

**The Vision of the Center for
Civil Society and Democracy in
Syria | CCSDS
about the Peace Process in
Syria**





Hivos - Humanist Institute for Co-
operation with Developing Countries
Raamweg 16 | 2596 HL | The Hague
| The Netherlands

website:
www.hivos.org



CENTER FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
AND DEMOCRACY IN SYRIA

Turkey, Gaziantep
ordu caddesi

Tel: 03428800003
Fax:03428800004

Email:
info@ccsdsyria.org

website:
www.ccsdsyria.org

CCSDS Vision about the Peace Process

Perhaps the most pressing subject among the Syrian people, whatever their background, is the current direction of the Syrian crisis and what may happen next. Syrians have been discussing several scenarios lately regarding the end of the crisis and how this will come to be. However, it is the death and misery caused by the conflict that is still at the front of people's mind. Even above Geneva II, which many consider to be a lame duck for many reasons. As such, finding a solution for Syria remains the utmost priority and stopping the bloodshed is the ultimate goal. Our determination to participate in the negotiation process is derived from the absence of any workable solutions and there are even no signs for a military solution. This is in addition to the inability of the international community to stop the bloodshed along with the inability of the international and humanitarian organizations, especially the United Nations, to tackle the humanitarian disaster that worsens day by day. For these reasons, we, the CCSDS, see that there is no way forward other than to participate in these negotiations. By participating we hope to ensure that we put an end to the tragedy of the Syrian people and establish a democratic Syria for all Syrians through a peace process which achieves freedom, justice and coexistence according to all the values we share. We think that the peace process has to be thorough and wide reaching so that it can produce a grass-roots solution that brings about a sustainable peace with positive results in the future. Peace should be built on the conditions of social, political and economic stability. Out of our analysis and vision, we believe that such an important peace process should come through two stages: the first stage is putting an end to the bloodshed and the sectarian fighting in Syria. The second stage would be building sustainable peace in society and dealing with the divisions that have been emerged from the conflict. In order to be able to build a conclusive and achievable strategy, we have to investigate the problems and obstacles of each local environment, find a solution for each community and then bring these communities together by means of techniques and strategies that help to maintain peace until we can produce a new Syrian identity of toleration and inclusivity.

1- CCSDS Negotiating Peace for Syria

Centre for Civil Society and Democracy in Syria

CCSDS was founded as an independent civil society organization to support Syrian people, advocate for attention to their concerns and build the conditions for a peaceful future. CCSDS works to improve the situation for people in Syria, brings new creative ideas and gets people working together. CCSDS has a team of 45 staff, 36 of whom work in different areas throughout Syria. CCSDS policy is to ensure that through its whole team it reflects and represents the multiplicity and diversity that makes up Syrian society.

1. Entering/Advocating at Track 1 Peace Negotiations.

The CCSDS goal in engaging in Track 1 Peace Negotiations is to have a sustainable peaceful solution to the conflict. CCSDS arrived at the conclusion that working for a political solution for peace was necessary because the military solution will not work. A political solution is inevitable at some point. A political negotiation holds the possibility of achieving the basis for justice, freedom and co-existence which a military solution cannot deliver.

CCSDS is not a political party or a warring party in the conflict. Nevertheless it does have a legitimate case to press for inclusion as a party at the Negotiating Table. This is based on:

(i) its large team's diverse representation of Syrian society which it uses as a valuable sounding board.

(ii) its model of working that engages people in its work.

(iii) its networking capacity and access to on-the-ground intelligence across Syria.

(iv) its positive work on exploring solutions to the conflict. CCSDS has demonstrated its willingness to work for the end of violence, the resolution of conflict and the accommodation (compromise) that is necessary to bring lasting peace.

CCSDS is neutral, impartial, non-partisan. It will make the case for entry to the Track 1 Negotiating Table as a neutral third party civil society organization. It will not enter Track 1 under the sponsorship of either of the political sides in the conflict. CCSDS wants to assist the process and to advance its independent priorities and positions for peace and for Syria's future which are based on listening to people. If entry is refused, CCSDS will engage at Track 1.5, engaging with Track 1 parties, the UN and international actors to advocate priorities and positions to inform the negotiations. A number of external governments are supporting a proposal for a parallel CSO process that interfaces with the negotiations.

2. Values/Principles/Criteria.

As a CSO, CCSDS will play a constructive, independent and non-partisan role in the peace negotiations. To defend its independence and neutrality CCSDS will use objective criteria to decide on negotiating priorities and develop negotiating positions on these. These objective criteria will come from CCSDS values and principles. This approach allows CCSDS to:

(i) discuss, clarify and develop its own priorities on challenging and controversial issues while maintaining cohesion within the organization.

