

**Memorandum Submitted to the Members of the Preparatory Committee for the Syrian  
National Dialogue Conference**

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**Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to your esteemed committee for inviting me to this meeting. I wish you all success in your efforts.

Given the limited time and the immense responsibilities placed upon the committee, I present to you some thoughts on the topics included in the meeting's agenda, hoping they will be of value in fulfilling the honorable mission entrusted to you.

Syria today faces challenges from three different timeframes simultaneously. The previous regime has left behind a heavy legacy of injustices and destruction. In addition to economic collapse and the deterioration of state institutions, hundreds of thousands of families are still awaiting news about the fate of their missing loved ones. Millions of displaced persons remain unable to return to their destroyed homes and regions. There is a pressing need to develop a national program for transitional justice to address the consequences of past violations, establish levels and mechanisms of accountability, provide material and moral compensation to victims and affected individuals, and honor them. This is essential for reconciliation and the safeguarding of civil peace, all of which require a national consensus to ensure long-term stability in Syria.

In the present time, early recovery priorities impose themselves as urgent tasks. Improving living conditions, ensuring security, restoring public order, revitalizing state institutions while preserving Syria's territorial unity, and transitioning from a factionalized reality to an institutional framework—one that is neutral toward all Syrians, governed by law, and accountable to constitutional institutions—are essential and cannot be delayed. These steps are crucial in providing a sound and supportive environment for political transition.

Looking toward the future, Syrians face the challenge of drafting their new social contract and achieving national consensus on a permanent constitution for the country. This constitution must safeguard public and private freedoms, define the structure of the new political system, and guarantee the balance and independence of powers. Furthermore, agreement must be reached on a new electoral system, an economic model capable of bearing the burdens of reconstruction

and development, ensuring the fair distribution of wealth, and incorporating the necessary components of the national transitional justice program.

❖ **On National Dialogue:**

The decision by the Presidency to form a preparatory committee for the National Dialogue, whose members are widely respected, represents a positive step in the right direction toward involving Syrians in addressing their current challenges and shaping their future. If well-managed, this dialogue can help different social groups feel a sense of partnership in the process and encourage them to defend it.

I recognize that the time allocated to this committee for preparing the dialogue is short relative to the scale of the tasks required. I also understand that meetings will be limited to a select number of participants, whereas engaging broader segments of society in in-depth discussions would require a longer timeframe.

For this reason, I propose that the National Dialogue be transformed into an ongoing process, with this preparatory conference serving as a positive starting point. I suggest the formation of an official **National Dialogue Authority** managed collaboratively by qualified Syrian figures with reputable backgrounds, representing diverse intellectual, political, regional, religious, and ethnic origins. This body should also ensure significant representation of women and youth.

Adequate financial resources should be allocated to this authority to conduct a series of dialogues across all Syrian provinces and among Syrians abroad over a period of 12 to 18 months.

For the National Dialogue to succeed, key conditions must be met, including:

- **Commitment by official authorities** to adopting the outcomes of these dialogues.
- **Inclusive participation**, ensuring discussions engage all segments of Syrian society across provinces. This includes cultural, intellectual, and social figures, professional associations such as chambers of industry and commerce, trade unions, academic institutions, and civil society organizations.
- **Equal and meaningful participation of women and youth.**
- **Collaboration with media outlets, research centers, and public opinion polling institutions.**
- **A clear and well-defined agenda** covering key topics, including:
  - The foundations of the new social contract.
  - A list of rights and freedoms to be guaranteed in Syria.

- The future political system, including the issue of decentralization.
- The best realistic approach for drafting and adopting the permanent constitution.
- The core elements of a national transitional justice program.
- The optimal economic model for Syria's future, ensuring development, poverty reduction, and fair wealth distribution.
- The formation of the Syrian General Conference.

Once the dialogues are concluded, the authority can present its findings to official authorities for adoption, ensuring that Syria's future is shaped through a broad participatory process involving the widest spectrum of Syrians inside and outside the country.

#### ❖ On Constitutional Framework:

The Presidency has announced its intention to adopt a **constitutional declaration** to regulate the transitional period, define the governing principles of public order, establish transitional institutions, outline their relationships, and specify the list of public and private rights and freedoms that Syrians enjoy under legal protection. Additionally, the Presidency has declared plans to form a committee to draft Syria's permanent constitution, taking into account the outcomes of the National Dialogue.

