Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Friends of Syrian People: Chairman's conclusions

2012-07-06

107 countries and organizations met in Paris on 6 July 2012 following the meetings in Tunis and Istanbul in order to support the people of Syria in their struggle to freely decide on their future within a democratic and sovereign framework.

The participants paid tribute to the courage of the people of Syria and honoured the memory of the more than 16,000 victims of the repression exercised by the regime and of the violence perpetrated in the country for over a year.

The participants expressed their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity of Syria at a time where in order to survive, the regime is threatening to plunge the country into all-out civil war. All Syrians must have a place in the new Syria, regardless of their origins, affiliations, religion, beliefs or gender.

The participants condemned the ever increasing use of force by the regime, including shelling and using helicopters against civilian areas. They reiterated their demand that the Syrian government immediately withdraw forces from urban areas, cease troop movements towards population centres, cease all use of heavy weapons in such centres, release all political prisoners and grant access for all humanitarian actors to those in need. They also condemned all summary executions, torture and other violations of human rights, as well as the increasing number of acts of terrorism.

They expressed their grave concern with regard to the alarming regional repercussions that are caused by the continued crisis in Syria in terms of regional security, stability, economic development, and outflow of refugees. The participants recognized that this deserves further close attention.

The participants welcomed that the Action Group Geneva communique called for the establishment of a transitional governing body with full executive powers. The participants agreed and insisted that those whose presence would undermine the credibility of the transition should be excluded. In that respect, they strongly underlined that Bashar al-Assad must relinquish power. They encouraged Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to work to implement this transition immediately and urged all parties to support these efforts.

The participants formally called upon the Syrian regime to finally meet its commitments with a view to the full implementation of the six-point plan for crisis resolution drawn up by Kofi Annan, Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States on the Syrian Crisis. They called on all Syrians and civil society organizations to publicly dissociate themselves from the human rights violations committed by the Syrian regime.

The participants made the following commitments to the people of Syria:

A STRONGER UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION IS NEEDED

The participants reiterated their support for the mission of the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. They also offered their appreciation to the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Human Rights Council, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference for their ongoing support and active engagement. They called on the United Nations Security Council to play its part and support JSE Kofi Annan by urgently adopting a resolution under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter that reaffirms the Joint Special Envoy's six-point plan, endorses the Action Group Geneva communique including its plan for political transition, and imposes measures under Article 41 of the United Nations Charter to enforce compliance.

THE PERPETRATORS OF CRIMES WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED:

The participants confirmed their support for the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, mandated by the United Nations Human Rights Council and chaired by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro. They also welcomed the commitment of Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, following the widespread increase in human rights violations in Syria.

The participants committed to support the efforts of the people of Syria and the international community to gather evidence which, when appropriate, could hold to account those responsible for widespread, systematic, and gross human rights violations and abuses, including those violations that may amount to crimes against humanity. The Syrian people, on the basis of broad, inclusive and credible consultations, should determine, within the framework provided by international law, the process and mechanisms to achieve justice, accountability, and reconciliation for violations occurring since March 2011, as well as reparations and effective remedies for victims. In any event, the judgment of those responsible for the repression and violence must be carried out under legitimate legal proceedings in accordance with international standards, and all individual or group retaliation must be prevented.

THOSE WHO CARRY OUT AND SUPPORT REPRESSION MUST FACE STIFFER AND WIDER SANCTIONS:

The participants committed to continue working to implement the commitments made at the last meeting of the Friends of the Syrian People International Working Group on Sanctions in Washington on 6 June 2012. They will continue to work together so that sanctions that have been adopted by various countries and relevant organizations are effectively implemented and enforced, will continue to develop new measures to bring additional pressure to bear on the Assad regime, will encourage others to adopt national measures, and will work to universalize such measures through action in the United Nations Security Council. Participants committed to continue coordination on sanctions, including by participating in the upcoming July 19 sanctions working group meeting in Doha.

THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION AND LOCAL SOLIDARITY NETWORKS WILL BE MORE ACTIVELY SUPPORTED:

The participants heard messages from activists from within the country. They expressed their admiration for the courage of those who risk their life every day for the sake of democracy in Syria.

The participants heard from the President of the Syrian National Council, as well as a report of the preparatory committee of the Cairo Conference presented by its spokesperson.

They commended and encouraged the opposition efforts to present a united front as a credible alternative to the current regime and urged the opposition to continue focusing on their common objectives. The meeting in Cairo under the auspices of the League of Arab States enabled the opposition to reach agreement for the first time on a national compact and a concrete and detailed transition plan, which represents a basis for a free and democratic Syria. The participants welcomed the League of Arab States efforts to follow up on the Cairo meeting and continue its work towards the consolidation of a united and democratic opposition.

The two documents complement the guidelines and principles laid out by the Action Group in Geneva and elaborate steps to achieve our shared goal of a democratic, pluralistic Syria that upholds the rule of law and respects the universal rights of all people and all communities, regardless of ethnicity, belief or gender.

The participants expressed their support for legitimate measures taken by the Syrian population to protect themselves.

The participants decided to greatly increase assistance to the opposition. This will include, for some participants, providing communication tools allowing them to communicate more securely with each other and with the outside world, as well as to protect themselves under their peaceful mobilization.

The participants heard the appeal for more active support from local solidarity organizations, which play a key role for the Syrian people, and committed to work with a range of partners to ensure support gets to those in need.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR THE POPULATION WILL BE STRENGTHENED

The Friends of the Syrian People expressed their alarm at the daily deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Syria as well as the flood of refugees entering neighbouring countries which are providing their assistance. The participants expressed their readiness to support the efforts of the host countries.

Following the third humanitarian forum in Geneva on 5 June, the participants committed to increase their assistance to the Syrians, including those who have been forced to leave their country.

Several countries announced additional assistance at the meeting.

The participants called upon the Syrian authorities to immediately implement the agreement which they concluded with the United Nations on 28 May and to finally ensure free and unhindered access to international humanitarian organizations.

They confirmed the humanitarian forum’s primary responsibility for the facilitation of humanitarian assistance to Syrians in need and the necessity to uphold the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian aid in order to ensure the respect and acceptance of all parties involved in the conflict.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL STAND BY THE SYRIAN PEOPLE AS THEIR COUNTRY IS REBUILT

The Participants reiterated their commitment to support the political and economic transition in Syria and welcomed the first meeting of the Working Group on Economic Recovery and Development on 24 May 2012 in Abu Dhabi. They commended the Co-Chairs United Arab Emirates and Germany for setting up a secretariat for the Working Group in Berlin. The Participants welcomed the formulation of a national economic vision for a new Syria by the Syrian opposition and encouraged the opposition to continue its close cooperation with the Working Group and the Secretariat.

They called on all countries as well as international and regional organisations to contribute to the work of the Working Group. All efforts must now together focus on the transition to allow the new Syria to also meet all of its economic, financial, social and governance challenges.

The participants welcomed Morocco’s readiness to host the next meeting of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People. Italy expressed its readiness to host the following one.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/friends-of-syrian-people-chairmans-conclusions