(ii) distinguish its position and methodology from that of other actors in the negotiations;

(iii) demonstrate the non-partisanship basis of its positions.

The last two are important where the CCSDS position on an issue is similar to that of another actor in the negotiations. It means that CCSDS can demonstrate it honestly holds an impartial position that was arrived at independently.

The values and principles that inform CCSDS approach to peace are those that underpin its vision and programme work. These are:

Freedom – including opinion, demonstrations, religion, tradition, etc.; freedom for political detainees.

Democracy – is related to all aspects.

Justice – implementing justice implies respect for freedom and implementing freedom implies justice; equality of opportunity; respect of others rights and duties; transitional justice; reparation for victims; punishment for perpetrators; perpetrators' right to be tried before the law rather than face revenge or imprisonment without trial and forgotten; social justice for all citizens, among all religion and sects.

Commitment to international treaties and laws – including human rights and equality; guarantee of all rights; political and religious rights; rights and protections for women and minorities; freedom of beliefs and opinions.

Co-existence – respect the uniqueness and sensitivities of each region and its laws but also recognising the importance of equality, diversity and inter-dependence; respect principles, traditions and variety of sects; rights of all regardless of difference.

Inclusion – people's participation and cooperation with everyone.

Independence

Neutrality – deal objectively with all components in society without bias and equality for all.

Transparency – clarity in how people are treated; clarity in work; monitoring systems

3. Mechanisms for Inclusion.

A committed, effective CSO can build engagement and confidence in peace processes. For a CSO seeking to represent citizens' views in peace negotiations, legitimacy and credibility depends on its success in reaching out to, listening to and engaging a diverse range of people. This is critical to building trust and confidence in the organisation both from people on the ground and from those mediating Track 1 negotiations.

Peace negotiations set the path for everyone's future, for children's future and for the destiny of the state. Thus CCSDS strives to make sure its positions on peace issues are guided by the opinions and points of view of the people they engage with, key figures and civil society leaders and organisations (Track 2) and people in cities, towns and rural areas (Track 3).

Everyone in the CCSDS team has an important part in advocating and building peace, including in support of Track 1 peace negotiations. They are a key link between citizens and the negotiations, whether they are working on the ground inside Syria, in contact with refugees outside Syria or advocating on behalf of Syrian citizens in the international arena.

The CCSDS staff team is a model of inclusion and diversity. It reflects the multiplicity of Syrian society with members embedded in communities which they understand and whose problems and views they represent in CCSDS discussions. Their input informs the development of solutions and the identification and elaboration of essential elements to building sustainable peace and future vision.

The CCSDS has adopted mechanisms for making decisions on peace priorities that enables it to maintain unity in the organization. Its hard work to achieve consensus and preserve unity provides a positive example of how people from diverse backgrounds can compromise in the common good and offer possible pathways to solutions for peace.

It is important that everybody within CCSDS understands and is convinced of the positions the organization will advocate for building peace and dealing with the effects and legacy of the conflict.

CCSDS uses multiple means of reaching as many people as possible:

- Questionnaires to survey and gather opinion on the internet and in areas.
- Facebook pages to share information.
- CCSDS projects that raise morale and trust, empower people to participate and engage in CCSDS consultations.
- Discussion forums, discussion circles and individual meetings to explain and explore ideas

with people.

- Inviting people in different areas to write up their problems as a basis for discussion and thinking about solutions with them.
- Targeting key people and organizations. The CCSDS team developed the priorities for peace process through long and deep discussions among themselves for about five days in November 2013. CCSDS team will continue to be involved through CCSDS internal communications and dialogues and the team will share information, analysis on local and international developments and current opinions and views. This process will keep CCSDS abreast of people's concerns and needs throughout the peace negotiations.

4. CCSDS Negotiating Team at/advocating at Track 1 Table.

The CCSDS leadership is conscious of the sensitivity of political negotiation and the need to have citizen support for the outcomes of the negotiations. The CCSDS negotiating team will reflect the diversity of CCSDS and Syrian society. Its model is the team of five CCSDS women who took part in the UN Women meeting in Jordan on the subject of the participation of women in the negotiations. A similar approach will be adopted for CCSDS involvement in Track 1 negotiations; it will choose a diverse and multi-skilled Negotiating Team, men and women, and a reserve panel to supplement the team when required.