I commend this commitment to governing Syria based on sound constitutional and legal principles, as this is an essential guarantee for the stability and security of the country and its people in the present, while laying the foundation for a future in which all Syrians feel ownership and participation. The new constitution must reflect their aspirations and protect their rights.

Furthermore, the constitutional process should serve as a **lever for social and political progress**, rather than allowing today's challenges to become obstacles that hinder Syria's political, social, and economic evolution in a world experiencing rapid changes. We need a **constitution that enables us to address the burdens of the past, respond to current realities, and move into the future with strength.**

To achieve this, I believe the **constitutional declaration for the transitional period** and the **permanent constitution** should include the following principles:

- **Full equality** between all Syrians in rights and duties, based on **equal citizenship**, with state institutions maintaining neutrality toward all citizens.

- **Recognition of Syria's cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity** as a source of richness, not division, ensuring that all groups have the full right to express their cultures and identities within the unity of the Syrian nation.
- **Acknowledgment of Syria's belonging to its Arab and Islamic cultural heritage**, while affirming its role as an active member of the international community, committed to the highest values of freedom, justice, and human rights, and contributing to regional and global peace.
- **Recognition of Islam's deep-rooted presence** in Syrian society as a moral and cultural pillar, alongside other religious traditions. The constitutional framework should build upon Syria's constitutional heritage in defining the role of Islam and other religions in governance.
- **Guarantee of public and private freedoms**, in accordance with international human rights conventions, including freedom of belief, thought, expression, assembly, and political and civil organization, with legal protections ensuring these rights are upheld rather than restricted.
- **Separation and independence of powers**, ensuring the executive branch does not dominate the judiciary and legislature, allowing both to operate independently and exercise their full authority.
- **Peaceful transfer of power, with the people as the source of all authority.**
- **Formation of the Supreme Constitutional Court** in a manner ensuring its independence from other branches of government. Judges should serve longer terms than those who appoint them, with appointments made by all three branches of government.
- **Political neutrality of the military and security forces**, strictly prohibiting their involvement in political life.
- **Rule of law as the foundation of governance**, ensuring that all individuals, institutions, and both public and private sectors—including the state itself—are accountable under publicly enacted laws, applied equally, and adjudicated by an independent judiciary. These laws must align with international human rights standards, and the state must take necessary measures to uphold the principles of legality, equality before the law, accountability, justice, separation of powers, participatory decision-making, legal certainty, non-arbitrariness, and procedural and legal transparency.
- **The state must guarantee security, freedom, and equal opportunities** for all Syrians.

- **International treaties ratified by Syria should have a status above national laws but below the constitution.** Additionally, as part of its constitutional obligations, Syria must uphold international humanitarian law and human rights law.
- **Crimes against humanity, war crimes, and human rights violations should be considered crimes that do not expire with time,** and all state institutions must be committed to implementing the principle of **no impunity.**
- **Explicit prohibition of torture and other degrading practices,** reinforced by legal frameworks. The constitution must also **guarantee fair and impartial trials** for all citizens, with legal mechanisms ensuring these rights are upheld.

#### ❖ **On Transitional Justice:**

One of the most defining aspects of Syria's modern history is the massive scale of injustices inflicted upon the Syrian people across all provinces, particularly during the years of the revolution. The previous regime committed widespread war crimes and crimes against humanity. Alongside the main conflict with the ousted regime, other unfortunate disputes arose, resulting in further violations against Syrian citizens.

Like any country transitioning from war to peace and stability, and seeking to build a state, Syria needs a comprehensive national transitional justice program. This program must ensure justice for victims, honor them, address the legacy of large-scale violations, and lay the foundations for reconciliation and peace. Such a program should include key elements such as uncovering the truth—understanding how these violations occurred, who committed them, for what reasons, and in what context. It should also encompass accountability and criminal justice, memorialization of victims, reparation and compensation, institutional reform, guarantees of non-repetition, and national reconciliation.

However, transitional justice in Syria faces several challenges. The first is the sheer scale of the violations, which complicates addressing them. For example, enforced disappearance has affected over 100,000 families, who continue to endure the agony of not knowing the fate of their loved ones. Forced displacement has resulted in the destruction of millions of homes and the displacement of millions of Syrians.

The second challenge is Syria's deteriorating economic situation and the lack of resources for both material and moral compensation for victims. There are currently insufficient funds to compensate the millions displaced, as well as individuals with disabilities, families of the missing and martyrs—particularly women and children—and victims of arbitrary detention and brutal torture.

