

Transcript of Press Briefing by Mr. Hadi Albahra

The Co-Chair of the Syrian Constitutional Committee

Monday, October 18, 2021

At the Conclusion of the First Day of the Sixth Session Meetings of the Constitutional Committee

"Today, we addressed the discussion and working mechanisms of the Constitutional Committee. The first session convened on the drafting of the constitution according to the proposed constitutional drafts. The open discussion phase has ended, and we have initiated the main process for which the Constitutional Committee was formed."

"We hope to conduct the rest of the meetings with the same ambiance and with the same previously agreed-upon mechanisms to yield the expected outcomes as soon as possible."

"The agenda was previously determined. We agreed on the methodology before coming to Geneva, and here we were able to agree on the implementation mechanisms in detail. Now there are no technical or procedural impediments to completion. And indeed the agreed-upon methodology and mechanisms were applied during the first meeting, where we initiated the work on the basic principles of the constitution."

"Sovereignty is one of the basic principles in the constitution, whether the sovereignty of state or the people in Syria. Today one of the parties addressed this point and presented their proposal on this matter, and it was discussed by the rest of the parties in the Constitutional Committee. The discussion was based on questions, criticizing some clauses, or providing alternate text for the same items."

"There are known constitutional provisions covered in the constitution, and there are legal issues identified within a legal framework, and there are political issues not related to the constitution. Constitutional provisions are specific and are applicable to all cases whether they are special, specific, time-bound, or public. Each party or member of the Syrian Constitutional Committee has the freedom to suggest any

constitutional drafts to be discussed. From our end in the Syrian Negotiations Commissions, we submitted a proposal for a comprehensive provision on sovereignty. What really matters is not only the document presented but rather what we will agree upon, as there is a mechanism for compiling these documents and discussing the documents

from a legal, constitutional, and linguistic aspect. The next step would be to agree upon common provisions that would then be submitted to the expanded body of the Constitutional Committee for discussion and approval. Therefore, text of sections submitted by different parties will not prevail unless all parties agree in consensus.”

"Any earlier delay was due to our work on the implementing mechanisms of the methodology, as we worked on the most precise details, because we understand that when we cover all these details at the beginning, we won't face problems during implementation, and that's why we had to work on these minor procedural issues."