

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi**  
**Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations**  
**On the “The situation in the Middle East - Syria / Political”**  
**Before the United Nations Security Council**  
**New York, 23 July 2020**

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*In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful*

**Mr. President,**

On 1 July, a virtual meeting of the summit in Astana format was held to discuss different aspects of the situation in Syria. Following discussions on the latest developments, the Presidents issued a joint statement in which they emphasized their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria; opposed illegitimate self-rule initiatives and separatist agendas; renounced the imposition of unilateral sanctions on Syria; rejected the occupation of the Syrian Golan and condemned the relevant United States decision; considered the Israeli military attacks in Syria as destabilizing and violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity; and reaffirmed their determination to cooperate in eliminating all Security Council-designated terrorist groups.

We once again stress that the sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria must be fully respected by all, and that, accordingly, all foreign forces whose presence is not permitted by the Syrian Government must leave the Syrian territory.

A prominent example is the occupation of parts of Syria by United States forces, who are continuing to loot Syrian oil and wealth as well as to support and shield terrorist groups under the mask of combating terrorism.

Similarly, Israel’s acts of aggression against Syria are in gross violation of international law and the United Nations Charter, in the face of which the Syrian Government has a sovereign right to decide how and when to exercise its inherent right to individual or collective self-defence. Such aggressions must come to an end.

The occupation of the Syrian occupied Golan by Israel is illegal, and the recognition by the United States of the Golan’s annexation by Israel is null and void. Condemning such unlawful and irresponsible acts, we stress that Golan is and will remain part and parcel of the Syrian territory.

We reiterate our principled position that there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict and that it must be resolved only through a Syrian-led and Syrian- owned, United Nations-facilitated political process.

Underlining that the establishment of the Constitutional Committee is an achievement of the Astana format and welcoming the agreement to hold its next meeting in August, we support the Committee's work. The Committee's activities must continue without any external pressure, and any possible assistance thereto, even by the United Nations, must be extended only at the request of the Committee itself in accordance with its rules of procedure.

We stress once again that the right to determine the future of Syria belongs exclusively to the Syrians. We welcome the successful holding of the recent parliamentary elections in Syria, which is a step forward in this direction.

Today the Syrian people must confront the challenges presented by both the conflict and the coronavirus disease pandemic. However, what is causing the situation to deteriorate is the recent imposition of inhumane unilateral sanctions by the United States against the Syrian people, which is a truly shameful act against a nation that, amid almost a decade-long conflict, is suffering from the coronavirus pandemic.

We strongly condemn this inhumane and irresponsible move by the United States and urge the international community to raise its voice in rejecting this shameful policy and calling for the removal of all these immoral sanctions. The international community should not leave the Syrian people alone in their struggle to overcome the economic problems resulting from these inhumane sanctions.

We also highlight the need to facilitate the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their original places of residence in Syria. Calling for the international community's contribution in this regard, we underline that any such assistance, including for Syria's reconstruction, must not be politicized or linked to the fulfilment of certain conditions.

**I thank you, Mr. President.**