The third challenge lies in the weakness of Syria's judicial system, which has suffered from decades of regime control and obstruction of its development. Additionally, Syria has not joined the International Criminal Court, and there is no dedicated international tribunal for war crimes in Syria, making it difficult to hold high-ranking human rights violators accountable—especially those who have fled abroad.

The fourth challenge is the emergence of conflicts with sectarian and ethnic dimensions alongside the primary struggle against the former regime, adding further complexity to social peace and reconciliation efforts.

Despite these challenges, Syria has a significant opportunity to design a national transitional justice program that helps its people overcome the effects of past violations and transition toward peace and reconciliation.

One of these opportunities is the humanitarian and moral stance adopted during the fight against aggression and the overthrow of the regime, rejecting the logic of revenge. This stance was embraced not only by leadership but also by the majority of the Syrian people, explaining why acts of communal violence have remained limited to specific areas and incidents. Preserving this opportunity and preventing a deterioration that threatens civil peace requires the urgent launch of Syria's transitional justice program.

Another opportunity is the publicly declared conviction of Syria's current leadership regarding the necessity of transitional justice, balancing justice and compensation for victims with the foundations of national reconciliation and civil peace. It is hoped that this conviction will soon translate into concrete actions.

A third opportunity is the collapse of the security and military institutions of the former regime, which were the primary violators of human rights in Syria. This increases the possibility of rebuilding these institutions on new foundations that respect human dignity and rights.

Finally, Syrian civil society has consistently called for the Syrian state to adopt a comprehensive approach to transitional justice during and after the transitional phase. This approach should prioritize victims—especially women and children—be nationally driven with the participation of victims' associations and specialized civil society organizations, and include a cohesive set of judicial and non-judicial processes. These should be based on national consultations and include truth-seeking initiatives, legal proceedings, reparation programs, and institutional reforms to address the root causes of conflict, ensure accountability, and prevent recurrence.

#### ❖ On Economic Affairs:

Faced with the immense economic challenges Syria endures and the hardships its people experience, the country needs an economic strategy that balances urgent immediate needs,



governance and security stability, and the foundation for a modern, competitive economy capable of generating added value in the global economic system. Many countries have emerged from devastating wars to build strong economies—South Korea being a prime example.

Syria needs an economic approach based on the following principles:

- **Equitable distribution of national resources**, prioritizing poverty eradication, creating decent employment opportunities for both men and women, and developing labor laws that safeguard the rights of both investors and workers.
- **Establishing a political, legal, legislative, and security environment** that attracts Arab and international investments in Syria, with the necessary facilitation for investors.
- **Enhancing public-private sector partnerships**, exploring successful international models, and developing the state's role as a guarantor of investor rights and smooth economic operations.
- **Boosting productive sectors** such as agriculture, industry, transportation, and tourism, while encouraging exports.
- **Fighting corruption**, promoting transparency, ensuring the rule of law, and strengthening judicial efficiency to swiftly resolve financial and economic disputes.
- **Gradual transition to a market economy**, allowing Syria's economy time to recover before exposing it to full market competition. South Korea provides a successful model—after the Korean War, it relied on donor aid and directed investments toward physical, technological, and scientific infrastructure, creating a solid economic base. It implemented gradual protectionist policies before easing them in parallel with economic growth, ultimately becoming globally competitive. Today, South Korean products are found in nearly every household worldwide.
- **Balancing public sector reforms**, including tackling disguised unemployment, with economic efficiency, fairness, and social stability, ensuring a gradual transition with alternative employment opportunities.
- **Directing capital, foreign investments, and international aid** toward productive sectors, infrastructure projects, technology, education, and housing development, laying the groundwork for a resilient and advanced economy.

Lastly, I pray that God grants you success in this noble work for the benefit of all Syrians and that these rounds of dialogue mark the beginning of an ongoing national conversation and partnership among all segments of Syrian society in managing the present and shaping the future.

The Syrian people are resilient. They have struggled, persevered, and liberated themselves and their country from one of the most oppressive regimes of this era. The road ahead is difficult, and we are still at the beginning of the journey. However, we will rise from the rubble, rebuild our free and dignified nation, and forge our own path to success—through the united efforts of all sons and daughters of Syria, and with God’s guidance.

**Mercy to our martyrs, congratulations to our freed detainees, patience and relief to the families of the missing persons, and a dignified return for the displaced.**

**Long live Syrian people—free and with dignity on their soil.**