The Negotiating Team will have preparatory meetings and develop appropriate processes of consultation. It will build on the work developed by the CCSDS team during the November workshops and further discussions. It will endeavor to draw on the team's expertise and viewpoints in developing positions as the negotiations progress. However, it is recognized that peace negotiations require confidences to be kept within the negotiations and in relation to some conversations behind the scenes, so public sharing of all aspects of negotiation is not possible. The point of the negotiations is to reach agreements that can be implemented with the support of all the people of Syria. This will entail compromises and adjustments in positions to be made. All members of the CCSDS staff team will need to invest trust in the CCSDS Negotiating Team so it has the confidence and authority to evolve and adapt the CCSDS position as the negotiations progress. If CCSDS is an actor in Track 1 negotiation it will have to take responsibility, with others, for the outcomes.

5. Mobilizing in Support of Peace Negotiations.

Advocating for an effective peace informally with Track 1 actors and Track 2 actors who are outside the Negotiating Table is part of the CCSDS strategy. Much of this work will be in quiet and private discussions or by facilitating confidential roundtable dialogues rather than in public forums. A central consideration in activating this work is the safety and security of the CCSDS team inside Syria who will not be asked to do anything that compromises their personal safety. What each team in Syria will raise for discussion and at what level will vary from area to area to take account of this. The range is likely to cover: encouraging support for peace negotiations, encouraging influence on the negotiations and discussion of CCSDS peace priorities.

2- Criteria For Negotiation Delegation

Best Practice: Qualities/Criteria for CSO Negotiating Team in Peace Process and Peace Nego-

tiations.

Inclusive:

Everyone can join the movement.

Reaching out to everyone.

Independent:

From different political groups.

From other influences and sectors.

Negotiating Team:

1. Inclusive and representative: different political perspectives, sectors and religious groups and other differences are represented including grassroots.
2. Willingness to dialogue among delegation and seek to reach consensus.
3. Willingness to bring and explore ideas and solutions that can reach an accommodation for everyone from different perspectives.
4. Willingness to compromise to reach a common solution (win/win).
5. Commitment to maintaining the independence of the delegation from regime and opposition influence.
6. Negotiating team should comprise different skills: eg. drafters of positions/papers; legal framers; strategists; advocates; media skills; influencers of different parties to negotiations. It should include women and men.
7. Capacity to work on issues from the agendas of the regime and the opposition as well as on issues the delegation brings forward for the agenda.
8. Criteria for taking decisions on the content of proposals from opposition or regime as for offering amendments to these so that the views coming from the delegation can be seen to be non-partisan, independent and objectively justified.

3- CCSDS Track 1 – Priorities for Negotiation

Introduction

In considering negotiating positions, mechanisms and actions account should be taken of the different stages in the negotiating and peace building process. It is important to consider what it is possible to achieve at different stages of a negotiating process. Elements to consider include: (i) immediate needs; (ii) trust and confidence building measures; (iii) the political agenda; (iv) peacebuilding and reconstruction at macro and micro levels and how it engages and provides for citizens at the grassroots as well as elite levels.

1. Six Point Plan.

The Six Point Plan includes a number of realistic and useful points. The regime, the opposition and all external governments should commit to implementing its key elements. All parties must:

- Commit to working with the Special Envoy to address the legitimate aspirations and concerns of the Syrian people, and engage in the negotiating process in good faith.
- Commit to stop the violence and implement this through a sustained cessation of all forms of armed violence that is evident and visible to people on the ground and pulling back military concentrations from population centers. The UN should deploy sufficient support to supervise a comprehensive ceasefire. The regime and opposition groups must cooperate with the UN to enforce implementation.
- Agree and implement an efficient mechanism to allow humanitarian organizations to enter areas safely to deliver relief aid. The UN and external governments should contribute to the relief efforts by (i) providing aid, and (ii) guaranteeing supervision of the humanitarian mechanism and channels.
- Release immediately those arbitrarily detained persons who committed no violations but were involved in peaceful political activities or who were detained simply because of their social background or where they were from. These people should not be part of any bargaining process between the two parties.
- Ensure safe and secure freedom of movement for journalists and CSOs throughout Syria.

2. Confidence Building Measures

All parties at the negotiations should be equipped with the skills to participate in negotiations effectively so that they may reach a sustainable and peaceful solution.

It is important to ensure that parties know and can clarify each other's views. This is in order to minimize miscommunication and misunderstanding. CSOs can facilitate trust building and agreement by providing information and/or new thinking that places an issue in a more neutral context and enables greater understanding.

