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MEETINGS COVERAGE AND PRESS RELEASES

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Security Council Unanimously Adopts Resolution 2254 (2015), Endorsing Road Map for Peace Process in Syria, Setting Timetable for Talks

7588th Meeting (PM)

SECURITY COUNCIL | MEETINGS COVERAGE

Ministers, Other Speakers Agree Terrorism Must End, Differ over Role for Assad

The Security Council today endorsed a road map for a peace process in Syria, setting out an early-January timetable for United Nations-facilitated talks between the Government and opposition members, as well as the outlines of a nationwide ceasefire to begin as soon as the parties concerned had taken initial steps towards a political transition.

Unanimously adopting resolution 2254 (2015), foreign ministers and others gathered in New York for the third meeting of the International Syria Support Group, the Council reconfirmed its endorsement of the 30 June 2012 Geneva Communiqué, and endorsed the "Vienna Statements" in pursuit of the Communiqué's implementation as the basis for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political transition to end the conflict.

"The Syrian people will decide the future of Syria," the text stated. By other terms, the Council requested that the Secretary-General — through his good offices and the efforts of his Special Envoy — convene representatives of the Syrian Government and opposition to engage in formal negotiations on a political transition process "on an urgent basis", with a target of early January for the initiation of talks. It expressed

support for a Syrian-led political process facilitated by the United Nations which would establish "credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance" within six months and set a schedule and process for the drafting of a new constitution.

By further terms, the Council expressed support for free and fair elections, pursuant to the new constitution, to be held within 18 months and administered under United Nations supervision, "to the highest international standards" of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians — including members of the diaspora — eligible to participate.

The Council acknowledged the close link between a ceasefire and a parallel political process, pursuant to the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, and that both should move ahead expeditiously. It requested that the Secretary-General lead the effort to determine the modalities and requirements of a ceasefire, and urged Member States — particularly members of the Support Group — to accelerate all efforts to achieve a ceasefire, including by pressing all relevant parties to adhere to one.

In that context, the Council requested that the Secretary-General report back on options for a ceasefire monitoring, verification and reporting mechanism that it could support within one month. It also welcomed Jordan's efforts to develop a common understanding within the Support Group of individuals and groups for possible determination as terrorists, demanding that all parties immediately cease attacks against civilians.

At the outset of the meeting, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the critical initiative of the International Syria Support Group and the draft resolution to be adopted, saying the text was the first to focus on a political path to resolving the crisis in Syria. "This marks a very important step on which we must build," he emphasized. The Support Group had made two major requests of the United Nations: to convene formal Syrian-led and transition-focused negotiations in January between the Government of Syria and opposition members, and in parallel, to determine the requirements and modalities of a nationwide ceasefire. "The United Nations stands ready to undertake these important tasks."

He said he had urged the Support Group to apply the necessary pressure on the Syrian parties to put an immediate end to the indiscriminate use of weapons against civilians, to allow unconditional and unimpeded access

for aid convoys, to halt attacks on medical and educational facilities, to lift all restrictions on medical and surgical supplies from humanitarian convoys, and to release all detainees. Calling upon the Security Council to show both vision and leadership in overcoming differences, he said a fleeting opportunity for peace had emerged, declaring: "Your duty is to seize it."

Secretary of State John Kerry of the United States, Council President for December, spoke in his national capacity, saying the resolution just adopted sent a clear message that now was the time to stop the killing in Syria. A broadly supported process was needed to give the Syrian people a real choice between war and peace, and the test now was to defeat the terrorists and put Syria on the road to the political transition envisioned in the Geneva Communique. While there were obstacles and sharp differences in the international community, especially about the future of President Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian leader had lost the ability and credibility to unite his country, Mr. Kerry said.

Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, said that today's resolution approved the 14 November 2015 agreement which referred to ways to re-implement the Geneva Communiqué. All three instruments constituted a platform for resolving the crisis in Syria. The Vienna format was the only one that brought together all influential players to find a sustainable and fair settlement through talks with the Government and the "whole span" of the opposition. "Only Syrian-led, inclusive dialogue can put an end to the untold suffering of the Syrian people," he said, adding that today's action was a response to the attempted imposition of an external solution on Syria. He called upon all parties not to engage in rhetoric and, instead, to be guided by the need to combat terrorism and find a political settlement of the conflict.

Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, emphasized that a national ceasefire must be aligned with the political transition, a process that must involve the departure of President Assad. He said the threat posed by Da'esh must be confronted, stressing that all countries claiming to fight the group must do what they said rather than directing the bulk of their attacks against non-extremist opposition groups.

Nasser Judeh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and

Expatriate Affairs of Jordan, said today's meeting was a milestone in the international response to the crisis in Syria. Jordan had played the role it had been asked to play by starting a coordination process aimed at reaching a common understanding among groups and individuals described as terrorists, he said. The results, including those involving groups around which there was no agreement, had been handed to the International Syria Support Group. That process and a ceasefire could help to defeat Da'esh and Al-Nusra Front, he said, noting that terrorism soiled Islam. Describing the refugee crisis as one of the most painful humanitarian crises, especially for host countries like Jordan, with its limited means, he pointed out that his country was now the second largest host of refugees in the world.

Other speakers cited the need for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political process that would include participation by women and preserve Syria's unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity, while ensuring that State institutions remained intact. There was a need for a verifiable ceasefire and an end to the use of barrel bombs, as well as unfettered access for humanitarian aid.

Several speakers, including France's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, and Lithuania's Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrius Krivas, stressed that President Assad could not be seen as part of the solution to the crisis. However, Venezuela's representative said that a positive aspect of the Vienna process was the willingness to engage with the Government of President Assad's, one of the essential actors in the equation.

Syria's representative said his Government was open to any sincere effort to overcome the crisis, and ready to participate in efforts whereby Syrians would take part in a Syrian process without foreign intervention, and which maintained its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Some countries affirmed Syrian sovereignty, yet violated it on the ground by supporting terrorist groups, sending military aircraft to bomb oil installations and imposing unilateral sanctions on the Syrian people. The success of a political process was predicated on the collective fight against terrorism, he said, adding that Syria was ready to end its fight in a manner that would restore normality to areas in which there were armed Syrian opposition members.

Others speaking today included Wang Yi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Manuel Domingos Augusto, Secretary of State for External Affairs of

Angola, and Ignazio Ybáñez, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain.

Also speaking were representatives of Malaysia, Nigeria, New Zealand, Chile and Chad.

The meeting began at 4:10 p.m. and ended at 6:15 p.m.

Opening Remarks

BAN KI-MOON, Secretary-General of the United Nations, recalled that the Syrian conflict had begun with peaceful demands for political change, yet had it soon become defined by internal, regional and international divisions, including within the Security Council. Almost five years later, the country was in ruins, with millions of its people scattered across the world and a "whirlwind" of radicalism and sectarianism challenging global security.

Welcoming the critical initiative of the International Syria Support Group, and the draft resolution to be adopted today, he said the text was the first to focus on a political path to resolving the crisis. "This marks a very important step on which we must build," he emphasized. During the two recent meetings held in Vienna, the Support Group had made two major requests of the United Nations: to convene formal negotiations in January between the Government of Syria and opposition members and focused on a Syrian-led transition, and in parallel, to determine the requirements and modalities of a nationwide ceasefire. "The United Nations stands ready to undertake these important tasks," he said.

He went on to welcome the meeting convened in Riyadh that had brought together a broad spectrum of the Syrian opposition, saying the parties must ensure the full and effective participation of women in intra-Syrian talks to be mediated by his Special Envoy. He said that this morning, he had urged the Support Group to apply the necessary pressure on the Syrian parties to immediately stop the use of indiscriminate weapons against civilians, allow unconditional and unimpeded access for aid convoys, halt attacks on medical and educational facilities, lift all restrictions on medical and surgical supplies from humanitarian convoys, and release all detainees. Pointing out that nearly two years had passed since the Geneva II conference, and that the people of Syria had suffered enough, he called upon the Council to show both vision and leadership in

overcoming differences. A fleeting opportunity for peace had emerged, he said, declaring: "Your duty is to seize it."

The Council then unanimously adopted resolution S/2015/2254 (2015).

