

**The Fourth Ministerial Meeting of
The Group of Friends of the Syrian People**
Marrakech, 12 December 2012
Chairman's conclusions

Following its meetings in Tunisia, Istanbul and Paris, the Group of Friends of the Syrian People held its Fourth Ministerial Meeting in Marrakech on 12 December 2012. The participation of about 130 representatives from Member States, including around 60 Ministers, the Syrian opposition, and officials of several international and regional organizations and NGOs is a strong illustration of the international community's determination to support a Syrian-led political solution to the crisis in Syria.

The aim of the meeting was to support the Syrian people in their struggle to meet their legitimate aspirations for democratic transition, dignity and development, and to ensure further support aimed at alleviating the immediate suffering.

Participants listened with great interest to the Royal Message sent by H.M. King Mohammed VI to the Conference. The Royal Message placed hope on the Marrakech Conference to mark an important step in bringing the cycle of violence in Syria to an end and in achieving Syrians' legitimate aspiration for democracy and freedom, making sure Syria's sovereignty is respected and its national unity and territorial integrity are safeguarded. The Message highlighted the tangible contribution from the active Group of the friends of the Syrian People in order to bolster international efforts and UN endeavors designed to find a political solution to the crisis and support the process of political transition in the country. The Message also applauded the dynamism of the Syrian opposition for unifying the full spectrum of political opinion at home and abroad which culminated in the Doha declaration on the establishment of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces. After presenting Morocco's contribution to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people, especially the field hospital set up by Morocco in the Zaatari camp in Jordan, the Message called for the establishment of a specific and efficient UN mechanism that can protect civilians, deliver and distribute aid to displaced persons and all citizens affected by the violence, in cooperation with States and international, regional and Syrian humanitarian organization, and in accordance with local organizations operating under the banner of the National Coalition.

The Chairman of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, Sheikh Ahmad Mouaz Al Khateeb, presented his report to the meeting. He described the gravity of the situation on the ground, including the brutal policy of killing, torture, and sexual and gender based violence perpetrated by the regime against its own people. He described the widespread, gross and systematic violations of human rights and lack of fundamental freedoms, and the

resulting thousands of civilian casualties, including children and women, as well as massive displacement of the population. He presented the National Coalition's achievements so far, including the development of its vision for Syria's future. Chairman Al Khateeb requested more support from the international community to enable the Coalition to work towards a political transition to a more just, democratic, and inclusive Syria.

On the basis of all participants' contributions, the meeting came the following conclusions:

Paying tribute to the Syrian people's steadfastness and resistance:

- 1 Participants paid tribute to the steadfastness of the Syrian people and their determination to pursue their legitimate rights despite the regime's brutal repression.
- 2 Participants reiterated that Bashar Al Assad has lost legitimacy to govern Syria.

Call for an immediate cessation of violence:

- 3 Participants called on the Syrian regime to immediately cease its attacks and fully withdraw troops from urban areas as the first steps towards a comprehensive cessation of violence. They condemned the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Syrian regime, including with heavy weapons, aerial attacks and missiles. They deplored the growing human cost of the conflict, including over 40,000 deaths and the escalating humanitarian and refugee crisis. They called for the end of violence and support conditions for a sustained, inclusive political solution to the crisis. They also called on all sides to respect international humanitarian law.
- 4 Participants recognized the legitimate need for the Syrian people to defend themselves against the violent and brutal campaign of Al Assad regime.

Commitment to Syria's Sovereignty and territorial integrity:

- 5 Participants reiterated the firm commitment to Syria's sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity.

Warning against any attempt to export the Syrian crisis:

- 6 Participants noted that the continuation of the crisis was threatening the stability, security and economic well-being of neighbouring and regional

countries. Participants expressed their strong support for efforts to protect against the growing threat, including NATO's decision to augment Turkey's defense and allies' intent to deploy the Patriot air defence system to Turkey.

International community's Responsibility:

- 7 Participants welcomed the resolutions of the UN General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation regarding the Syrian crisis. Recognizing Security Council resolutions 2042 and 2043, the participants again called on the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities. In light of the gravity of the crisis and the impact on regional security, it is critical that all member States of the Security Council exert their substantial collective weight and influence to have the Council come to a meaningful and robust response.
- 8 Participants urged some countries supporting the Syrian regime to review their position in view of the strong resolve of the international community. They encouraged all relevant UN bodies to fulfill their responsibilities.