- The sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria must be respected.
- Commit to resolving conflict through peaceful dialogue and negotiation alone. The negotiations and the transitional phase must be conducted without violence in a climate of safety, stability and calm for all.
- Engage in the process in good faith with commitment to find a credible solution. Respect all parties at the negotiating table and engage genuinely with the Special Envoy and those facilitating and assisting the process.
- Agree principles and guidelines for the negotiations and the transitional phase that will deliver a Syrian-led transition with clear steps and timetable to arrive at a perspective for the future that can be shared by all in Syria.
- Stop the use of heavy weapons, establish a ceasefire and agree to cooperate with the Transitional Governing Body (TGB) to make the ceasefire permanent;
- Apply humanitarian criteria and provide humanitarian access for the UN and CSOs to deliver humanitarian relief and support across the whole country, overseen by the UN/international guarantors.
- Release arbitrarily detained persons.
- Create conducive conditions for the return of refugees and meet the needs of internally displaced people, especially the most vulnerable and those in besieged areas.

- Identify mutual points on which there can be common agreement such as (but not confined to) reconstruction, reparation, opposing extremists.
- Use and promote the use of neutral facilitators and mediators, including CSOs in these roles where appropriate, to mediate dialogues and/or resolve conflict at various levels throughout Syria.

3. Role of External Governments

- Must work together to support the process for negotiating and implementing peace. They should (i) press the regime and the opposition to commit to and implement the Six Point Plan; (ii) use their influence on the parties to the conflict to bring them to the negotiating table and press them to come to a solution; (iii) put concerted (i.e. joint, determined and sustained) international pressure on all parties to implement all points of the political settlement when negotiated.
- Should stop providing weapons and military equipment to any party to the conflict. They should take decisive action to prevent the flow of arms, military equipment and foreign combatants across the borders into Syria.
- Should priorities providing and delivering humanitarian assistance and facilitating the UN and CSOs to deliver relief aid safely within Syria. They should also support programs for Syrian refugees within their own countries. As the Syria works to move out of conflict they should financially assist programs to support and resettle people within Syria, including those who return from outside Syria. This support should include financial assistance for housing, health, education and social and economic regeneration as well as psychological support and trauma programs to deal with the consequences of the conflict.

4. Civil Society Organizations

The UN, the regime, the opposition and external governments should:

- Recognize the neutrality and non-partisanship of CSOs and their roles and activities during the conflict and in the resolution of conflict. CSO roles and activities include: (i) supporting people through the problems and consequences of the crisis and representing their issues and needs; (ii) a channel and link between the people and the negotiating table; (iii) working with all actors to inform them of citizen's issues; and (iv) monitoring effective implementation of processes.
- Certify and facilitate the access and work of CSOs in regime and opposition areas. Guarantee the safety and security of CSOs, ensuring that CSOs and their work are not violated or placed in danger.
- Affirm the importance of having people's voices in the peace building process at all levels and ensure that people's views and voices will be included through CSO engagement in/with Track 1.
- Guarantee in the political settlement from the negotiations to consult and engage fully with CSOs during the Transitional Governing Body phase. Commit to engaging and resourcing CSOs to assist with facilitating the engagement of all groups and segments in all peace building and reconstruction processes to ensure these are inclusive and meaningful, particularly in: (i) the National Dialogue process; and (ii) all processes for the review of the constitution and the legal framework.
- Accept and guarantee the role of CSOs to monitor implementation of the peace process and

any process during the transitional phase.

- Commit to encourage the development of an active civil society in Syria. Guarantee protection for CSOs, their role and activities in the future in compliance with international treaties and standards. Ensure CSOs are permitted and enabled to: (i) develop an active civil society; (ii) carry out their work in providing services to people and advocacy for people; (iii) train officials in civil society awareness and relationship building; (iv) promote transparency.
- Fulfill the obligations under international treaties to engage consistently with CSOs, including women's CSOs, by enshrining in law a consultative role for CSOs with the future government and regional administrations; and do not pass any laws or policies that contradict engagement with CSOs.

