

Joint Statement of the Participating Countries in the Istanbul Meeting on Syria, 20 April 2013 / Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Joint Statement of the Participating Countries in the Istanbul Meeting on Syria, 20 April 2013

Foreign Ministers of Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Italy, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, UK, USA and Turkey came together in Istanbul on 20 April to review the developments in Syria.

The Ministers were extremely concerned with the situation in Syria which is a result of the brutal campaign of the regime. They agreed that immediate action has to be taken to bring this conflict to an end.

With reference to their discussions in Rome Meeting of February 28, 2013, the Ministers reiterated their firm support for a political solution to the conflict in Syria within the framework of the Geneva communique. They welcomed the work of the National Coalition for a political solution in Syria and expressed their support to this end. They also restated their firm position that Bashar Al Assad and his close associates have no place in the future of Syria and that they must cede power to a transitional executive body to prevent further bloodshed in the country and prepare the ground for an orderly transition that would lead to a unified Syria where the rights and interests of all Syrians are protected.

They welcomed that the National Coalition, which they recognize as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, is further expanding its basis by embracing all Syrians, who adhere to the basic principles and objectives of the revolution. They also praised the decision of the Arab League to transfer the seat of Syria to the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces.

They welcomed the Declaration by the National Coalition on the understanding and the basic principles to which it will be committed in its struggle against the regime in Syria, including its firm rejection of extremism and its commitment not to use chemical weapons . In view of these commitments, the participant countries agreed to enhance and expand their support to all Coalition institutions.

In this regard, the Ministers recalled that in the Rome meeting they underlined the right to self defense of the Syrian people and the need to change the balance of power on the ground. They now agreed to further increase and deepen their assistance to the Syrian opposition against the Syrian regime. With this understanding, they reviewed the current

flow of assistance to the Supreme Military Council (SMC) of the Coalition and welcomed the additional pledges and commitments to further increase the support to the SMC. They committed to channel all military assistance exclusively through the SMC.

They strongly condemned the use of ballistic missiles by the regime in Syria, targeting civilians. They agreed that action must be taken against this crime to stop it. They also discussed the allegations about the use of chemical weapons in Syria and urged an immediate investigation by the UN to substantiate these claims. They deplored the obstruction by the regime of the UN fact-finding mission to investigate these allegations and expressed their conviction that such an approach suggests the responsibility of the regime. They stated that they will pursue this issue and if these allegations are proven to be correct, there will be severe consequences.

They called upon those assisting the regime in its campaign of terror against the people of Syria to cease providing military equipment and weapons as well as armed fighting units and to uphold universal values of human rights.

They expressed their deep concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria and called for concrete and urgent action by the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. In this context, they stressed the necessity to develop new ways for protecting civilians and saving lives and to ensure better humanitarian access to larger areas in Syria.

They underlined the importance of cross-border humanitarian operations and called upon international actors and organizations to engage in such activities in the absence of safe access to many areas in need. They also called upon all parties to the conflict to stop interfering and to facilitate cross-line humanitarian operations.

They urged the international community to provide more financial support to those countries hosting the Syrian refugees to enable them to respond to their growing humanitarian needs as well as to consider addressing the refugee issue through appropriate means and measures in accordance with the principle of burden sharing.

While we have stated our united commitment to a political solution within the framework of Geneva Communiqué, if the Syrian regime rejects this opportunity, further announcements regarding expanding our assistance will follow.

They agreed to continue their close coordination and cooperation to help the Syrian people.

Istanbul, 20 April 2013