

Summary of mr. Al-Jarba speech delivered to the expanded Friends of Syria at the United Nations

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Remarks

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Representative Office to the United Nations

New York

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Today Ahmad al-Jarba, President of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces delivered remarks to Ministers and delegations of the countries of the Friends of the Syrian People, as summarized below:

I am speaking with you today on behalf of the people of Syria, including the families of the 150,000 dead and 300,000 wounded, and the 7 million displaced and refugees. I speak to you in the name of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, which represents the broad spectrum of moderate political movements, all the ethnic and religious groups of Syria, local committees and councils, and the political arm of the Free Syrian Army.

We are entering the third year of the Syrian Revolution, in which the Syrian people are seeking to restore their universal rights and liberties after decades of oppression and exclusion.

The regime has sought to portray itself as fighting terrorism, even as the regime destroys cities, villages, mosques, and churches in violation of international humanitarian law. Were the hundreds of children lined up in Ghouta terrorists? With the introduction of sectarian Iranian and Hizbollah militias, and the indiscriminate bombardment by tanks and aircrafts, can the regime's fight fairly be construed as targeting terrorists?

The Syrian people support peace and moderation, tolerance and coexistence. What we are seeing from groups linked to al Qaeda has nothing to do with the Syrian people, its revolution, or the Free Syrian Army. The extremism, much of it imported from outside Syria, has emerged as a phenomenon supported, planned, and left alone by the regime

in an attempt to turn the revolution into a sectarian conflict.

The persistence of a criminal who has used chemical weapons is a stain on the conscience of the international community and calls into question the credibility of our international laws and institutions. Meanwhile, the same regime that used chemical weapons faces insufficient consequences for the use of conventional weapons to kill civilians on a daily basis, while spreading sectarianism and subjecting our country to foreign intervention. Departure of the regime is a necessary prerequisite to peace-building and national reconciliation.

Since the outset of the political process with the adoption of the Geneva Communiqué, the regime has intensified the scope and scale of its aggression, while we have urged the world to implement that political transitional framework. First, all parties must recognize that the goal of negotiations is the implementation of the Geneva Communiqué and its international commitment to a transition to democracy. Second, there must be a clear timetable for this transition. Third, foreign militias must be made to leave Syria. Fourth, the regime must take confidence-building measures such as the release of political prisoners, lifting of sieges against cities, and providing the necessary elements to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. Fifth, there must be an Arab commitment to support the Syrian people during transition, in addition to the broader international support.

The transitional government, in accordance with the Geneva Communiqué, must have full executive powers, including military and security authority, and judicial powers, with a clear timeframe for democratic elections. The Free Syrian Army will be restructured as a national army that protects Syria and its national unity, free of political party control. The security sector must also act only in accordance with national interests and must protect citizens' rights and freedoms with specified responsibilities subject to rule of law. An independent judicial body must be established which works in accordance with law and in the interests of all citizens.

We urge the international community to force the regime to allow visits of prisons and detention centers, demand the release of political prisoners, lift the siege on civilian areas, and allow the delivery of international humanitarian aid. Ghouta, with a population of 2 million, has been under siege for 9 months, and is on the verge of crisis. We urge an investigative mission to review and propose solutions to alleviate this impending disaster.

This is the only way to build a national, democratic, civil, modern state. The future government of Syria aspires for a government that does not serve only a sect or family, but a state for every Syrian citizen. Syrians have paid a dear price for their freedom and

dignity. They deserve the support of the international community. The people will not stop their struggle until these noble goals are accomplished.