5. Transitional Governing Body / National Dialogue / National Reconciliation

- The conditions for a neutral environment should put in place for a transitional period during which a National Dialogue process can be conducted. In addition to members of the regime and the opposition, independent figures from civil society should be part of the Transitional Governing Body (TGB). Women must be fully represented in the TGB (among all parties) and all aspects of the transition.
- The TGB should ensure that the conditions are strengthened for progress on the National Dialogue and a sustainable national reconciliation and peace building process. All parties in the TGB must commit (i) not to re-engage in violence; (ii) to consolidate a climate of safety, stability and calm throughout Syria; (iii) to implement all the points of the negotiating table settlement.
- Principles and guidelines for the operation of the TGB should be established during the negotiations and confirmed at the outset of the TGB. This should include mechanisms for coming to agreed decisions where there is conflict. International supervisors - the UN and the League of Arab States - should monitor the working of the TGB. An International Mediator(s) should be available to solve any problems between members of the TGB that threaten to derail the process as it progresses.
- There should be an agreed timescale for the TGB's work on the National Dialogue process. This should be a realistic timescale that takes account of reviewing the constitutional order and legal system, constitutional drafting and effective and meaningful consultation in the National Dialogue process.
- For the Syrian people to meaningfully determine the future of the country the National Dialogue must have an effective process for involving all groups and segments of Syria society. CSOs are critical to this. Ensure that CSOs are fully engaged and properly resourced to assist with facilitating the engagement of all groups and segments in all peace building and reconstruction processes to ensure these are inclusive and meaningful, particularly in: (i) the National Dialogue process; (ii) all processes for the review of the constitution and the legal framework; and (iii) resolving problems on the ground that threaten to derail the peace process.
- Once the new constitutional order is established the TGB should prepare for and conduct free and fair multi-party elections for the new institutions and offices. Those elections should be internationally supervised.
- Government institutions and qualified staff should continue under the control of the TGB. They should perform according to human rights and professional standards and their leadership should inspire public confidence. No person guilty of gross violations or crimes must serve

in any government institution.

- With international support the TGB should ensure that violence has permanently ceased, with completion of withdrawals, disarming, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups. Release of detainees and prisoners should progress rapidly. The legal process for prosecuting those who have committed gross violations and crimes should be established.
- The TGB should ensure that vulnerable groups are protected and humanitarian aid is reaching those in need. The TGB's strategy for managing Syria's transition from conflict and beginning the process of rebuilding Syria should prioritize supporting Syrian people to resettle, including returning from outside Syria. This support should include programs for housing, health, education and social and economic regeneration as well as psychological support and trauma programs to deal with the consequences of the conflict.
- The TGB must agree a comprehensive package of transitional justice measures that includes accountability for acts committed during the conflict, compensation/reparation and rehabilitation for victims and steps towards national reconciliation and sustainable peace. National reconciliation and sustainable peace building must involve (i) all groups and segments; (ii) getting to the truth; and (iii) rebuilding relations between people, groups and segments.

6. Permanent Ceasefires

- The primary priority is the protection of civilians. Shelling must cease immediately on both sides. There should be an immediate unconditional and sustained ceasefire. Military concentrations should be pulled back from population centers.
- External governments must stop supplying weapons and military equipment to the two sides (regime and opposition) and the many armed groups.
- International peacekeeping forces made up of UN and Arabic forces should be deployed across the country to: (i) watch the borders to prevent weapons and foreign combatants coming across the Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraqi borders into Syria; (ii) keep peace on the interfaces between the two warring sides and different warring groups; (iii) monitor violations, shelling and firing in both opposition and regime areas through civilian 'blue hat' UN peacekeepers.
- The UN peacekeepers and other mechanisms to maintain peace must have an engagement strategy to consult and work with CSOs on peacekeeping problems and solutions for civilians, including women's CSOs and the CSOs looking after the interests of children.

7. Besieged Areas

- Stop the shelling immediately and introduce and enforce a credible sustained ceasefire. Pull all military concentrations back from population centers and withdraw all forces to barracks within specific contained areas. This should be followed by the final withdrawal of forces from the areas completely. The UN peacekeeping forces should monitor all containment of forces and eventual withdrawal of forces.
- Open humanitarian corridors and routes and provide protection and safeguards for the delivery of humanitarian aid such as food, medicines, supply of doctors and medical staff and other humanitarian support. Provide UN protection and oversight for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- Take all steps to meet the ongoing special health needs of those in besieged areas resulting from extreme ill health caused by lack of food and access to vaccines and other medicines and

trauma; and

- Engage and consult with CSOs, including women's and children's CSOs, on meeting civilians' protection, health and other needs and on monitoring violations and abuse.

