

Joint Statement

Syrians to ISSG: Bring Leverage to Geneva or Peace Talks Will Collapse



SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

Saturday , March 25, 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

[23 March 2017] As Syrians embark on a new round of peace talks in Geneva, Syrian activists are demanding that the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) come prepared to apply leverage on the Syrian regime and its allies – or risk condemning the peace process to failure. In a letter to the ISSG and the Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, Syrian civil society groups warn:

“Geneva IV failed to deliver tangible progress to improve the lives of our people. Unless there are consequences for the continued killing of civilians, Geneva V will suffer the same fate.

“As this new round of talks begins, we appeal to you to bring leverage to the table – otherwise your presence does nothing to increase the chances of success. We know what we want for our future and how we should get there. We need what we can’t deliver and what has always been missing: pressure on and leverage over the regime and its allies to enforce Security Council resolutions, which are clear and explicit.



"Close to 300 civilians were killed during the previous round of Geneva talks. In eastern Damascus and Homs, regime airstrikes intensified. In Al Waer, regime sieges tightened, with 16,000 Syrians leaving the area for Jarablus this past week, adding to the demographic change that occurred in Homs. By the end of peace talks, violence, displacement and destruction had returned to pre-ceasefire levels.

"If the next round of peace talks is to stand any chance of success, the violence—and the impunity which breeds it—must stop. It is not enough to share our pain—your collective failure to take the concrete steps needed to end the Syrian conflict allows the conflict to continue."



Syrian civil society organizations are calling on the ISSG and the UN Special Envoy to: Enforce Syria's ceasefire by implementing credible consequences for those who violate the ceasefire. If Syria's ceasefire is to hold, it requires impartial UN-led monitoring and credible enforcement.

Insist that the ceasefire and Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) are discussed in Geneva. Astana will not produce results because, once again, there are no consequences for violating the Syrian ceasefire. The ceasefire needs to be integrated into the Geneva process and you need to deliver monitoring and consequences for violations.

