Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

London 11 Statement on Presidential elections in Syria

2014-04-03

Joint Statement by the “London 11” Core Group of the Friends of the Syrian People on Presidential Elections in Syria:

The core group of the Friends of the Syrian People – including Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States – continues to support the efforts of Joint Special Representative Brahimi to mediate a political solution between both sides and calls upon the Syrian regime to cease its obstruction of the Geneva process by clearly endorsing all elements of the Geneva Communiqué, which was enshrined in Security Council Resolutions 2118 and 2139 and reaffirmed by the United Nations and the international community at the Montreux conference.

As previously stated by the core group of the Friends of the Syrian People in January 2014 and recently by Joint Special Representative Brahimi, any unilateral decision by the Syrian regime to hold presidential elections would be entirely inconsistent with the Geneva Communiqué’s call for the establishment of a transitional governing body to oversee constitutional reforms leading to free and fair elections in a neutral environment. Elections organized by the Asad regime would be a parody of democracy, would reveal the regime’s rejection of the basis of the Geneva talks, and would deepen the division of Syria.

Recent actions by the Asad regime to pave the way for presidential elections in the coming months, including the promulgation of a new electoral law, have no credibility. Bashar al-Asad intends these elections to sustain his dictatorship. They would be conducted in the midst of a conflict, only in regime-controlled areas, and with millions of Syrians disenfranchised, displaced from their homes, or in refugee camps. An electoral process led by Asad, who the United Nations considers to have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, mocks the innocent lives lost in the conflict.

The best way out of Syria’s crisis is a political solution based on the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué. This requires the Syrian regime to accept the agenda and sequencing laid out by Joint Special Representative Brahimi as a condition for the resumption of talks: (i) violence and terrorism; (ii) transitional governing body; (iii) national institutions; and (iv) national reconciliation. As Joint Special Representative Brahimi has stated, items (i) and (ii)

must be discussed in parallel, and there must be genuine engagement on the creation of a transitional governing body.

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