

Speech by Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle to open the second meeting of the working group on economic recovery and development of the Friends of the Syrian People

 auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/120904-bm-ag-wiederaufbau-syr/251350

Welcome

Breadcrumbs

1. [Federal Foreign Office](#) ›
2. [News](#) ›
3. [Newsroom](#) ›
4. **Speech by Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle to open the second meeting of the working group on economic recovery and development of the Friends of the Syrian People**

04.09.2012 - Speech 

On 4 September, the working group on economic recovery and development of the Friends of the Syrian People met at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. Those attending included many participants representing the international community as well as the Syrian opposition. Foreign Minister Westerwelle gave the following speech to open the meeting.

-- Translation of advance text --

Excellencies,
Ladies and

gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Berlin for the second meeting of the Working Group on Economic Recovery and Development of the Friends of the Syrian People.

Let me extend a special welcome to my co-chair, Minister of State Reema al-Hashimi. We have enjoyed excellent cooperation with your government since the creation of this working group. And I look forward to continuing our teamwork.

Let me also offer a warm welcome to the representatives of the Syrian opposition, the members of the Syrian business community and the Syrian economic experts. We had the opportunity for a brief exchange with some of you right before coming here. We all agreed that economic recovery and successful political transition are two sides of the same coin.

Living conditions for the people in Syria are getting worse day by day. The regime is using brutal force. Bashar al-Assad is killing the people he is claiming to protect. His air force is bombing cities and destroying the infrastructure of the country. The repression of the population is appalling. Hundreds of thousands of people have already fled the country. Over a million are displaced within Syria.

There can be no doubt that the days of the regime are numbered. It has lost all legitimacy to represent the Syrian people. It is crumbling from inside. On the international level, it is increasingly isolated. The overwhelming majority of countries reject the massive violation of human rights. There is no future for Bashar al-Assad in a new Syria.

As the international community, we must do our utmost to stop the violence and to allow for a process of transition to begin.

Germany will continue to back the efforts of the United Nations and the Arab League. We offer our full support to the work of Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi and his team.

We share a common vision and a common goal. We want the violence in Syria to stop. We want to see the end of this brutal regime. We want Syria to be ruled by a democratic government that respects the rights of all its citizens, regardless of their ethnic, religious or political affiliation.

I warmly welcome the vision a group of Syrians produced in the Day After project here in Berlin a few days ago.

This vision contains a comprehensive blueprint for a process of transition towards a democratic Syria. It is one contribution among several, but it is precisely the kind of effort that is needed to bring together the Syrian opposition.

We urgently need a common platform for all opposition groups, which is committed to democracy, tolerance and pluralism. We urgently need an inclusive transitional government formed on the basis of these values. There is no time to waste. Therefore I call on the opposition to create the conditions for such a transitional government as quickly as possible. The people in Syria must see that there is a credible alternative to the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

Political freedom must be supported by economic recovery and development. Economic growth and investment require a new political beginning in Syria. The political transition can only be successful if the economic situation of the Syrian people improves.

Against this background, we must do as much as possible to avoid a collapse of the infrastructure and basic services in Syria. The international community must be prepared to assist swiftly when the time comes.

At the same time, our working group cannot limit itself to post-conflict planning. We cannot wait for the fall of Assad, we must act now. I would therefore suggest considering the following points in today's discussions:

What can we do now to secure basic services for the population, especially where opposition forces have taken over effective control?

How can we increase our efforts to strengthen our cooperation with local councils inside Syria?

How can we convince key people inside Syria to join the opposition?

I would also like to thank the Secretariat of the Working Group for their strong leadership in this process and those countries who have taken the lead in one of the baskets.

I wish you all a good and productive meeting. I would now like to give the floor to my co-chair. Minister, you have the floor.

Overview "Newsroom"

Keywords

Syrian Arab Republic →