

Foreign Minister Westerwelle: Support for the unification of the Syrian opposition

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16.08.2012 - Press release 

Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle today met Riad Seif, a key figure in the Syrian opposition and a member of the Syrian National Council.

They discussed the situation in Syria and the opposition's efforts to work on a unified and credible alternative to the Assad regime.

On Thursday, Riad Seif also attended a preparatory meeting of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People's Working Group on Economic Recovery at the Federal Foreign Office. Representatives of more than 20 states and international organizations participated in this meeting. The Working Group has as its aim the timely coordination and preparation of economic reconstruction in Syria.

Foreign Minister Westerwelle issued a statement about the meeting:

“The German Government is actively working toward a unification of the Syrian opposition. I have today encouraged Riad Seif to present a common opposition plan on the political transition in Syria as quickly as possible. The opposition must be ready to assume power whenever Assad may fall.
What I value about Riad Seif is his committed and selfless engagement for a democratic, civil and socially just Syria.”

Background information on Riad Seif:

Riad Seif has for years led a non-violent campaign against the Assad regime and for a democratic, pluralistic Syria. As an independent MP, Seif was one of the main figures behind the Damascus Spring of 2000/2001. He was arrested for his democratic activism

and spent over eight years in prison. In 2003, Riad Seif was awarded the Weimar Human Rights Award in absentia. He managed to leave Syria this June with the support of the German Government; he has been in Germany ever since.

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