doors of Syria to foreign militias who commit the worst sectarian massacres at the same time as fuelling sectarian rhetoric, which deprives him of any eligibility to participate in any political process that aims to unite the country.
- Finally, Bashar al-Assad has handed over Syria to Iranian and Russian invaders, thus committing an unforgivable act of betrayal to the country's history, its future and dignity.

Fifth: We consider that dissolving the security agencies and the restructuring of the military institution directly responsible for killing Syrians an essential item for any political solution. This beleaguered and crumbling military institution has turned into sectarian militias led by Iran. It cannot therefore form the nucleus of a national army, nor can it be trusted by the Syrian people to restore security and stability to the country.

Sixth: The formation of a transitional governing body is a process of full transfer of power in which Bashar al-Assad and pillars of his regime have no place. We emphasize the need to preserve state institutions and prevent their disintegration as they belong to the Syrian people, and to prevent the country from sliding into more chaos.

Seventh: We consider that proposing the "Working groups" initiative ignores the majority of the relevant United Nations resolutions on Syria, particularly resolutions 2118, 2165 and 2139. This initiative is in fact a complicated political process that requires confidence-building between the Syrian people on the one hand and the party that will sponsor the political process, namely the United Nations. Confidence-building can only be achieved through the implementation of the above-mentioned UN resolutions that the Syrian regime has so far disabled them.

Eighth: We consider that the "Working groups" initiative in its current form and its unclear mechanisms provides the perfect environment to reproduce the regime. These "Working groups" must instead be based on clear principles regarding standards for selecting the participants in these groups and the final vision for the solution.

Ninth: We condemn Russia's direct military escalation in Syria and consider the Syrian regime fully responsible as it has turned Syria into a hotbed for foreign intervention. The silence of the international community also bears responsibility for this escalation and represents a point of no return in the relationship between the Syrian people and Russia. This escalation clearly shows that Russia is not serious or sincere in its commitment to the political process, and that it has never been a honest mediator but a party to the conflict and a key ally of the criminal regime.

Tenth: While forces of the revolution and its institutions reaffirm commitment to our people, we vow to exert the utmost efforts to close ranks and correct previous mistakes. We also vow that the revolution will remain faithful to its principles and the blood of its fallen heroes, and that we will strike a balance between achieving our objectives and safeguarding our fundamental principles. We also pledge to alleviate the suffering of our people, expedite victory and to dedicate our political and military capabilities for this purpose.

Accordingly, the "Working groups" initiative in its current form is unacceptable neither practically nor legally process unless the above-mentioned points are taken into consideration and the ambiguities shaping the mechanisms of this initiative are resolved.

Rebel factions:

Ahrar al-Sham Movement

Jaish al-Islam

Islamic Union of Ajnad al-Sham

Al-Sham Legion

Al-Sham Revolutionaries

The Levant Front

Al-Rahman Corps

Homs Corps

Al-Mujahideen Army

Fastaqim Kama Umert Conglomeration

Ajnad al-Sham

Noureddine Zanki Movement

Homs Liberation Movement

The South's 1st Army

Al-Yarmouk Army

The 1st Corps

Al-Tawhid Army – Homs

The Tribes Army

Division 101

Division 13

Amoud Horan Division

The Tribes Corps

Tahrir al-Sham Division

The Central Division
Division 16 Infantry
Sultan Murad Aldin Division
The 1st Coastal Division
Fajr al-Tawhid Division
Salahuddin Division
Division 24 Infantry
Al-Qadisiyah Division
Shabab al-Sunnah Division
Ossoud al-Sunnah Division
Fallujat Horan Division
March 18 Division
The 69th Davison- Special Tasks
Ahrar Nawa Division
Khaiyalet al-Zaidi Division
Shuhadaa' al-Hirak Division
Al- Sham Unified Front
Al-Asala wal Tanmiya Front
Ansar al-Islam Front
Al-Inqath Fighting Front
Suqur Jabal al-Zawiya Brigade
Fursan al-Haqq Brigade
Farouk al-Janoub Brigade
Shuhadaa' al-Islam Brigade
Al-Fatah Brigade
Al-Siddiq Brigade
Talbeesah Brigade
Ahbab Omar Brigade
Ahfad al-Rassoul Brigade
Jisr Houran Brigade
Tawhid Kataeb Houran
Tafas Brigade
Al-Muhajirin wal Ansar Brigade
Youssef al-Azmah Brigade
Omar al-Mukhtar Brigade
Shabab al-Huda Brigade
Al-Sahel 10th Brigade
Al-Furqan Brigades
Suqur al-Ghab Brigades
Ansar al-Sham
Abnaa' al-Qadisiyah
Al-Safwah Battalions
Al-Omari Brigades Conglomerate
Izraa' Brigades Conglomerate

Regiment 111
The 1st Regiment
The Artillery Regiment
The FSA Brigades in Hasaka