Encouraging a political solution:

- 9 Participants re-affirmed their commitment to facilitate a **Syrian-led political solution** to the crisis in Syria and expressed support for the mission of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States.
- 10 Participants reaffirmed their support for the full implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 2042 and 2043, and reiterated that Bashar Al-Assad has lost legitimacy and should stand aside to allow the launching of a sustainable political transition process in conformity with the Geneva communiqué.
- 11 Participants underlined that it is for the people of Syria to determine the future of Syria. All Syrian communities should have a role in the future Syria which should be a free, independent, democratic and pluralistic State where all Syrians will be equal, respecting international laws in support of peace in the region.

Recognizing the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces and the mechanisms of achieving democratic transition:

- 12 Participants welcomed the agreement signed by the various groups of the Syrian opposition at the Doha meetings (November 5-11, 2012) under the joint auspices of the League of Arab States and Qatar. They welcomed the commitment of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces to a peaceful political transition, economic recovery, as well as to respect human rights, international law and humanitarian access.
- 13 Participants acknowledged the National Coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people and the umbrella organisation under which Syrian opposition groups are gathering.
- 14 Participants welcomed the organisational developments achieved by the National Coalition and its ongoing efforts to: finalise an inclusive political structure with 4th vice presidential appointment; establish a functional Secretariat to support Coalition leaders; set out a vision for Syria's future in support of all Syrian communities; and take active steps to join with local councils inside Syria. They encouraged the National Coalition to reach out to all elements of Syrian society and offer reassurances about its vision for an inclusive future for Syria.
- 15 Participants expressed their commitment to provide support to the National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, including the development of the National Coalition's 'Assistance Coordination Unit' (ACU) to coordinate the delivery of assistance to the Syrian people inside Syria and technical advice and financial assistance to build the capacity of the National Coalition in order to meet the needs of the Syrian people. They reiterated that the prompt departure of Bashar al Assad would avoid the loss of more Syrian lives and further destruction.
- 16 Participants urged the Coalition to build upon and strengthen its engagement with the United Nations and the League of Arab States on political steps to end the crisis, protect Syrians and address the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Ending human rights violations in Syria and helping the Syrians lead transitional justice in their country:

- 17 Participants condemned the escalation of systematic and widespread violations by the Syrian Regime of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture, sexual violence and deliberate destruction of residential areas.

- 18 Participants underscored the importance of respecting international humanitarian law and human rights law by all and at all times, and condemned those who do not respect this.
- 19 Participants stressed once again that the Syrian regime will not escape accountability and punishment for its violations of international law.
- 20 Participants called upon the International community to take the necessary measures to deny the Syrian regime access to any means of repression and violence, and demanded the countries that have been supplying it with those tools to end this practice and assume their moral responsibility towards the victims.
- 21 Participants reaffirmed the importance of international efforts to document the Syrian Regime violations of international law, in particular, their support to the work and reports of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, mandated by the UN Human Rights Council, which enabled the identification of continuous gross human rights violations perpetrated against the Syrian people. These reports confirmed the participation of the regime's security forces in atrocities committed against civilians, including gross violations of the humanitarian international law and human rights law.
- 22 Participants welcomed the overwhelming support for the two resolutions adopted by the UN Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly (27/11/2012) on the situation of human rights in Syria. They expressed support for the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry to document human rights violations and abuses for a future accountability process. They welcomed the decision of the Human Rights Council on 27 September to extend the mandate of the UN Commission of Inquiry, welcome the appointment of two new members to that body and fully support their call for human rights violations and abuses to be thoroughly investigated. Participants called upon the regime to guarantee access into Syria for the Commission, with a view toward enabling it to carry out its full mandate within Syria.
- 23 Participants confirmed the necessity of holding accountable perpetrators of crimes under legitimate legal proceedings in respect of international standards preventing any form of individual or collective reprisal. Participants invited all the Syrians and civil society organizations to publicly dissociate themselves from human rights violations.
- 24 Participants stressed that **any use of chemical or biological weapons by the Syrian regime would be abhorrent and that this would draw a serious response from the International community**, and that those

responsible would be held accountable for such actions. They called upon the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to continue engage preventively according to its mandate.

