

## Letter to United Nations Special Envoy to Syria, Mr. Geir Pedersen

*February 13, 2019*

Dear Mr. Pedersen,

The Syrian people have been experiencing one of the worst crises since World War II. For more than seven years, they have suffered indiscriminate killing, bombing, forced displacement, arrest, persecution, as well as the deprivation of all kinds of freedom. In addition, they have suffered deep disappointment every time signs of an agreement to end the crisis fails. All attempts to end the war have failed due to the complexity of the Syrian issue as well as the increasing internationalization of the conflict.

As the Center for Civil Society and Democracy (CCSD) we welcome your appointment. To ensure the success of your mission we believe that the negotiations should focus on four essential points:

### **I. Lasting Peace**

Since its establishment, CCSD has advocated for dialogue and a political solution to the conflict, believing that they are the best mechanisms to end the violence and achieve lasting peace for all Syrians. Lasting peace cannot be achieved without taking into account equality as well as justice and accountability for human rights violations.

In addition, CCSD believes that the release of detainees, the cessation of violence, and the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons, are priorities needed to start rebuilding trust between the various conflicting parties, as well as create the appropriate environment for an integrated political transition.

### **II. Syrian people are the overriding priority**

We are fully aware of the fact that the Syrian issue is no longer the concern of Syrians alone. It has become a regional and international issue due to the many threats it poses to international peace and security. Therefore, the prevailing approach for advancing the negotiating process is to achieve a convergence between international perspectives, especially those involved in the Syrian conflict.

However, CCSD believes that in order to ensure the success of any solution to the Syrian crisis, the top priority is to meet the demands of the Syrian people –irrespective of their backgrounds and affiliations –ensure their rights, engage them in leadership roles in shaping the future of their country, as well as prevent their marginalized at the expense of international and regional interests.



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### **III. Building on the six-point peace plan**

In 2012, then Special Envoy for Syria Mr. Kofi Annan presented the six-point peace plan for Syria. Since then, however, we have been witnessing day after day the widening gap between each of the original six points. We would therefore like to stress the importance of building on the six-point peace plan and international resolutions on Syria. This includes a particular focus on the Geneva Communique of 2012, United Nations' Security Council Resolution 2245 (2015) and other United Nations' resolutions as well. We also stress the importance of the whole process being under the auspices of the United Nations.

### **IV. Continuous support for the participation of women and civil society**

The establishment of the Women's Advisory Board and the Civil Society Support Room have been key milestones in the United Nations' efforts to support a solution to the Syrian conflict, and are important mechanisms for ensuring the participation of women and civil society. Therefore, we look forward to continuing to support, develop and expand their roles in the peace process and in shaping the future of the country as well.

In conclusion, we are completely aware that the situation in Syria is one of the greatest challenges you may face. Your acceptance of this challenge shows your determination and desire to reach a peace agreement that will end the tragic situation that drains Syrians day-by-day. As such, we express our readiness to cooperate for peace and wish you success in your mission to help realize the aspirations of the Syrian people for freedom, justice and coexistence.

Sincerely,

Center for Civil Society and Democracy