European External Action Service (EEAS)

Statement by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL/Da’esh

2016-02-02

1. Foreign Ministers of the Small Group of the Global Coalition to counter ISIL/Da’esh met today in Rome at the invitation of Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni to take stock of the Coalition’s work and to accelerate our unified efforts to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL/Da’esh, dismantle its networks, and counter its global ambitions. The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Minister Gentiloni and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. Twenty-five delegations took part in the meeting (Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, European Union, France, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States, with the United Nations observing). The meeting marked the one-year anniversary of the Coalition Small Group.

2. While aware of the challenges still ahead, we are unanimous in our certainty that the Coalition’s actions against ISIL/Da’esh are gaining momentum, with strong impact. Iraqi forces, with continuous Coalition support, have retaken large portions of Ramadi. This follows the liberation last year of Tikrit, Sinjar, and Bayji. We have pushed ISIL/Da’esh out of approximately 40 percent of the populated territory it once controlled in Iraq. We have likewise continued our campaign in Syria, assisting Syrian moderate opposition forces, including with airstrikes, with tangible results. With the recent capture of Tishreen Dam and surrounding villages, as well as areas to the south of al-Hawl, important logistics routes for ISIL/ Da’esh into ar-Raqqah have been cut off, complementing Iraqi offensives that have constrained ISIL/Da’esh supply lines and further isolated ar-Raqqah and Mosul. We will intensify and accelerate the campaign against ISIL/Da’esh in Iraq and Syria, act in concert to curb its global ambitions and take every measure to ensure the protection of our citizens. We reaffirm our commitment to deliver a lasting defeat to this barbaric organization.

3. Continued success requires that the Coalition expand its multifaceted approach, one that goes beyond battle lines and seeks to deprive ISIL/Da’esh of oxygen on every possible front. We are determined to keep ISIL/Da’esh cut off from the international financial system; to disrupt its economic and financial infrastructure, as well as its energy operations, and to curtail its smuggling of antiquities. We will keep ISIL/Da’esh leadership under relentless threat, and constrain its foreign terrorist fighter flows across borders. We shall also work to ensure that ISIL/Da’esh terrorists are held to account for the crimes that they have perpetrated. We will use every available avenue to expose ISIL/Da’esh’s delusional narrative

– increasingly laid bare in the face of territorial loss, horrific eye witness accounts of its barbarity and failure to fulfill its boasts of statehood.

4. Syrian and Iraqi citizens who have fled the strife or have been expelled from their homes and now face uncertainty in places of refuge, deserve the international community's full support, in the form of adequate protection and humanitarian aid to cover their basic needs and longer term educational and development aid, so as to offer them the prospect of a brighter future in their home countries and to make up for the opportunities denied to them. The members of the Coalition will make every effort to ensure that these growing humanitarian and development needs in places of refuge are met. Moreover, any returns of such persons to their places of origin must be safe, informed, voluntary and non-discriminatory, in line with international protection principles.

5. Respecting international humanitarian law and supporting stabilization and restoration of essential services in areas liberated from ISIL/Da'esh are vital to allow displaced persons to return to their homes in safety and dignity and enable them to revive their communities in their places of origin. Iraq's stabilization efforts, with the cooperation of UNDP and local authorities and assistance from the Coalition, have helped restore communities like Tikrit to new life and are poised to begin addressing immediate stabilization needs in Ramadi and other liberated areas. We welcome the generous contributions to the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS) and call on the international community to ensure continued funding for this instrument. Recognizing the imperative of civil and military coordination and quickly establishing public security and the rule of law, we will continue our support for Coalition efforts to train Iraqi police forces to hold and stabilize Da'esh-free areas. Even as we mark this progress, we are acutely aware of the ten million Iraqis and 17.8 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance now, and we urge contributions to the $861million UN appeal for Iraq, the $8.98 billion appeal for Syria and support for the upcoming London conference to aid the Syrian people.

6. We recognize that a lasting investment in inclusive governance and a sound political process is necessary to lay the foundation for sustained success against ISIL/Da'esh. We continue to support Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's government as it seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of all parts of Iraqi society, address corruption, decentralize some federal authorities, empower local communities and reconcile ethnic and sectarian divisions in Iraq. We give our full support to the Government of Iraq in its efforts to mobilize and equip local volunteer fighters to assist the liberation of their provinces. We also stress the need for all Iraqi forces to be under the Prime Minister's command and control. In Syria, we support UN Special Envoy De Mistura's work towards a genuine political transition, based on the principles of the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, in line with UNSCR 2254, the statements of the International Syria Support Group and the group's efforts towards that end. We reaffirm the importance of a political transition aimed at establishing a democratic, inclusive, pluralistic and non-sectarian government that represents the will of all Syrians and confronts ISIL/Da'esh and other terrorist groups, creating the conditions to reverse the tide of

extremism. We encourage the meaningful participation of women in these processes. We emphasize that measures to build confidence in Syria should be taken without further delay, including a halt to deliberate attacks on civilians, lifting sieges around towns and population centers and granting humanitarian access. We call on countries involved in military action in Syria to focus their efforts against ISIL/Da’esh.

7. We are aware that ISIL/Da’esh poses a terrorist threat to our own homelands, as demonstrated by its heinous and barbaric terrorist attacks in Turkey, France and elsewhere, while noting ISIL/Da’esh is losing both territory and credibility in Iraq and Syria. Our determination to curb ISIL/ Da’esh’s global ambitions and to protect our homelands and allies has spurred us to greater collaboration and information sharing in the international counterterrorism arena. We are committed to further strengthening coordination and cooperation between our intelligence, security and law-enforcement agencies in order to improve our preventive capacities. In this regard, Coalition members are encouraged to act on the measures in the Hague Implementation Plan on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, a practical, action-oriented outcome of the joint Coalition and Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group meeting in the Hague on 11 January 2016. We also pledge to implement United Nations Security Council resolutions supporting action against ISIL/Da’esh, including UNSCR 2253, passed 17 December, 2015, which updates and strengthens the United Nations Security Council’s ISIL/ Da’esh and al-Qaida sanctions regime, makes it easier to designate those supporting ISIL/Da’esh and strengthens the UN implementation process. We endorse Coalition efforts to expose ISIL/Da’esh’s false ideology and narratives, and we support collaborative institutions such as the Sawab Center in the United Arab Emirates and Coalition Communications Cell in the United Kingdom.8. We underlined our determination to counter and push back ISIL/Da’esh global ambitions and its expansion beyond Iraq and Syria. We follow with concern the growing influence of ISIL/Da’esh in Libya, will continue to monitor closely developments there and stand ready to support the Government of National Accord in its efforts to establish peace and security for the Libyan people. 9. We remain fully mobilized in the fight against ISIL/Da’esh. Building on the Coalition’s growing momentum during recent months, we have used today’s gathering of the Small Group to enhance our understanding of the likely opportunities and challenges that will arise over the coming year and to prepare for them accordingly, while continuing to strengthen and adapt our means and resources across the entire Coalition. In this regard, we welcome the decision by Afghanistan to join the Coalition. We look forward to the next working level meeting of the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL/Da’esh, expected to take place in late Spring of 2016.

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