

VOICES FROM THE SOUTH

E-Newsletter -March 2014

Call for Peace in Syria Statement of the “All Sides Consultation for a Political Solution in Syria,” March 2014



The International Peace Initiative for Syria is a network of academics, human rights activists and cultural and public front figures that wishes to support and encourage initiatives that can lead to the opening of a national dialogue between the main political and social forces involved in the ongoing armed conflict in Syria. The aim is to pave a way for a political solution based on the following criteria or principles:

- negotiations and a ceasefire should go hand in hand with a process of de-escalation and de-militarisation, aiming for the people of Syria to express their will peacefully and eventually at the ballot boxes in free elections.
- categorically rejecting any kind of military intervention, wherever it may come from
- fundamental importance is given to the democratic and social rights of the vast majority of the people, and a sustainable, peaceful settlement must be based on a constitutional process which allows free elections organised by a transitional government as a result of negotiations.
- support to all initiatives and tendencies among the existing political and military forces which are promoting inter-confessional tolerance on the base of the same rights for all citizens.

After delegation visits to Syria and Lebanon in 2012 with informal talks with high officials from all sides of the conflict, an agreement was reached of organising a consultation with representatives of civil society leaders from all sectors of the Syrian society.

The following statement is a summary of the discussions held in the “All Sides Consultation for a Political Solution in Syria” held in Austria, March 8-9th 2014. It gives a summary of the discussions as perceived by the organisers of the consultation. A formal agreement or common platform was not reached by the Syrian participants themselves, but this summary and call has been accepted by all participants. Furthermore, there was a unanimous wish to continue the dialogue and process among the Syrian civil society representatives attending the consultation.

See page 2 for more info.



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The International Peace Initiative for Syria (IPIS) is a movement of peace activists, intellectuals and members of the international civil society aimed at establishing contacts with those Syrian political forces that are willing to engage in a political dialogue under conditions which eventually could lead to a cease-fire and a political transition acceptable to all people who truly want peace in Syria and in the whole area.

For more information, visit PEACEinSyria.org



Statement of the “All Sides Consultation for a Political Solution in Syria”

Vienna, March 24 -- Syrians coming from most diverse social, educational, political and national backgrounds have gathered on March 8th and 9th in the Castle of Schlaining, Austria, in the framework of an “All Sides Consultation for a Political Solution in Syria” organized by the *International Peace Initiative for Syria*.

Driven by deep worries about the deteriorating developments, the disastrous humanitarian situation and the future of the Syrian people, the *All Sides Consultation* has been searching for what can be done, by means of a political solution, to stop the war, the violation of human rights causing a huge number of victims, the destruction of infrastructure and culture. This solution should help the Syrians to find a new social contract for the construction of a State based on comprehensive national reconciliation and accountability, guaranteeing the rights and freedom for all Syrians.

Recognizing the immense complexity of the situation and the increasing suffering and polarization, following points emerged as consensual during our deliberations. As conveners, we are formulating them in the spirit of the discussions:

- 1- Based on the principle of the sovereignty of the Syrian people we call for cease fires by all participants of the war and demand all non-Syrian armed forces to leave the Syrian territories.
- 2- We appeal to stop the war, emphasizing that a political solution is the best solution for all participants. This solution implies guaranteeing for everybody basic political, economic and social rights leading towards social justice and the release of political prisoners and hostages from all sides.
- 3- We want to search for realistic and practical methods and procedures in order to realize an “All side’s peace conference” which includes all Syrian parts involved in this crisis.
- 4- We will work on all levels in order to satisfy the urgent and necessary needs of the civilians including safe delivery of human aid.

5- Particularly we will work on bringing back the refugees and emigrants to Syria and to find ways of providing them with the necessary means of living in regions that are safe from war and military activities.

6- To work on finding a space that can be used as a center for the peace process and where a constant and open dialogue can take place. This will be named “The Syrian House of Peace.”

7- We will constitute a Network for Peace in Syria including both, Syrians of all walks of life as well as non-Syrians, supporting a political solution.

“This [political] solution [to the war] should help the Syrians to find a new social contract for the construction of a State based on comprehensive national reconciliation and accountability, guaranteeing the rights and freedom for all Syrians.”

Furthermore following issues and positions have been discussed without reaching consensus and therefore need to be referred to a next conference:

The way how to find a just and comprehensive solution for the Kurdish question in order to guarantee equal civil rights while maintaining the unity of the Syrian people and State?

In which way equal rights between women and men can be established guaranteeing full rights for women? ■

For detailed documentation from the consultation, visit:

www.PEACEinSYRIA.org/conference.html

The Initiative for a Political Solution in Syria can be contacted at:

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