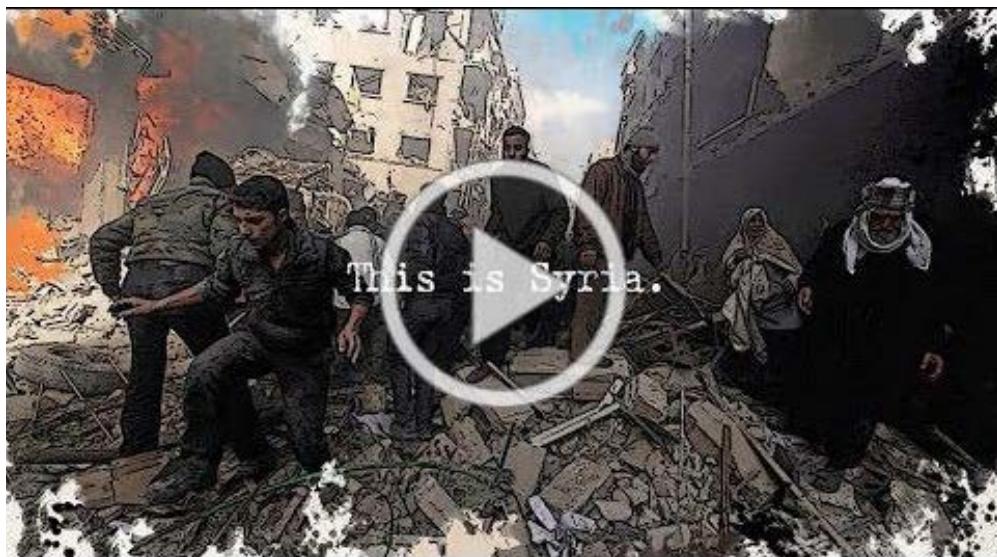


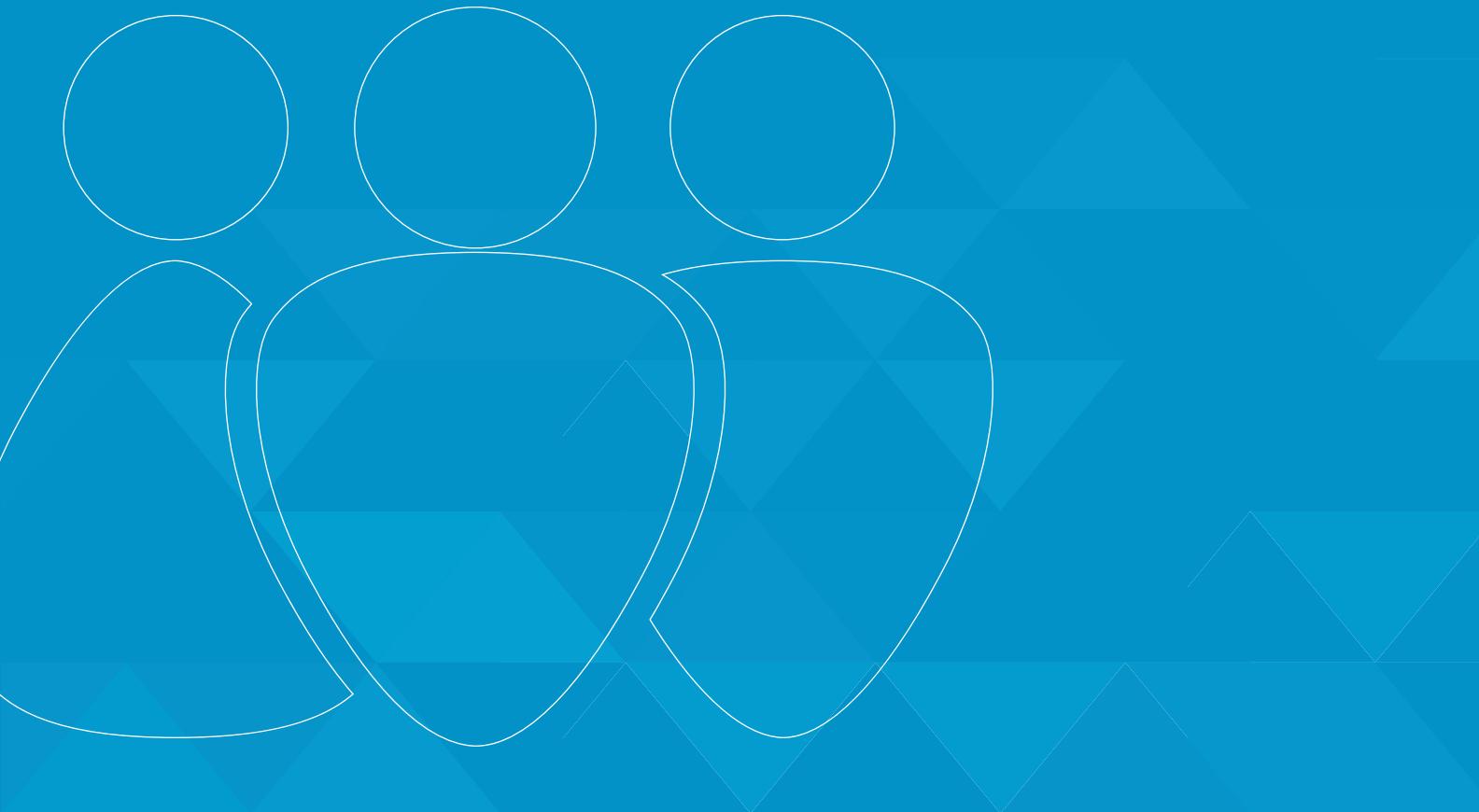
Come prepared to exert leverage to unblock obstructionism by the parties to the conflict. If the next round of Geneva talks is to see substantive progress, ISSG members must come prepared to do what it takes to unblock obstructionism.

Maintain a focus on transition and uphold international law. A sustainable peace in Syria requires political transition and a credible transitional justice process.

Push for progress on the detainee file and humanitarian access. Geneva must maintain a focus on securing the release of detainees and prioritise free and continuous access to humanitarian aid, particularly to Syria's besieged communities.

The full letter and list of signatories can be found [here](#).





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