8. Victims, Refugees and Internally Displaced People

- Ensure that sufficient humanitarian assistance, including food and medicine and other relief aid and support, is delivered to internally displaced people and those living in besieged areas. Improve the situation of Syrian refugees living outside Syria. External governments should facilitate them to live a dignified life and allow them to work. Conditions for those in refugee camps should be substantially improved.
- Educational opportunity and continuity of education must be guaranteed for children and young people, whether they are internally displaced or refugees living in another country. To avoid losing several educated generations, neighboring governments of countries to which children have been displaced, whether living in refugee camps or towns and cities, should work with the UN to ensure that all children and young people are registered, taught and are able to advance through all stages of their education.
- Syrian embassies must deliver and renew passports of Syrian citizens in reasonable time without discrimination. Neighboring country embassies should facilitate access to and renewal of passports for Syrian citizens while the conflict continues.
- Urgent attention must be given to the resettlement of internally displaced people and refugees, including support and reparation to help them resettle. A program for the reconstruction of houses is a priority. The re-inclusion of Syria refugees must be guaranteed and when a sustainable ceasefire is in place they should be encouraged to return. Their right of return should be facilitated as quickly as possible by providing security, services and temporary accommodation inside Syria while houses are being reconstructed.
- All those injured and traumatized must have access to appropriate services quickly. This includes services that take account of the nature and extent of injuries, the extreme damage to the health of those in besieged areas and those who were denied access to vaccines and other medicines, and the health situation of externally and internally displaced people living in poor conditions.
- There must be ongoing support to meet the future needs of those with disabilities, whose numbers have increased substantially as a result of the conflict. Services for those suffering the effects of the conflict should include psychological support and trauma programs. The extent and level of child trauma must be recognized with special programs for children and young people. The effects of violence against women must be recognized and support programs provided. The psychological and health needs of detainees and prisoners should be provided for. Programs should be sensitive to responding to different gender needs and different groups of victims.
- A reparation mechanism should be established to provide reparation for the victims and survivors of the conflict, including provision for detainees and prisoners and their wives and families. The reparation mechanism should take account of the needs of men, women and children.
- A special commission should be established to make proposals for the support of widows and orphans in recognition of the fact that 40% of displaced/refugee families in camps are headed by women.

- CSO work with victims and survivors should be recognized and financially supported. The safety of CSOs should be guaranteed to deliver humanitarian aid, and external governments working with the UN on resolving the Syrian crisis should financially support CSO humanitarian work. CSO should be consulted on and help design future health, trauma, reparation and other programs that will best meet the needs of victims and survivors. CSOs should have an ongoing role in representing the needs and interests of the affected groups and a key role in working with the Transitional Governing Body and the new post-TGB government to rebuild an inclusive, cohesive and integrated society.

9. Prisoners, Detainees and Disappeared

- Freedom of movement, security and safety must be guaranteed for all. The regime and opposition groups must stop lifting people at checkpoints and targeting and abducting people in any way. They must enforce and monitor this strictly with their armed groups. The UN, the parties and external governments must work together to establish and implement an effective mechanism to stop the abduction of people by groups who are not at the negotiating table.

- The regime and the opposition must release immediately people who have committed no violations but who were detained simply because they were political activists or because of their social background or where they were from. These people should not be part of any bargaining process between the two sides.

- The regime and opposition groups must agree to provide a list of the detainees and prisoners they are holding, with full details of who they are and where they are being held. The mechanism for documenting this should be designed to be capable of overcoming difficulties in getting a comprehensive list despite the fragmentation of forces on each side. The documentation should begin immediately and the sides given a timescale for progress/completion.

- The UN should oversee the process of documenting prisoners and detainees and appoint an international team to visit prisoners and detainees in the locations in which they are held and to report on their condition. The regime and opposition should provide prompt responses to all written requests for information, access or release of persons.

- Prisoners and detainees must be held in verifiable locations and in humane conditions. All groups must end violence, torture, inhuman and degrading treatment of detainees and prisoners. Parties to the negotiating table must commit to this and enforce and monitor it with their armed groups.

- The UN should put in place a mechanism for gathering the names of the disappeared and getting answers on their whereabouts from the regime and the opposition.

- Set up an international Commission of Inquiry to uncover the massacres, the truth about disappeared people and violations of human rights and use of torture in detention centers and prisons. Mindful of a State's international obligations, those responsible for torture and violations of human rights on any side should be brought to justice.

- Release of prisoners and detainees held by all parties should be managed according to three categories:(i) People with no violations who have been arbitrarily detained should not be part of any bargaining between the two sides but should be released immediately; they should receive reparation for themselves and their families. (ii) Those on both sides who have been involved in fighting. (iii) Those who have engaged in gross violations and crimes.

- Mechanisms should be established for managing categories (ii) and (iii) so that people are not held without trial for a long period. Category (ii) individuals might be released subject to

certain conditions outlined under disarmament and security below. Category (iii) individuals should face independent trials under UN supervisions for their violations and crimes, such trials to take place over an agreed period of time.

