

Syrian Civil Society: To Succeed, Syrian Peace Talks Must Reflect Concerns of Syrians in Syria

[23 February 2017, GENEVA] - Today, Syrian civil society representatives arrived in Geneva to make clear that all parties to the conflict attending the new round of peace talks must prioritize the needs of Syrians inside Syria.

"Syrians want an end to the violence", Dr. Haytham Alhamwi of [Rethink Rebuild Society](#) stated. "We need immediate, full humanitarian access to *all* Syrians and a political solution that achieves freedom, justice and dignity. We are hopeful the Geneva process can achieve this, but to do so the safety and security of Syrian civilians must come first. Indiscriminate violence against civilians must stop."

The ceasefire established on 30 December 2016 is fraying. On Monday, 20 February 2017, air-to-surface missiles struck the Maaret Missrin hospital in Idlib killing 7 civilians and injuring 35 others. In Daraa, hundreds of Syrian regime and Russian airstrikes have caused dozens of civilian deaths and rendered medical facilities inoperable.

"This week's attacks are a fraction of the hundreds of violations that threaten the Syrian ceasefire and delegitimize peace talks", Fadel Abdul Ghany of the [Syrian Network for Human Rights](#) warned. "We, civil society organizations that represent and serve the Syrian people, have a constructive role to play in the political process and are paramount in securing a long-term, sustainable peace. But so long as indiscriminate violence continues with impunity and indiscriminate weapons eradicate the civilians we serve our contribution will be ineffective."

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Syrian civil society groups, many of whom are in Geneva for the peace talks, are calling for:

- The United Nations to **independently and impartially monitor** Syria's ceasefire, including with independent observers on the ground.
- The imposition of **credible consequences** for *all* parties who violate the ceasefire to ensure that all civilians are adequately protected.
- All confidence-building measures negotiated or agreed upon, including humanitarian access and the release of detainees, to be in line with the Geneva communiqué and under the **auspices of the United Nations**.
- The **Geneva Communiqué** and all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions **2118 and 2254**, to form the basis of any future political agreement.
- Syria's political process to be **inclusive**, with **women** and **civil society** playing a robust role at all stages of political negotiations and their independence and inclusion must be preserved in any future political agreement reached.
- Guaranteed, unhindered and continuous **humanitarian access** to *all* areas of Syria, especially besieged areas.

- An end to all policies of **forced population transfer**, which remain an integral feature of the Syrian regime's policy to create demographic displacement in Syria, as we currently see in the Damascus suburbs.
- Release of all arbitrarily-held **detainees**, including all political prisoners illegally held in military detention facilities, and all **execution orders** stopped, including those issued by military and secret courts.
- All perpetrators of war crimes to be held **accountable** through a transitional justice process in keeping with international humanitarian and human rights law.
- The crafting of Syria's **democratic constitution** to be **Syrian-led** and agreed on the basis of an effective ceasefire.
- A future Syria that respects and protects Syria's diverse **ethnic and religious** communities and is **pluralistic, inclusive, democratic** and governed by the rule of law.

Click [this](#) to tweet: **#Syria civil society @Rethink_Rebuild's Dr Alhamwi: We are at #SyriaTalks to achieve freedom, justice, and dignity**

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