

Joint Statement

Europe must not Finance the Syrian Government Plans for Reconstruction until an Inclusive Durable Transition is Underway: the International Civil Society Ask the European Leaders to Take the Initiative in the Syrian Crisis in the Sixth Anniversary of the Revolution

SNHR

SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Monday, March 13, 2017

The Syrian Network for Human Rights, founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, non-profit independent organization that is a primary source for the United Nations on all death toll-related statistics in Syria



Brussels/London/Paris, 13 March – European tax-payers’ money must not go to Syria’s government for reconstruction until an inclusive, durable transition is underway, an international coalition of more than 80 civil society organisations has said today, ahead of the revolution’s sixth anniversary on 15 March. [1]

The call comes ahead of [a major conference](#) to be held in Brussels on 4 and 5 April, at which European funding for the reconstruction will be discussed. The coalition called on European leaders to insist that not a single penny or cent for reconstruction will reach the Syrian government until:

- An inclusive political transition with credible guarantees is underway;
- the Assad government and its allies have ended all attacks on civilians and respects a ceasefire with the moderate opposition;
- there is an end to the sieges, with full and unhindered humanitarian access and passage for civilians;
- independent monitors are allowed unhindered access to places of detention;
- humanitarian and civil society organisations are effectively decriminalised and their necessary contribution to the future of Syria recognised.

“Without the credible promise of democracy, and an end to attacks on civilians, siege-warfare, torture and the criminalisation of civil society and humanitarian actors, there can be no transition worth the name in Syria,” said Dimitris Christopoulos, President of the FIDH, a partner to the coalition. “If European leaders neglect these conditions, they will be bankrolling continued war crimes and instability.”

Recently, the UN estimated that more than 600,000 Syrians are denied access to humanitarian aid by siege warfare, while the Siege Watch project puts this number at more than 900,000. More than 90,000 are forcibly disappeared or detained in prisons in which torture is rife. [2]

Jan Gruiters of coalition partner PAX, a Dutch peacebuilding initiative, said: “Russia has said it wants Europe to fund the reconstruction of Syria. Russia has also at last recognised that there is a moderate opposition. That suggests that Europe has leverage which – if used wisely – could help to energise the peace talks, and to create momentum towards a genuine, inclusive political transition, followed by reconstruction.” [3]



The call comes six years after peaceful protestors first took to the streets in Syria to call for freedom and reform. Despite a nominal ceasefire, civilians are dying due to aerial and artillery bombardment every day. Humanitarian access has worsened since the ceasefire begun on 1 January. [4]

Husam AlKatlaby, CEO of the Violations Documentation Centre in Syria, one of several Syrian partners to the coalition, said: "In Eastern Ghouta, where the regime is gradually cutting off the lifeline of 450,000 Syrians to the outside world, patients are already dying due to lack of medicine, food is becoming more expensive, and every day brings fresh casualties from conventional or chemical weapons. We fear that Eastern Ghouta will be the next of many more Aleppos yet to come – cut off, strangled, and bombarded while the world watches." [5] As part of the sixth anniversary activities, a hard hitting video will be released on 14 March, calling on European leaders to step up to the plate and forge the coherent Syria policy needed bring peace to the war-ravaged nation. The video is available here in [English](#) and here in [Arabic](#).

This press release is supported by the following 81 organisations:

Abrar Halap Association for Relief and Development*, Ahl Horan, Al Ihsan Local Organization for Relief & Development*, Al-AMEEN*, AL- Basar Organization*, Alkawakibi Organization for Human Rigths, Alseeraj for Development and Healthcare*, Amrha*, Arab Coalition for Sudan, Attaa Association*, Attaa for Relief and Development (ARD)*, Bader Organization*, Balad Syria Organisation*, Basmet Amal Charity*, Baytna Syria, Bihar Relief Organization*, Broederlijk Delen, Civil Care Organization*, Collectif des Amis d'Alep, Damascene House Foundation for Society Development*, Dawlaty, Deir Elzozr United Association (FURAT)*, Education Without Borders (MIDAD)*, EduRights Foundation*, Emaar Al Sham Humanitarian Association*, Enjaz Development Foundation*, FIDH - International Federation for Human Rights, Gaith Organization*, Ghazi Sham Organization*, Ghiath Matar Foundation*, Green Organization*, Human Care Organization- Arsal*, Humanitarian Relief Association (IYD)*, Independent Doctors' Association, Insan for Psychosocial Support*, INSURYA*, International Humanitarian Relief*, International Supporting Woman Association (ISWA)*, Irtiqaa Foundation*, Jana Watan Association*, Local Development and Small-Projects Support (LDSPS), Maram Foundation for Relief & Development*, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, Mountain Foundation*, NAS Organization*, Nasaem Khair*, NuDay Syria*, Orient for Human Relief*, Pax Christi Flanders, PAX, Qitaf Al Khair Relief Association*, Resalet Al-Sham Humanitarian Association*, Saed Charity Association*, Save A Soul*, Sawa Association*, Sedra Association for Charity*, Sham Association for Orphans Care*, Shama Association*, Snabel Al Khyr*, Souria Houria, Syria Charity*, Syria Institute for Justice, Syria Relief Organization*, Syrian Education Commission (SEC)*, Syrian Engineers for Construction & Development Organization (SECD)*, Syrian Institute for Justice, Syrian Medical Mission*, Syrian Network for Human Rights., Syrian Orphans Organization*, Takaful Al Sham Charity Organization*, The Society for threatened Peoples (Germany), The Syria Campaign, The Syrian Establishment for Human Care & Enhancement (MASRRAT)*, Trócaire, Tuba Dernegi*, Unified Revolutionary Medical Bureau in East Ghouta*, Union Of Syrians Abroad*, Vague Blanche pour la Syrie, Violations Documentation Center in Syria, White Hands - Beyazeller*, Women Now for Development (Syria)



*These organizations are members of the Syria Relief Network (SRN), an umbrella organization of Syrian humanitarian NGOs working inside Syria and neighbouring countries to provide humanitarian assistance relating to the Syrian crisis.