10. Trials, Punishment, Amnesty and Getting Truth and Recognition

- As part of the transitional justice process, there should be a transitional justice commission and/or a program of sessions, discussions and dialogues to get to the truth. This should engage combatants who have not committed gross violations and crimes as well as victims and survivors.
- Those responsible for gross violations and crimes should be tried and punished. These include: (i) Those responsible for decisions made at the center/in headquarters for such violations and crimes; (ii) Leaders on the ground who gave the orders to carry out gross violations and crimes; (iii) Individuals who directly carried out gross violations and crimes.
- Collect stories of violations from the multiplicity of sources and verify them. Use human rights organizations and CSOs or set up special committees to gather this evidence.
- Where it is possible to do so, the regime and opposition might identify from among the list of prisoners they compile those who they are accusing of ordering or committing gross violations and crimes.
- Individuals accused of gross violations and crimes should face independent trials under UN or other international supervision, such trials to take place over an agreed period of time. The trials may be at international or national level but international law and standards should be the benchmark for such trials.
- Sufficient judges with the qualifications and capacity needed for these types of cases is a concern that needs to be addressed.
- Any amnesty for those involved in armed conflict should be on conditions that include handing in their weapons and renouncing violence. In order to qualify for amnesty and escape prosecution, they should: (i) hand in their weapons; (ii) agree not to take up arms against the new/renewed army or at any time in the future; and (iii) commit in writing, or by other sworn means, to pursue only peaceful means to resolve conflict in future.
- Qualification for amnesty and escape from prosecution must not apply to those who have committed gross violations and crimes.

11. Disarmament and Security

- External governments and other actors should immediately stop supplying weapons and military equipment to the warring groups. They should monitor their borders effectively to ensure that weapons, equipment and recruits cannot continue to flow into Syria.
- A new or renewed national army which is capable of retaining the confidence of all citizens is needed. Any person involved in the new/renewed national army must not have been involved in gross violations and crimes.
- The leadership of the new/renewed national army must inspire public confidence. It might reside in one person who has the confidence of both sides and the public or, for an initial period of time, be a joint office shared by a leading figure from each side provided each has the confidence of the other.
- Any disarmament process must be able to convince both sides to engage in demobilization

and disarmament. Disarmament must be verifiable and require a lasting commitment to give up arms from those who engage in the process. Disarmament might be conducted in one of two ways: (i) if it is agreed quickly, the new/renewed national army could implement a mechanism for disarming all sides. (ii) Alternatively there could be two separate bodies - one for the regime and one for the opposition - conducting disarmament on each side.

- An international Disarmament Commission for Syria should be appointed to oversee disarmament on all sides.
- Individuals with weapons might be offered a financial incentive to return their guns. In order to qualify for amnesty and escape prosecution, they should: (i) hand in their weapons; (ii) agree not to take up arms against the new/renewed army or at any time in the future; and (iii) commit in writing, or by other sworn means, to pursue only peaceful means to resolve conflict in future.
- Qualification for amnesty and escape from prosecution must not apply to those who have committed gross violations and crimes.
- It will not be possible to achieve full disarmament by these means as some people will not give up their weapons. There should be a means to disarm those who refuse. Alongside this, there should be a mechanism for ridding Syria of foreign combatants.
- CSOs could have a role in assisting and monitoring the disarmament process. CSOs should work on building confidence and reducing fear, and building relationships that create the possibilities and routes for people to hand over guns.
- The military forces and security services should perform according to human rights and professional standards. Human rights training must be introduced for all ranks of the army and security services. This should be assisted and supervised internationally.

12. Human Rights and Equality

- Syria must comply with international standards and laws, especially all human rights standards and laws. Syria should remove any reservations it has recorded under any international human rights instruments. The international standards and laws should be incorporated into the national constitution and laws. Effective mechanisms should be instituted to ensure adherence to national and international standards and laws.
- Freedom of thought, religion and belief, movement, association and holding peaceful demonstrations should be guaranteed by law.
- Equal protection of the human rights, equality and inclusion of everyone must be incorporated into the national standards and laws. This must take account of the multiplicity of religions, sects and components, women's rights, minority rights, rights of victims and those with disabilities, the rights of other marginalized groups and people, and linguistic rights.
- Include as part of the new legal and implementation mechanisms, a mechanism to engage with and consult with representatives of these different interest groups when designing laws, policies and programs.
- National laws should include both anti-discrimination legislation and promotion of equality legislation. Equality law should guarantee equality between individuals and between groups, and promote and protect equality of opportunity and chances for all no matter where they live and work in the state.

