

Statement by the Co-Chair of the Constitutional Committee, Representative of the Syrian Negotiation Commission, Prior to The Beginning of the Eighth Session of the Committee's Meetings

Geneva – Sunday, 29 May 2022 – 10:00 AM Damascus time

Tomorrow, Monday, proceedings of the Eighth Session of the Syrian Constitutional Committee's meetings will begin. The Continuation of obstructing the work of the Committee and impeding it from accomplishing its mission is a further prolongation of the suffering of all Syrians, an evasion of justice, a continuation of the erosion of our dilapidated economy, a deepening of the gap among the country people, and a solidification of the division of our homeland.

We are fully aware of the magnitude of the task upon us, and we know that we work for the present and future of our people and country. Upon our shoulder a responsibility given to us by all inflicted Syrians. We promise to make every effort and employ every capability in our disposal to fulfil the aspirations of our people in freedom, justice, equality and democracy, by all legitimate means. The constitutional process is one of the baskets within the track of the political solution that is based on the full and strict implementation of resolution 2254 (2015). Progress made in the work of the Constitutional Committee is the evidence of the level of commitment of all parties to reach the desired political solution. This requires setting a specific timetable for the completion of the Committee's mission in accordance with its mandate. I reiterate our demands to the Secretary General of the United Nations and his Special Envoy for Syria to exert all their efforts to put that timetable that we formally demanded. We have also called for activating the negotiations on the rest of the baskets of resolution 2254 (2015) in conjunction with the work of the Constitutional Committee in several letters and meetings since 2020 until the present day.

Since the end of the Seventh Session, we have worked to communicate with Syrians at home and abroad; held workshops with Syrian constitutional experts; and held many consultative meetings, with politicians, representatives of civil society, women's, youth and human rights organizations; we briefed them on the course of the meetings of the Seventh Session, and reviewed the shortcomings, obstacles and difficulties thereof. We also heard many opinions and concerns, and we contacted the office of the UN envoy, Mr. Gere O. Pedersen to highlight the need to complete the work methodology to be effective to the fullest. Through the SNC, we met with representatives of the countries concerned with the Syrian issue, at the Arab, regional and international levels, to revitalize their role to push the political process forward, and assume their responsibilities toward serving justice and forming a special international tribunal to hold accountable the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria. We pointed out the importance of bringing the issue of detainees and the forcibly disappeared persons under an international mechanism that guarantees and documents their release in an orderly manner that respects their human dignity; and uncovering the fate of the disappeared in an effective and rapid manner. We affirmed our belief that no solution can be sustainable without achieving peace, and the safe, dignified and voluntary return of IDPs and refugees to their original homes.

We renewed our adherence to a political solution as the only viable solution to the Syrian cause by the full and strict implementing of UNSCR 2254 (2015) in its entirety.

In the course of our work and meetings, we are committed to utmost transparency, while adhering to the internationally documented internal rules of procedures and regulations that govern the work of the Constitutional Committee. We always welcome, at every stage, all initiatives, proposals and constructive observations that would contribute to the accomplishment of our work and our mission, and the development of our vision that we worked on with male and female Syrian constitutional experts and specialists for years. We also work closely with our political terms of references to activate all elements of the political process, and we inform our people, with honesty and transparency, of the results of the mission we are undertaking.

We will continue our efforts during this Eighth Session with the United Nations as a facilitator for the work of the Constitutional Committee, so that all parties abide by the rules of procedures, mechanisms and work methodology. It is time for all to seriously and responsibly engage to achieve a draft new constitution, and progress swiftly on all other tracks of the political solution of the Syrian cause through the full and strict implementation of UNSCR 2254 (2015).

We reaffirm that our only goal is to realize the aspirations of our people for which they revolted. Our constants have not and will not change, whatever the circumstances and pressures are; they are constants of a state with a civilized constitution which befits the Syrians of all components and groups, their history and authentic heritage. A constitution that provides guarantees to the rights of all, without discrimination on any grounds and ensures non-repetition of the tragedy experienced by our people. We want our people to be the owner and source of all powers, as we want the separation of powers in a way that enhances the independence and integrity of the judiciary; a legislative authority that does not go beyond the constitution in its legislation, and be a guardian and guarantor of enforcement thereof; an executive authority that is subject to the constitution and upholds it while it exercises its duties to serve the people. A constitution that defines the tasks of the army and security agencies and guarantees their neutrality, and keeps them away from political action, so that the Syrians have a state of equal citizenship and democracy based on political and partisan pluralism. A state of peaceful transfer of power; a state of law, justice and freedom; a state free of corruption and tyranny. All Syrians, of different groups, affiliations and components, are our partners. We work with them and for them. We carry the flag on behalf of a free and generous people; a people who made enormous sacrifices to make their flag fly high in a state of law, justice, dignity, freedom and democracy. This is what we will see soon, come what may.

Co-Chair of Constitutional Committee
E. Hadi Albahra