Statements

JOHN KERRY, Secretary of State of the United States and Council President for December, spoke in his national capacity, saying the resolution just adopted sent a clear message that now was the time to stop the killing in Syria. President Barack Obama had set three goals: to support friends and ensure that instability in Syria did not spread; to provide humanitarian assistance and to help neighbours; and to defeat Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh). Pressure to retake territory and squeeze supply routes was intensifying, he said, recalling that during yesterday's Council meeting, efforts to cut the group off from revenue resources had been multiplied.

A broadly supported process was needed to give the Syrian people a real choice between war and peace, he continued. The test now was to defeat the terrorists and put Syria on the road to the political transition envisioned in the Geneva Communique. Noting the progress made in recent weeks, he recalled that in Vienna, the International Syria Support Group had agreed on steps to advance a political transition and isolate the terrorists. In Riyadh, a broad cross-section of opposition groups had come together. Negotiations were meant to facilitate a transition to a democratic, secular Government in six months and elections in 18 months, he said. He expressed hope that a nationwide ceasefire could go into effect, excluding Da'esh and Al-Nusra Front.

Noting that there were obstacles and sharp differences in the international community, especially about the future of President Bashar al-Assad, he emphasized that the process must be implemented by Syrians and could not be imposed from outside. There was now an unprecedented consensus on the need for negotiations and to defeat Da'esh, he said, describing today's resolution as a "milestone". Saying that he was aware of the atrocities that had been committed and were being committed against innocent civilians, he stressed that Da'esh could never be allowed to control Syria. President Assad had lost the ability and credibility to unite the country. If the war was to end, it would be imperative that the Syrian

people agree on a different Government. Today's vote reaffirmed the Council's endorsement of the Geneva Communique for the transition, the Vienna timeline for transition and elections, as well as standards for such elections, he said. It brought fundamental values that could guide a Syria by Syrians, for Syrians.

SERGEY LAVROV, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, said that today's resolution approved the 14 November 2015 agreement which spoke of a way to re-implement the Geneva Communiqué. All three instruments constituted a platform for resolving the crisis in Syria. The Vienna format was the only one that brought together all influential players to find a sustainable and fair settlement through talks with the Government and the "whole span" of the opposition. "Only Syrian-led, inclusive dialogue can put an end to the untold suffering of the Syrian people," he said. Today's action was a response to attempts to impose an external solution on Syria.

Terrorists had no place in the talks, and nor did those who sought a military solution, he emphasized, adding that today's unanimous Council action had created a broad counter-terrorism front based on the United Nations Charter. Stressing the need to cut off financing to terrorists, he said that fight should be "consistent and selfless", because the notion of good and bad terrorists was unacceptable. Furthermore, humanitarian aid should be provided in compliance with the guiding principles outlined in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. It was important that the Council had reiterated the need to uphold Syria's sovereignty and enshrined its own oversight of results achieved in the Geneva agreement.

The Special Representative would play a lead role in organizing and holding negotiations, he said, citing meetings held in Moscow, Cairo, Riyadh, Helsinki and elsewhere. The Government of the Russian Federation was counting on balanced recommendations on steps to be taken in all areas outlined in the Vienna process. The Special Representative must be guided by the task of finding a mutually acceptable agreement between the Syrian Government and the opposition. The Russian Federation would be ready, with the United States and the United Nations, to convene another meeting in order to define further steps to be taken, he said, calling upon all parties not to engage in rhetoric and instead, to be guided by the need to combat terrorism and find a political settlement of the conflict in Syria.

NASSER JUDEH, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and Expatriate Affairs of Jordan, said today's meeting was a milestone in the international response to the crisis in Syria. A political settlement of a crisis that was dangerous to the international community was being reached because of its humanitarian and security aspects resulting from the actions of Da'esh and other terrorist groups. The process was based on Geneva Communique I and the Vienna meetings, he said, adding that Saudi Arabia had hosted a conference for the opposition in Riyadh, which hopefully would lead to the realization of that political solution. Jordan had played the role that it had been asked to play by starting a coordination process in order to reach a common understanding among the groups and individuals that were described as terrorists, he said.

