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President al-Jarba Confirms the Syrian Coalition's Return to Geneva Talks

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Press Statement
Syrian Coalition
Istanbul, Turkey
February 02, 2014

President of the Syrian Coalition Ahmad al-Jarba announced in a security conference in Germany on Sunday that the Coalition would return to Geneva for the resumption of peace talks scheduled for February 10. As of yet, the regime's attendance remains uncertain.

President al-Jarba outlined the Coalition's continued commitment to negotiations during remarks at the Munich Security Conference. A transcript of his comments appears below:

"There are those who are trying to put the executioner and the victim on an equal footing. We have millions of refugees and internally displaced people. We have tens of thousands of detainees and people who have been kidnapped; and we are still pursuing a political solution.

"The Coalition took a brave decision in going to Geneva. We support a political process leading to a democratic solution for Syria. We are committed to the implementation of the Geneva I Communiqué, which includes the formation of a transitional governing body. This is how we understand Geneva I, and this is what the UN Secretary General's invitation - that we and 40 countries received - outlined.

"The Assad regime is trying to use every single issue as a bargaining chip at the negotiating table. The criminal regime even tried to use opening humanitarian corridors as a bargaining chip - while it killed more than 1,500 civilians even as negotiations proceeded.

"Is it not shameful that while we meet at the negotiating table the regime is using MiG aircrafts to shell the people? It is firing missiles and dropping barrel bombs on civilians. Despite all that, and despite the painful fact that people are being killed, the Syrian Coalition has decided to come back on February 10 for the second round of negotiations.

"This is because we are serious, and we do not lie. We have taken a decision and we will go as far as it takes. But here I ask; will the international community and the Security Council; in particular Russia and the U.S. do the same?

"We will go for the second round. I think you heard two speeches in Montreux; one was that of the Coalition, and the other was the hard-line speech of the Assad regime, in which it accused half of the world of terrorism."

"We have always called for the expulsion of all militias from Syria, and we repeat our demand. Hezbollah, designated a terrorist group, has been heavily involved in the fighting in Syria for more than a year and a half. There is also the terrorist group ISIS which we have fought and defeated in Aleppo, Idlib, and Hama."

We ask for Mercy for our martyrs, health for our wounded, and freedom for our detainees.

Long live Syria and its people, free and with honor.

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