Sanctions:

- 25 Participants welcomed the conclusions of the Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on Sanctions, held in Tokyo on November 30, 2012, for the first time in Asia, with record-high participation of 67 countries and organizations, including new countries from Asia, to increase pressure on the Syrian regime, isolate it from the international community, and deprive it of resources, such as oil proceeds and assets, used for financing the killing. They called for the effective implementation and enforcement of these sanctions as an appropriate means to deter repression against the Syrian people, and put an end to violence in the country.
- 26 Participants invited the International community, particularly members of the UN Security Council, to increase pressure on the Syrian regime by adopting and implementing measures to prevent the Syrian regime from receiving external support and resources allowing it to commit violence against its own citizens. Such measures include **tightening control on the transfer of weapons** used in the killing and repression of the Syrian people.
- 27 Participants commended the efforts exerted by neighboring countries to impose sanctions on the Syrian regime, despite the effects on their economies. They invite other countries to join this effort.
- 28 Participants emphasized that the economic difficulties faced by the Syrian people are the result of policies and practices of the Syrian regime and that the sanctions do not target civilians. They rather focus on the regime and its supporters. It remains important to freeze the assets of the Syrian regime, institutions and individuals associated with the regime as those assets belong to the Syrian people.
- 29 Participants commended the courage shown by those who defected from the regime and are committed to lift, swiftly and appropriately, any sanctions imposed on them. They also invited all those working with the Syrian regime, its armed forces, financial and economic operators to dissociate themselves from it and support the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

Alleviating the sufferings of the Syrian people:

- 30 Participants expressed serious concern regarding the worsening humanitarian situation of the Syrian people, particularly the dire situation of 2.5 million of displaced persons inside the country and the difficulties experienced by over 500,000 Syrian refugees in various refugee hosting countries.
- 31 Participants listened to the report of the Assistance and Coordination Unit (ACU) of the National Coalition, they welcomed the intensive and positive work which has been accomplished by the ACU after Doha, and encouraged it to continue its activity. They were particularly concerned by the fact that many of those in need in Syria had not yet been reached and received appropriate assistance.
- 32 Participants called for unimpeded access for humanitarian organisations working in Syria and for the promotion and support to an impartial and independent humanitarian response led by relevant internationally mandated organisations.
- 33 Participants agreed to coordinate and work with the ACU of the National Coalition to set up innovative complementary mechanisms to reach those in need in Syria, including working with local councils and local solidarity networks who can provide particularly effective channels for responding to the needs on the ground in Syria. They noted the commitment by the ACU to honour the fundamental principles of providing humanitarian assistance, particularly without discrimination.
- 34 Participants also reiterated their commitment to provide support and assistance to the neighbours of Syria and others supporting Syrian refugees.
- 35 Participants commended the laudable efforts of neighboring countries aimed at responding to the growing needs of the refugees. They urged the international community to enable these countries to sustain their efforts.
- 36 Participants reiterated full support to the efforts of the United Nations to play its role with regards to the humanitarian response. They called for all members of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People to respond actively to the significantly underfunded UN humanitarian and refugee appeals.
- 37 Participants expressed their readiness to increase the funding of the National Coalition relief activities.

Reconstruction and Peace-building:

- 38 Participants welcomed the work of the Working Group on Economic Recovery and Reconstruction co-chaired by Germany and the UAE. In the light of the evolving situation, they tasked the Working Group and its Secretariat with supporting the Assistance Coordination Unit, including in their interaction with the international donor community. The Secretariat may, inter alia, provide capacity building functions, upon request, via the provision of international experts to the ACU and other institutions empowered by the National Coalition that are dedicated to economic recovery, with the aim to expand donor participation and increase the visibility of the National Coalition in all service delivery inside Syria.”
- 39 Participants also welcomed the willingness of Germany and United Arab Emirates to respond to the request by the National Coalition and work on the establishment of a Trust Fund. This Trust Fund should provide the international community with a vehicle to offer financial support to the National Coalition for responding to the needs of the Syrian people.
- 40 Participants stressed the importance of preparing for the reconstruction period in Syria. In this context, the International community should be predisposed to promptly and decisively reconsider sanctions where appropriate and, in a coordinated manner, as a means to remove obstacles to the recovery and development of the Syrian economy. This would also facilitate the reconstruction efforts and the return of assets misused by the Syrian regime.
- 41 Participants encouraged the National Coalition to build on the national covenant and transition plan as agreed at the meeting of Syrian opposition groups in Cairo on 3 July 2012.
- 42 Participants committed to supporting a coordinated transition and day after planning effort, building on efforts to date, which will be led by the future transitional authority in Syria. They agreed that it is important the international community plans ahead to ensure it is poised to provide rapid support to a future Syria, and shows its readiness to organize a donors’ Conference immediately after the fall of the Assad regime.
- 43 Participants encouraged the National Coalition and all opposition groups to work together to agree a common approach for a sustainable transition process and the post-Assad period. This approach should guarantee the rights of all Syrians and create the conditions for a future Syria to be just, democratic, inclusive and adhering to international law.

Participants welcomed Italy’s readiness to host the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Syrian people in 2013.