The results, including those involving groups on which there was no agreement, had been handed to the International Syria Support Group, he said. Emphasizing that there was no way to restore normality in Syria and maintain its territorial integrity except through a political solution, he said the process and a ceasefire could help to defeat Da'esh and Al-Nusra. Terrorism soiled Islam, he said, stressing that crimes committed in its name were not part of that religion. The Council must defeat any attempt to delay the process. Describing the refugee crisis as one of the most painful humanitarian crises, especially for host countries like Jordan with its limited means, he said his country was now the second largest host of refugees in the world. Although Jordan was proud of its actions, the world must share its burden because its efforts had been undertaken on behalf of international humanity, he said.

LAURENT FABIUS, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, said today's resolution offered a "glimmer of hope" and a road map. A tenuous political process initiated in Vienna on the basis of the Geneva Communiqué had gathered a heretofore unforeseen totality of partners, who would seek to establish a transitional authority and negotiate a ceasefire. The Council had adopted the first result of that process, he said. To those who questioned which opposition would be involved, he said several meetings had been held on that topic. The recent conference in Riyadh had been a success, with all branches of the political and armed opposition having come together to support a free, secular and democratic Syria offering space for all segments of society. However, the Syrian regime had not shown a desire to enter negotiations based on the terms of reference.

Underlining the need for institutional reform, especially in the area of security, he said it would provide Syria with a framework that respected the country's diversity. There must also be safeguards that included an exit by the current President. The political reality could not be hidden: as long as his Government persisted, reconciliation between various populations and the State appeared unattainable, he emphasized. The ceasefire must be national, viable and verifiable, he said. It must meet at least three conditions: it should accompany the political transition, rather than precede it; it must be prepared with immediate humanitarian measures and require compliance with international humanitarian law; it must undertake confidence-building measures to create conditions for the ceasefire. Monitoring would require a mechanism through which members of the International Syria Support Group and permanent Council members should hold the parties accountable for compliance.

WANG YI, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, welcomed the unanimous adoption of the resolution, which underlined the Council's role and lent fresh impetus to the search for a solution. The protracted conflict had brought Syria to ruins, displaced a large number of its people and turned it into a playground for terrorists. Emphasizing the urgent need for a political settlement, he said international efforts to find one had been relentless, and the need now was to build on experience and lessons learned in order to make the process irreversible. Since there could be no military solution, a political settlement was the only way, he said, stressing that all parties must stop fighting immediately.

The Council had sent out a strong message, but countries in the region must also leverage their influence, he stressed. A commitment must be made that Syria's future must be decided by Syrians, consistent with the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. Transitional steps must be negotiated between the Government and opposition groups, and the country's future leader must be chosen independently. The international community must create a favourable environment and the United Nations must play its role as mediator. China looked to the Organization to play a bigger role in consolidating the opposition groups, he said, adding that the international community and the International Syria Support Group should assist and complement United Nations mediation efforts.

PHILIP HAMMOND, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth

Affairs of the United Kingdom, said he hoped the Council would be able to look back on today as a significant step towards an end to the conflict in Syria. It had all too seldom found the unity to live up to its peace and security responsibilities. "That must change," he said, noting that, on the Syria dossier, "we have to concede we have all been losers". All members shared the urgency of addressing the humanitarian catastrophe, and President Assad bore responsibility for the majority of deaths in Syria. Commending Saudi Arabia for having convened a broad cross-section of opposition members, he said the agreement reached there, and the formation of a negotiation committee, demonstrated its commitment to playing a crucial, constructive role in talks. He also welcomed Jordan's efforts to identify terrorist groups, saying that while it was the Council's role to designate those individuals and entities, the Support Group could provide information, analysis and advice. It was also able to test which groups were willing to commit to a ceasefire.

All parties wanted to see a national ceasefire established, he said, stressing that it must be aligned to progress on the political transition and talks among Syrian parties. The voices of all Syrians must be heard, including those of Syrian women and minorities. All parties must undertake confidence-building measures, some of which were outlined in the resolution, and must take care not to cause civilian deaths. The indiscriminate use of weapons must stop, and the parties must ensure rapid, safe, unhindered humanitarian access to Syria. Noting that the resolution repeated the commitment to a political transition, following the principles of the Geneva Communiqué, he said that process must involve the departure of President Assad. While the threat posed by Da'esh must be confronted, all countries claiming to fight the group must do what they said rather than directing the bulk of their attacks against non-extremist opposition groups, he stressed. He said the United Kingdom would co-host a conference on humanitarian support for Syria in February.

