

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 22 February 2021 from the Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We have the honour to forward to you a joint statement by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey on the international meeting on Syria in the Astana format, held in Sochi on 16 and 17 February 2021 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Majid Takht Ravanchi**
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran

(Signed) **Vassily Nebenzia**
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation

(Signed) **Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey



Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2021 from the Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and Russian]

Joint statement by the representatives of Iran, Russia and Turkey on the international meeting on Syria in the Astana format, held in Sochi on 16 and 17 February 2021

The representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey as guarantors of the Astana format:

1. Reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic as well as to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and highlighted that these principles should be universally respected and complied with;

2. Reiterated their determination to combat terrorism in all forms and manifestations and stand against separatist agendas aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria as well as threatening the national security of neighboring countries. Condemned the increasing terrorist activities in various parts of Syria which result in loss of innocent lives. Agreed to continue cooperation in order to ultimately eliminate DAESH/ISIL, Al-Nusra Front and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaeda or DAESH/ISIL, and other terrorist groups, as designated by the UN Security Council, while ensuring the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure in accordance with international humanitarian law. Expressed serious concern with the increased presence and terrorist activity of “Hayat Tahrir al-Sham” and other affiliated terrorist groups as designated by the UN Security Council that pose threat to civilians inside and outside the Idlib de-escalation area;

3. Reviewed in detail the situation in the Idlib de-escalation area and highlighted the necessity to maintain calm on the ground by fully implementing all agreements on Idlib;

4. Discussed the situation in the north east of Syria and agreed that long-term security and stability in this region can only be achieved on the basis of preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Rejected all attempts to create new realities on the ground, including illegitimate self-rule initiatives, under the pretext of combating terrorism, and expressed their determination to stand against separatist agendas in the east of Euphrates aimed at undermining the unity of Syria as well as threatening the national security of neighboring countries. Expressed concern, in this regard, with the increasing hostilities against civilians. Reaffirmed their opposition to the illegal seizure and transfer of oil revenues that should belong to the Syrian Arab Republic;

5. Condemned continuing Israeli military attacks in Syria in violation of the international law and international humanitarian law and undermining the sovereignty of Syria and neighboring countries as well as endangering the stability and security in the region and called for cessation of them;

6. Expressed their conviction that there could be no military solution to the Syrian conflict and reaffirmed their commitment to advance viable and lasting Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated political process in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254;

7. Emphasized the important role of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva, created as a result of the decisive contribution of the Astana guarantors and in furtherance of the decisions of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi;

8. Discussed in detail the fifth round of the Constitutional Committee's Drafting Commission held on 25–29 January, 2021 in Geneva and reaffirmed their determination to support the Committee's work through continuous interaction with the Syrian parties, Constitutional Committee delegates and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen, as facilitator, in order to ensure its sustainable and effective functioning;

9. Emphasized the importance of ensuring respect to the Terms of Reference and Core Rules of Procedure to enable the Committee to implement its mandate of preparing and drafting for popular approval a constitutional reform as well as achieving progress in its work;

10. Expressed the conviction that the Committee in its work should be governed by a sense of compromise and constructive engagement without foreign interference and externally imposed timelines aimed at reaching general agreement of its members;

11. Reiterated grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Syria and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing that it presents a profound challenge to all Syria's health system, socio-economic and humanitarian situations. Rejected all unilateral sanctions which are in contravention of international law, international humanitarian law and the UN Charter, particularly in the face of the pandemic. Took note of the statements made by the UN Secretary-General and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in this regard. Called upon the wider UN system, in particular WHO, including through COVAX initiative, to prioritize the vaccination inside Syria;

12. Emphasized the need to increase humanitarian assistance to all Syrians throughout the country without discrimination, politicization and preconditions. In order to support the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Syria and the progress in the process of the political settlement, called upon the international community, the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies, to enhance the assistance to Syria, inter alia by developing early recovery projects, including the restoration of basic infrastructure assets – water and power supply facilities, schools and hospitals as well as the humanitarian mine action in accordance with the international humanitarian law;

13. Highlighted the need to facilitate safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their original places of residence in Syria, ensuring their right to return and right to be supported. In this regard they called upon the international community to provide appropriate contributions and reaffirmed their readiness to continue interaction with all relevant parties, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other specialized international agencies;

14. Reaffirmed their determination to increase and expand their cooperation within the framework of the Working Group on the Release of Detainees/Abductees, Handover of Bodies and Identification of Missing Persons;

15. Took note with appreciation the participation of delegations of Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon as observers of the Astana format as well as the United Nations and the ICRC;

16. Representatives of Iran and Turkey expressed their sincere gratitude to the Russian authorities for hosting in Sochi the 15th International Meeting on Syria in the Astana format;

17. Decided to hold the 16th International Meeting on Syria in the Astana format in Nur-Sultan in mid-2021.