- Establish an independent Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Specific consideration needs to be given to addressing the legacy of the conflict in relation to (i) the human rights of victims; and (ii) the reintegration of prisoners.

13. Future Syria

- Syria should be one united country with a single constitution covering the whole country that guarantees the same rights and duties to everyone. The inclusion of all Syrian citizens in the future state should be guaranteed and underpinned by the constitution and a legal and policy framework and programs to deliver an inclusive and integrated society in which co-existence and cohesion flourish.
- Syria must be democratic and pluralist. Democratic and pluralist means the lasting commitment to multi-party democracy, and the continuing right of all to take part in elections fairly and equally without fear or intimidation. There must be separation of state and religion, in Syria as a whole and in all regions of the state, so that all people are free to practice their religions and traditions but not to impose these on others.
- Syria must commit to and set in place the laws, policies and mechanisms for the application of the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and accountable government.
- There should be freedom of association. The right to participate and have opportunities for development must be available for everyone. There should be policy and resources to support CSOs and build a healthy civil society. CSOs should have a key role in working with the new government to rebuild an inclusive, cohesive and integrated society.
- Syria must comply with international standards and laws, especially all international human rights standards and laws. Syria should remove any recorded reservations on any international human rights instruments. These international standards and laws should be incorporated into the national constitution and laws. Mechanisms should be instituted to ensure adherence to national and international standards and laws.
- Incorporated into the national standards and laws must be equal protection of the rights and inclusion of everyone taking account of the multiplicity of religions, sects and components, women's rights, minority rights, rights of victims and those with disabilities, the rights of other marginalized groups and people, and linguistic rights; and also protection for the promotion of equality of opportunity and chances for all no matter where they live and work in the state.

Controversial points:

There are a lot of controversial points among the Syrian people both at the grass-root and elite levels. These points could be dealt with in later stages of the process at a time when an agreement on them becomes essential to ensure a conclusive building process that everybody agrees upon:

- Prisoners, detainees and missing persons: there are two points here related to the prisoners and detainees that must be addressed in the future to find a solution that is acceptable to all:

- There is a clear difference between the regime and the opposition, including the sheer numbers of people held by the regime. How can there be a convincing mechanism that deals with the regime?

- The location of Islamic Courts should be identified along with their mechanisms and methods. Respect for human rights and compliance with international humanitarian law should be enforced.

- Gross violations and crimes: A definition is needed of what is to be included in 'gross violations and crimes'. For example, are the following to be included: massacres, targeted assassinations of political activists, indiscriminate killing of civilians, denial of food and medicines, torture, rape, etc.?

- There was an unfinished discussion on the idea of a new national army (called the Military Institute) comprising the regime and opposition forces. There was concern about the composition of a new national army based on concern about what comprises the opposition forces as there are more than fifty parties to the armed conflict. There was concern about how long it might take to build a new national army given the number of armed conflict groups - FSA defected soldiers, civilians with guns and armed gangs and thugs generally - when the country needs a security mechanism immediately. It was suggested that all parties, including opposition parties, should agree not to break up the current national army. An army that supported one side may have difficulty in gaining the respect and support of all. On the other hand there will be disaffected soldiers who refused to follow regime orders and joined the opposition or fled, who may be persuaded to rejoin. It was suggested there needs to be good vetting to get qualified people to stay in or to join the new army. The 30.06.2012 Final Communique from the Action Group for Syria proposes that the military forces and security services, and intelligence service, should continue under the control of the Transitional Governing Body, perform according to human rights and professional standards and operate under a top leadership that inspires public confidence. Published by the center for civil society and democracy in Syria | CCSDS

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- The funding and appointment mechanisms for the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Suggestions made were: (i) to protect its independence this Commission should be part-funded by the new national government and part-funded independently. (ii) Appointments to the Commission could be made by the national government, by local councils, by election. Further detailed consideration of these points are needed, including looking at how similar bodies are appointed, funded and operate in other jurisdictions.

- Maybe the most controversial point is the one related to whether Syria should be organized as a centralized or decentralized state. If the Syrian state is organized as a decentralized state, this will be done on the basis that (i) it does not threaten the unity of the country or create division between people but promotes coexistence and genuine sharing in one united country;

(ii) it is done on a geographical and not on a sectarian or ethnic basis; (iii) that regional laws cannot contradict the national constitution or national laws, most particularly those laws that guarantee and protect human rights and equality; (iv) that it is not permitted to promote and prefer one religion, sect or ethnic group over another in any part of the state; (v) that resources in a region are shared with a percentage to the region (e.g. 15%-25%) and the rest to the state to be used for the benefit of the whole country