IGNACIO YBÁÑEZ, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, said that the resolution's adoption opened a window of opportunity to embrace dialogue as a way to deal with the crisis in Syria, the main victims of which were Syrians themselves. A ceasefire would enable the international community to focus on a political solution to the conflict. The resolution just adopted asserted the central role of the United Nations and the Security Council, which could not continue to "twiddle its thumbs" in the face of conflict on such a scale. The United Nations must play the role of

arbiter for a long-term solution, as reflected in the responsibilities allocated by the resolution. Success or failure would depend on Syrians themselves. He called for an immediate end to indiscriminate attacks on civilians and the use of barrel bombs.

MANUEL DOMINGOS AUGUSTO, Secretary of State for External Relations of Angola, welcomed the adoption of today's landmark resolution, and encouraged all parties to abide by its provisions in order to ensure the continuity of governmental institutions, as well as Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Government of Angola had often acknowledged with disappointment the lack of political will by major stakeholders to seek solutions, he said, adding that it looked forward with a sense of renewed hope to the international community's apparent determination to defeat terrorism and find a solution to the conflict. The recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut, Baghdad, Bamako and elsewhere, as well as the staggering refugee crisis, had been game changers in terms of making the international community understand the implications of allowing conflicts to degenerate to the extent of that in Syria. Describing exclusion, poverty and conflict as fertile ground for terrorists to spread an ideology of hate and intolerance, he said the international community had begun to turn the tide by taking steps that would meet the legitimate aspirations of Syrians and hopefully enable them to determine their own future, while repudiating extremist elements. He stressed the importance of identifying members of the opposition, and urged that both sides discuss a ceasefire without delay. Parties to the conflict must also implement confidence-building measures, he said, underlining that among the most pressing issues was to end the violence, while fulfilling the obligation to provide aid in the meantime.

ANDRIUS KRIVAS, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, said that today's meeting marked an important step in the settlement of the most brutal conflict of the century. The civilian population continued to suffer atrocities not only committed by Da'esh, but also by President Assad's regime. Being part of the problem, President Assad could not be seen as part of the solution to the crisis. An end to the conflict was a moral obligation, and the first step towards that was a long-term sustainable ceasefire, as well as unhindered humanitarian access to those in need. The political momentum was fragile and still reversible. He welcomed the meeting by a broad range of representatives held in Riyadh, observing that it demonstrated the beginning of consolidation and readiness to seek

common solutions. Even with a political transition on track, Da'esh would remain a threat to peace and stability in the region and beyond. A long and difficult battle against its ideology had to be fought by Muslims themselves. In addition, women's voices had to be heard loud and clear, he stressed, adding that the final decisions on the Syrian people's destiny had to be taken by the Syrian people themselves.

SITI HAJJAR ADNIN (Malaysia), noting that her Government would have preferred more time for consultations on the matter today, said the international community's desire to end the conflict could not be doubted. She had joined consensus on the resolution in order to end the suffering arising from the conflict and support the aim of building on the Geneva communiqué and Vienna statements. The conflict remained a litany of horrific human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. The Syrian Government must accept that it bore the primary responsibility to protect its people. She welcomed that the text reaffirmed the demand to cease indiscriminate attacks on civilians and reaffirmed condemnation of the use of barrel bombs. There should be no impunity for perpetrators of possible war crimes and crimes against humanity. Expressing concern that aid delivery was a problem, she called on Syrian authorities to do more to comply with Council resolutions. She also praised Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey for their hospitality in welcoming those fleeing Syria. The principles of unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity were key factors for accepting any proposal for the Syrian people. All parties should ensure that proposed talks take place in early January, with a focus on narrowing differences. There could be no military solution to the conflict, she said, citing the need for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political process.

U. JOY OGWU (Nigeria), underscoring her concern regarding the conflict in Syria, stated that terrorist groups were taking advantage of the situation and committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. Defeating them should be the top priority for the international community, and the Syrian conflict should be resolved comprehensively. Warring parties had to agree on a ceasefire without delay. The establishment of the International Syrian Support Group had given much-needed momentum to the search for a solution. As well, the unanimous adoption of the resolution was an unequivocal indication of the Security Council's commitment to resolving the conflict. It presented a roadmap on the way forward. She urged warring parties to build on the momentum of the resolution, bring the

conflict to an end, and restore peace and security in Syria.

