



**Official Statement issued by the Syrian Negotiations Commission
On the Constitutional Committee and the UN-sponsored political process in Geneva**

The Syrian people are facing a critical stage in their struggle to restore their full sovereignty over their territories from the sectarian forces of extremism and terrorism; to restore their human and constitutional rights stolen by the tyrannical regime and to reach the independence of their national decision and unity of land and people. Out of our belief of the futility of military solutions which are incapable of achieving durable peace, security and stability, we see the importance of reaching a political solution in a way that meets the aspirations of the Syrian people of a state of a ruling system that is civil, democratic and pluralistic. A system that lays the foundations for the rule of law, realizes equal citizenship in rights and duties, guarantees the freedom of its people, safeguards their dignity, serves justice for all victims and afflicted persons, secures the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their original homes and holds perpetrators of war crimes accountable for the crimes they have perpetrated against innocent people, in order to apply transitional justice and unify the internal front of Syrians.

On the backdrop of such reality, we must, as Syrians, look beyond delusional military solutions that would lead to the destruction of what remains of our country and take down our entity as one homeland and one people. We must look beyond any cosmetic political solutions that would circumvent the demands and aspirations of the Syrian people. Hence, we must all live up to the national perspective to confront the challenges and threats ahead and meet the well-deserved goals and aspirations our people sacrificed dearly for. With this national perspective in mind, the SNC is exerting strenuous efforts with all parties, to reach a political solution based on the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and Geneva Communiqué. The SNC is also interacting seriously with any positive development that may lead to realizing these objectives, and it is utilizing all available capabilities to counter any efforts aiming at circumventing these objectives.

Our national battle is the battle of the people against a totalitarian regime and against a system of suppression, criminality and corruption. In light of all recent local, regional and international military and political developments and challenges, the political and legal battlefields have become the most important ones ahead of us. They are the main fields through which we can continue our struggle to meet the aspirations of the Syrian people. The Syrian revolutionary and opposition forces have engaged responsibly with the efforts of the United Nations in the political process since the beginning of its launch in 2014. Opposition and revolutionary forces have actively participated in Geneva II negotiations conference, committed to the objectives of the revolution and the aspirations of the Syrian people, within the framework of UNSCR 2118 (2013) and Geneva Communiqué (2012), as well as all resolutions relevant to the Syrian issue. The opposition has also participated in the first Riyadh conference from which the Higher Negotiations Commission emerged. With the developments at the international level and the issuance of UNSCR 2254 (2015), which provided for the necessity of the unification of the opposition under one negotiations commission, and after conducting expanded consultations, the second Riyadh conference was held which fulfilled this requirement and led to the formation of the Syrian Negotiations Commission (SNC). The SNC continued to participate in the UN-sponsored political process in Geneva actively, positively and with full national responsibility and commitment to reach a political solution that leads to the full and strict implementation of UNSCR 2254 (2015). Through consultations with the political and technical team of the United Nations, the opposition produced plenty of documents that represent its vision for fulfilling that end. However, due to the intransigence and negativity of the regime delegation and its rejection of discussing such documents neither directly or indirectly, the political process reached a deadlock. The SNC exerted every effort and provided ideas and documents illustrating its vision in their consultations with the UN team, yet the political process in Geneva remained in a deadlock. This has put the United Nations and the international community face to face with their responsibility to find appropriate exits to move the political process forward.

In the context of the deadlock in the political process, there is a need to explain some of the recent developments at the political level, especially following the Sochi conference and its final communique which adopted UNSCR 2254 (2015) as its terms of reference and the full implementation thereof. The Sochi conference recognized as well the UN-led political process in Geneva to be the terms of reference in terms of defining the mandate, points of reference, powers, procedures and membership criteria of the constitutional committee. The final communique adopted the 12 Living Intra-Syrian Essential Principles, developed, discussed and agreed upon within the UN-led political process in Geneva, which the regime delegation refused discussing then. The final communique called on the UN secretary general to task the special envoy to Syria to assist in delivering the activities of this constitutional committee in Geneva. The communique also considered the constitutional committee and outputs thereof as part of the UN-led political process, and stated that the Sochi conference is only a contribution to move the UN-sponsored process forward.

The SNC, before and after Sochi conference, has communicated with the UN Secretary General and the under-secretary general for political affairs, and made communications and broad consultations with sisterly and friendly states which expressed their full support for the creation of the constitutional committee and tasks thereof under the direct auspices of the United Nations, as part of the political process and as a step towards the full and strict implementation of UNSCR 2254 (2015) in its entirety.