NOTES TO EDITOR

[1] In a separate initiative, several major international NGOs will be giving their social media accounts over to members of Syrian grassroots civil society on 15 March, to amplify the voices of Syrians to citizens of European nations. The takeover will use the hashtag #withSyria on Twitter. The participating organisations will include Amnesty International, Islamic Relief, Oxfam, Physicians for Human Rights and Refugees International, as well as prominent individuals including Julian Reichelt, Editor of Bild Online (Germany), British television personality Mariela Frostrup, and Irish actor Robert Sheehan.

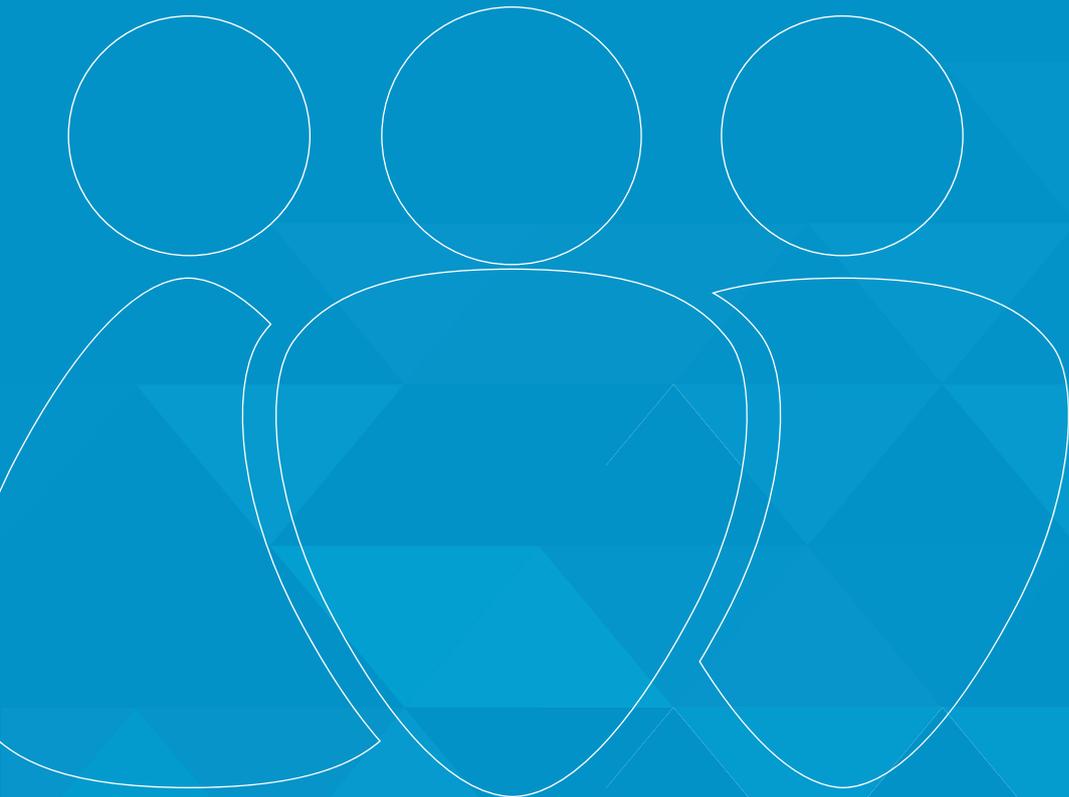
[2] 92,879 people have reportedly been detained or forcibly disappeared by the Syrian government: <https://twitter.com/snhr/status/835032035584520192>; UN says than 600,000 in besieged areas who have not been reached by humanitarian convoys in 2017 (16 February): [http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/FA51032E05CA8D67C12580_CA002A6CF7?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/FA51032E05CA8D67C12580_CA002A6CF7?OpenDocument); Siege Watch estimate as of 31 January 2017 is 913,575, figure from forthcoming annual report

[3] Russia wants Europe to fund reconstruction: <https://www.ft.com/content/47933554-f847-11e6-9516-2d969e0d3b65>; Russia's list of 'moderate opposition' groups in Syria: http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12107227@egNews; Moderate opposition say Russia put pressure on Assad government to discuss political transition: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-opposition-idUKKBN168503>

[4] As of 16 February, humanitarian access in Syria had worsened since the beginning of the current 'ceasefire': [http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/\(httpNewsByYear_en\)/FA51032E05CA8D67C12580_CA002A6CF7?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/unog/website/news_media.nsf/(httpNewsByYear_en)/FA51032E05CA8D67C12580_CA002A6CF7?OpenDocument); The killing of civilians continues: <http://sn4hr.org/blog/2017/03/01/33671/>; <https://twitter.com/snhr/status/838137703157874688>

[5] 450,000 is a credible estimate of Eastern Ghouta's population: <https://tcf.org/content/report/into-the-tunnels/#easy-footnote-bottom-2>; East Aleppo's population during the siege in late 2016 was often estimated at around 250,000





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