RAFAEL DARÍO RAMÍREZ CARREÑO (Venezuela) noted that he had voted in favour of the resolution even though there had been very little time to become familiar with its content. A positive aspect of the Vienna process was the willingness to engage with the Government of Bashar Assad, who was one of the essential actors in the equation. Sidestepping that reality was condemning the peace process to failure. Reiterating his support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, he added that the solution to that country's humanitarian crisis was linked to the cessation of hostilities. Any action with the goal of combating ISIL had his delegation's support on the understanding that those actions should be coordinated with Syrian authorities. More so, the international community needed to avoid the collapse of Syria and its institutions, he said, adding that the traumatic events in Iraq and Libya and the resulting consequences could not be repeated.

GERARD VAN BOHEMEN (New Zealand) said that while the international community and the Security Council must accept a share of the blame for the devastation in Syria, there was now, after five years, a glimmer of hope for achieving a political solution to the conflict. Anyone insisting on political red lines that blocked necessary compromises would have to measure that delay in terms of more lives lost, more refugees and more suffering, he said, noting that delay played into the hands of extremists like ISIL. Despite progress, big questions remained outstanding, including the need for a comprehensive ceasefire. New Zealand recognized the process led by Jordan to add to the list of designated terrorist organizations, he said, adding, however, that peace in Syria would not be well served by a "blunderbuss approach" that defined far too many people as terrorists, an approach which the international community had seen fail so many times in other situations. Encouraging key players to prioritize pragmatism and ending the conflict over their other interests, he emphasized that the Security Council's immediate responsibility was to renew the mandate for cross-border and cross-line humanitarian assistance.

CRISTIÁN BARROS MELET (Chile), pointing out that his delegation would have appreciated more time to examine the resolution, said the next step was to overcome differences and build areas of common understanding. It was also necessary to include all Syrian stakeholders interested in a political situation. That should be a Syrian-led political process that would

include the participation of women and preserve Syria's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, with State institutions intact, since their collapse could have catastrophic consequences for civilians. The international community must unite against terrorism, he said, adding that he valued the Council's recent unity in tackling that threat. A ceasefire was the only way to tackle the humanitarian crisis, he emphasized.

MAHAMAT ZENE CHERIF (Chad) said that despite the complexity of the Syrian crisis, the international community must spare no effort in advancing the political process towards an acceptable transition for all concerned. All parties must make reason, rather than force, a priority and commit to dialogue. Emphasizing that there could be no military solution to the crisis, he welcomed today's meeting of the International Syria Support Group, expressing hope that the "new dynamism" of the Vienna and New York meetings, as well as today's resolution, would help to overcome differences. Chad called upon regional players to encourage the parties to show flexibility and commit to the political process without preconditions, since peace required concessions from both sides.

BASHAR JA'AFARI (Syria) said the situation in his country should be read the correct manner, rather than by adopting positions that only prolonged the crisis and repeating failed assumptions that had caused destruction in more than one country. The Government of Syria was open to any sincere effort to overcome the crisis and had shown cooperation with, and commitment to, the United Nations. Syria was ready to participate in efforts whereby Syrians would take part in a Syrian process without foreign intervention, and which maintained its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Some countries affirmed Syrian sovereignty, yet violated it on the ground by supporting terrorist groups, sending military aircraft to bomb oil installations and imposing unilateral sanctions on the Syrian people. There must be cooperation with the Syrian Government on all aspects of the political path, the success of which required international commitment.

He went on to say that the success of any political process was predicated on the collective fight against terrorism, and thanked the Russian Federation for having submitted a resolution that contained dimensions not included in previous texts. Syria had co-sponsored resolution 2253 (2015) in hopes that it would be a "turning point" in closing the gap between words and deeds, he said, adding that his country did not want hollow alliances led by supporters of terrorism. Peace required dealing

immediately with the terrorist threat. Syria was ready to end its fight in a manner that would restore normality to areas where there were armed Syrian opposition members, he said. It would never engage in dialogue with terrorists, he vowed, calling upon "honourable Syrians" to participate in a political process. Some had spoken today of Syrians deciding their future, yet they had an issue with the country's Presidency, he noted, saying that such a condition exposed their real intentions.

