Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Friends of Syria Core Group - Final Communique

2013-06-22

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar and the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, and the United States, met after Rome, Istanbul and Amman in Doha on 22 June 2013 to discuss developments in Syria. After the peace initiative announced by Foreign Minister Lavrov and Secretary Kerry, Bashar Al-assad, Iran and Hezbollah launched military operations against the people of Syria. The Ministers expressed their concern about this offensive calculated to change the situation on the ground to the determent of the peace initiative.

The Ministers expressed their concern about the growing sectarian nature of the conflict in Syria, and the radicalizing risks that accompany such developments to regional and international stability and security. In this regard, the Ministers condemn the intervention of Hezbollah militias and fighters from Iran and Iraq in Syria, who are aiding Syrian regime repression against the Syrian people in locales like Qusayr, Aleppo and Ghouta and other parts of Syrian territory. These actions threaten the unity of Syria, broaden the conflict across the border threatening further militarization that undermines the Geneva initiative and inflame the entire region. The Ministers demand that these fighters leave Syria immediately and called on Hizbullah and the government of Iran to immediately effect such a withdrawal and to take steps to stop sectarian tensions.

In direct response to Assad’s actions and in furtherance of the goal of convening the Geneva conference, the Ministers agreed to take urgent practical steps to support the Syrian opposition. The Ministers welcome the upcoming meeting of the Syrian Opposition Coalition at which they will endorse the completion of their expansion and will elect their leadership so that they will be able to implement their vision for a peaceful, prosperous, unified and sovereign Syria.

The Ministers reviewed the joint statements adopted by the Istanbul meeting on 20 April 2013, and the Amman meeting on 22 May 2013, which note that, in case the allegations that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons against the Syrian people prove true, there will be severe consequences. In light of confirmation by France, the UK, the US and other countries about the use of chemical weapons in several areas by the regime,the Ministers call on the regime to allow access to the UN investigating team mandated by UN Secretary General to conduct an investigation into reported use of Chemical Weapons.

In light of all of the above developments, the Ministers have agreed the following actions to change the balance of power on the ground:

To provide urgently all the necessary materiel and equipment to the opposition on the ground, each country in its own way in order to enable them to counter brutal attacks by the regime and its allies and protect the Syrian people. In this context, the Ministers direct concerned parties to take all necessary practical measures

To channel all military support by the relevant countries through the Staff Chairmanship of the Syrian Supreme Military Council.

The crossing of fighters and militias who support the regime and are involved in military activities and operations in the Syrian territory, must be prevented.

To pursue all appropriate avenues in the U.N. to support and protect the Syrian people.

The Ministers emphasized the need for Iraq and Lebanon to actively safeguard their borders in order to ensure that fighters and equipment do not escalate current tensions.

The Ministers supported reaching a political solution that preserves the dignity of the Syrian people, stops the Syrian bloodshed, and allows the release of prisoners and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people. The Ministers expressed readiness to participate in the Geneva II meeting to fully implement the outcomes of the Geneva I meeting in order to achieve the aspirations and hopes of the Syrian people, preserve the territorial integrity of Syria and promote national unity among all components of the Syrian national fabric. The Ministers affirmed their prior commitments in the previous meetings in favor of negotiations, which would lead to the establishment of a transitional governing body to which full executive powers would be transferred, including military and security institutions, that excludes the central figures and associates whose hands are stained with blood. In this context, Bashar al-Assad has no role in the transitional governing body or thereafter.

The Ministers stressed the responsibility of those with influence over the regime to end the violence and secure a negotiated political solution on the basis of the Geneva communiqué.

The Ministers reaffirm their strong concern over the increasing presence and growing radicalism of the conflict and terrorist elements in Syria; a matter that deepens the concerns for the future of Syria, threatens the security of neighboring countries and risks destabilizing the wider region and the world.

The Ministers expressed their deep concern over the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Syria, and called upon the international community to shoulder its responsibilities by taking urgent and tangible actions to alleviate the Syrian people’s suffering. In this context, the Ministers called for cross-border humanitarian access and agreed to consider further

possibilities to ensure the flow of humanitarian assistance to the whole Syrian territory, and be delivered to all needy Syrians. The Ministers commended the efforts of the Assistance Coordination Unit of the Coalition (ACU) for its work in helping communities inside Syria and its role in facilitating humanitarian assistance.

The Ministers urged the international community to fulfill its commitments and go beyond by increasing financial support to the neighboring countries hosting Syrian refugees to enable them to address their increasing humanitarian needs, taking into account that the issue of refugees is addressed through appropriate means and procedures in accordance with the principles of burden sharing.

The Ministers agreed to continue to collaborate and coordinate in order to assist the Syrian people.

Further information

For more detail on the UK’s work to support Syria:

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