The SNC observed the proceedings and outputs of Sochi conference, as well as the interaction of the regime with the conference, both during and after it. It was obvious that the regime rejected the language of the final communique, especially provisions related to the constitutional committee and the 12 Living Essential Principles. The regime has also published a different communique on the website of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and refused to announce its approval for participating in the committee and naming its nominees on it. Following a period of over four months of obstruction, the regime, under Russian pressure, submitted the list of its nominees for the constitutional committee to the UN after informing the two guarantor states. The regime announced its approval of the Sochi Conference final communique as well.

Building on the same logic of seizing any potential opportunity to build on what has been achieved in the UN-sponsored political process in Geneva to push it forward; benefiting from the international consensus on ways to implement key provisions of UNSCR 2254 (2015); along with the abovementioned reasons, facts and possible options that could ensure the continuation of the revolution until realizing its objectives, that may never be neglected or overridden; and based on our will to support the UN efforts and engage in the political battle with a clear strategy and informed plans, relying on our internal capabilities and capacities we have as a revolting people, the SNC shoulders the responsibility of representing the revolution and opposition forces in this political process. At the same time, the SNC indeed bears the responsibility of realizing the aspirations and ambitions of all Syrians, with a promising future of one homeland and unified people. The SNC is addressing the international and regional political and military realities, through alliances built on the intersection of interests between our national interests and the interests of other sisterly and friendly parties, in a way that leads to realizing the objectives of the revolution and the aspirations of the Syrian people. For that end, the SNC made its decision to positively engage with the activities of the constitutional committee to be established by the United Nations, in accordance with the vision submitted to the UN by the SNC along with a list of names of its nominees for the membership of the committee, which relied on the following:

1. The list of nominees and the items included below shall be deemed an integrated unit that defines the bases upon which the participation of the SNC in the constitutional committee are based.
2. We reaffirm that the goal of the UN-sponsored political process is the implementation of Geneva Communiqué, dated June 30th, 2012, and UNSCR 2118 (2013), through the strict implementation of UNSCR 2254 (2015) in its entirety, according to the sequence stated therein.
3. We underscore the essential principle of the negotiations process that has been adopted since the launch of the process which states that “there should be no agreement on anything before reaching an agreement on everything”.
4. Participating and engaging with the activities of the constitutional committee on our part shall by no means indicate that the political process

is reduced to the constitutional track alone. In this context, we highlight the importance of facilitating the resumption of negotiating the baskets “topics” that have been adopted in the course of negotiations, including reaching an agreement on establishing a transitional governing body, in accordance with Geneva Communiqué (June 30, 2012) which provides for a TGB to prepare safe, neutral and calm environment within which the transitional process shall take place, including the constitutional and electoral processes. The TGB shall give real hope for the desired constitution to be effectively implemented, providing the Syrian people with a new opportunity to restore their political life and human rights. Hence, we underscore the importance of prioritizing the first basket in the political process and the negotiations track in Geneva.

5. The activities of the constitutional committee shall be part and parcel of the complete constitutional process. The results thereof shall feed into the negotiations track of the political process. Therefore, it is highly important to launch the work on the four baskets in conjunction and ensure progress on the issues of governance, political transition and elections.
6. His excellency the UN Special Envoy has clearly indicated in his briefing to the Security Council that the achievement of unifying the three main components, mentioned in UNSCR 2254(2015), of the Syrian opposition in the Riyadh II conference, as well as the inclusion of wide representation of independent figures and moderate military factions which believe in a political solution, whether in the conference itself or the resulting SNC. The SNC is, therefore, the party that represents the opposition in the UN-sponsored political negotiations in Geneva. The SNC is also the party that decides on the names of opposition representatives within the constitutional committee, by one third of the total number of the committee members.
7. The SNC reiterates the principle of equal proportions in membership. The number of SNC representatives on the constitutional committee and all subsequent subcommittees should be equal to those of the regime. Each party shall have one third of the total number of members.
8. The Special Envoy shall hurry in providing his own proposals in relation to the terms of reference of the constitutional committee and the fate of all drafts

to be developed there and the decision-making mechanisms therein, in line with UNSCR 2254(2015) and Geneva Communiqué (2012).

9. In relation to the one third of the committee members to be selected by the Special Envoy, we highlight the importance of applying criteria of impartiality and professional competence in accordance with the vision he provided.
10. We believe that the constitutional committee shall have a specific timeframe within which it should accomplish its tasks. The timeframe shall not exceed six months as of the date of holding the first official session thereof.

We ask for mercy for martyrs, freedom for detainees and missing persons, well recovery for the wounded and victory for the great Syrian people

Riyadh – August 2, 2018