Resolution

The full text of resolution 2254 (2015) reads as follows:

"*The Security Council*,

"*Recalling* its resolutions 2042 (2012), 2043 (2012), 2118 (2013), 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2170 (2014), 2175 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2199 (2015), 2235 (2015), and 2249 (2015) and Presidential Statements of 3 August 2011 (S/PRST/2011/16 (http://undocs.org/S/PRST/2011/16)), 21 March 2012 (S/PRST/2012/6 (http://undocs.org/S/PRST/2012/6)), 5 April 2012 (S/PRST/2012/10 (http://undocs.org/S/PRST/2012/10)), 2 October 2013 (S/PRST/2013/15 (http://undocs.org/S/PRST/2013/15)), 24 April 2015 (S/PRST/2015/10 (http://undocs.org/S/PRST/2015/10)) and 17 August 2015 (S/PRST/2015/15 (http://undocs.org/S/PRST/2015/15)),

"*Reaffirming* its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

"*Expressing* its gravest concern at the continued suffering of the Syrian people, the dire and deteriorating humanitarian situation, the ongoing conflict and its persistent and brutal violence, the negative impact of terrorism and violent extremist ideology in support of terrorism, the destabilizing effect of the crisis on the region and beyond, including the resulting increase in terrorists drawn to the fighting in Syria, the physical destruction in the country, and increasing sectarianism, and *underscoring* that the situation will continue to deteriorate in the absence of a political solution,

"*Recalling* its demand that all parties take all appropriate steps to protect civilians, including members of ethnic, religious and confessional

communities, and *stresses* that, in this regard, the primary responsibility to protect its population lies with the Syrian authorities,

"*Reiterating* that the only sustainable solution to the current crisis in Syria is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, with a view to full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 as endorsed by resolution 2118 (2013), including through the establishment of an inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers, which shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent while ensuring continuity of governmental institutions,

"*Encouraging*, in this regard, the diplomatic efforts of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) to help bring an end to the conflict in Syria,

"*Commending* the commitment of the ISSG, as set forth in the Joint Statement on the outcome of the multilateral talks on Syria in Vienna of 30 October 2015 and the Statement of the ISSG of 14 November 2015 (hereinafter the "Vienna Statements"), to ensure a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition based on the Geneva Communiqué in its entirety, and *emphasizing* the urgency for all parties in Syria to work diligently and constructively towards this goal,

"*Urging* all parties to the UN-facilitated political process to adhere to the principles identified by the ISSG, including commitments to Syria's unity, independence, territorial integrity, and non-sectarian character, to ensuring continuity of governmental institutions, to protecting the rights of all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religious denomination, and to ensuring humanitarian access throughout the country,

"*Encouraging* the meaningful participation of women in the UN-facilitated political process for Syria,

"*Bearing in mind* the goal to bring together the broadest possible spectrum of the opposition, chosen by Syrians, who will decide their negotiation representatives and define their negotiation positions so as to enable the political process to begin, *taking note* of the meetings in Moscow and Cairo and other initiatives to this end, and *noting* in particular the usefulness of the meeting in Riyadh on 9-11 December 2015, whose outcomes contribute to the preparation of negotiations under UN auspices on a

political settlement of the conflict, in accordance with the Geneva Communique and the "Vienna Statements", and *looking forward* to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria finalizing efforts to this end,

"1. *Reconfirms* its endorsement of the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, *endorses* the "Vienna Statements" in pursuit of the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué, as the basis for a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition in order to end the conflict in Syria, and *stresses* that the Syrian people will decide the future of Syria;

"2. *Requests* the Secretary-General, through his good offices and the efforts of his Special Envoy for Syria, to convene representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition to engage in formal negotiations on a political transition process on an urgent basis, with a target of early January 2016 for the initiation of talks, pursuant to the Geneva Communiqué, consistent with the 14 November 2015 ISSG Statement, with a view to a lasting political settlement of the crisis;

"3. *Acknowledges* the role of the ISSG as the central platform to facilitate the United Nations' efforts to achieve a lasting political settlement in Syria;

"4. *Expresses its support*, in this regard, for a Syrian-led political process that is facilitated by the United Nations and, within a target of six months, establishes credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance and sets a schedule and process for drafting a new constitution, and *further expresses its support* for free and fair elections, pursuant to the new constitution, to be held within 18 months and administered under supervision of the United Nations, to the satisfaction of the governance and to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate, as set forth in the 14 November 2015 ISSG Statement;

"5. *Acknowledges* the close linkage between a ceasefire and a parallel political process, pursuant to the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, and that both initiatives should move ahead expeditiously, and in this regard *expresses its support* for a nationwide ceasefire in Syria, which the ISSG has committed to support and assist in implementing, to come into effect as soon as the representatives of the Syrian government and the opposition have begun initial steps towards a political transition under UN auspices, on the basis of the Geneva Communiqué, as set forth in the 14 November

2015 ISSG Statement, and to do so on an urgent basis;

"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to lead the effort, through the office of his Special Envoy and in consultation with relevant parties, to determine the modalities and requirements of a ceasefire as well as continue planning for the support of ceasefire implementation, and *urges* Member States, in particular members of the ISSG, to support and accelerate all efforts to achieve a ceasefire, including through pressing all relevant parties to agree and adhere to such a ceasefire;

"7. *Emphasizes* the need for a ceasefire monitoring, verification and reporting mechanism, *requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on options for such a mechanism that it can support, as soon as possible and no later than one month after the adoption of this resolution, and *encourages* Member States, including members of the Security Council, to provide assistance, including through expertise and in-kind contributions, to support such a mechanism;

"8. *Reiterates* its call in resolution 2249 (2015) for Member States to prevent and suppress terrorist acts committed specifically by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), Al-Nusra Front (ANF), and all other individuals, groups, undertakings, and entities associated with Al Qaeda or ISIL, and other terrorist groups, as designated by the Security Council, and as may further be agreed by the ISSG and determined by the Security Council, pursuant to the Statement of the ISSG of 14 November 2015, and to eradicate the safe haven they have established over significant parts of Syria, and *notes* that the aforementioned ceasefire will not apply to offensive or defensive actions against these individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, as set forth in the 14 November 2015 ISSG Statement;

"9. *Welcomes* the effort that was conducted by the government of Jordan to help develop a common understanding within the ISSG of individuals and groups for possible determination as terrorists and will consider expeditiously the recommendation of the ISSG for the purpose of determining terrorist groups;

"10. *Emphasizes* the need for all parties in Syria to take confidence building measures to contribute to the viability of a political process and a lasting ceasefire, and *calls on* all states to use their influence with the government

of Syria and the Syrian opposition to advance the peace process, confidence building measures and steps towards a ceasefire;

"11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council, as soon as possible and no later than one month after the adoption of this resolution, on options for further confidence building measures;

"12. *Calls on* the parties to immediately allow humanitarian agencies rapid, safe and unhindered access throughout Syria by most direct routes, allow immediate, humanitarian assistance to reach all people in need, in particular in all besieged and hard-to-reach areas, release any arbitrarily detained persons, particularly women and children, *calls on* ISSG states to use their influence immediately to these ends, and *demands* the full implementation of resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and any other applicable resolutions;

"13. *Demands* that all parties immediately cease any attacks against civilians and civilian objects as such, including attacks against medical facilities and personnel, and any indiscriminate use of weapons, including through shelling and aerial bombardment, *welcomes* the commitment by the ISSG to press the parties in this regard, and *further demands* that all parties immediately comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law as applicable;

"14. *Underscores* the critical need to build conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their home areas and the rehabilitation of affected areas, in accordance with international law, including applicable provisions of the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, and taking into account the interests of those countries hosting refugees, *urges* Member States to provide assistance in this regard, *looks forward* to the London Conference on Syria in February 2016, hosted by the United Kingdom, Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the United Nations, as an important contribution to this endeavour, and *further expresses* its support to the post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation of Syria;

"15. *Requests* that the Secretary-General report back to the Security Council on the implementation of this resolution, including on progress of the UN-facilitated political process, within 60 days;

"16. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter."

For information media. Not an official record.