

CSSR ONLINE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

– *Amman*

Participants summary report

CSSR Amman

May 6 and 11, 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Virtual Amman Civil Society Support Room (CSSR) consultations were held on May 6 and 11, 2020. Participants discussed the role of the CSSR, its civic and social values, and future strategies to support it. Suggestions were made regarding communication mechanisms to present the CSSR's role as an

advocacy and confidence-building platform for Syrians to a wide spectrum of civil society. Participants also shared their views on links between the CSSR and the political process. Various humanitarian topics were discussed.

Working session only for participants in the Jordanian CSSR to discuss and collect opinions and proposals on the following topics.

Legitimate Questions

- ◆ What is the actual role of the CSSR in the Constitutional Committee? Why is there no oversight and advisory role for the CSSR in the Committee?
- ◆ What is the possibility of holding an international conference on detainees in the presence of and in coordination with Syrians, the outcome of which would be binding?
- ◆ Where does the negotiation space for the CSSR lie?
- ◆ What are the legal mandates of the CSSR?
- ◆ Regarding advocacy, what are the mechanisms, channels, financial and media-related means available to the CSSR?
- ◆ Do we have the right to reject the form of the state in case it does not meet the aspirations of Syrians?

Lack of clarity on key issues

Everyone feels that so far there has been no effective communication with the Middle Third, and we are still receiving news either through personal contacts or through CSSR briefings on most of the issues related to the activities of the Office of the SE for Syria (OSE-Syria). For example, we have heard that there are

possible changes in the composition of delegations, but the OSE-Syria has not confirmed anything of this sort. We heard that the parties have reached conclusions, but there was no information from the OSE-Syria about the type of consensus and the next steps, so where do we stand? And what is our real role in this room?

Proposals

The CSSR participants in Amman made the following proposals:

- ◆ We propose that there should be a binding supervisory role for the work of the Middle Third of the Constitutional Committee (because this Third is under the mandate of the UN SE), as well as a non-binding advisory role for the Constitutional Committee to provide ideas and consultations.
- ◆ We propose to provide a periodic briefing on the detainees' file, the efforts to release them and the role of the actors in their case.
- ◆ We propose the creation of UN refugee protection offices to monitor the conditions of those returning to Syria.
- ◆ If the work of the Constitutional Committee is disrupted for more than six months, we propose that an ultimatum be issued to the disrupting party, giving such party a specified period to reform. In case of non-compliance, the file of negotiations will be referred to the Security Council for the implementation of Resolution 2254 under Chapter VII and directly declaring the beginning of the transition.
- ◆ We propose that there should be a written briefing on the work of the Women's Advisory Board (WAB) and the CSSR.

Reiterations

Participants from the Jordan based CSSR emphasized a set of objectives, namely:

1. We emphasise the ownership of the CSSR by Syrians, and that it must be a Syrian-Syrian interaction, and we should have the right to veto the mechanisms of action and propose new ideas and mechanisms.
 2. We emphasise the need to crystallise the oversight and negotiating role of the CSSR and to increase the number of participants in the CSSR.
 3. We emphasise the quest for the continuity of the CSSR; that there should be specific dates for regular meetings, like for the WAB; and that the CSSR should participate in setting the agenda of these meetings.
 4. We emphasise our rejection of the involvement of Syrian youth in the fighting in Libya and believe that we need help to provide channels to educate Syrians at home about the dangers and consequences of this step.
 5. We emphasise that the Russians are a dishonest partner to which the Syrian file was entrusted, and that it was involved in and continues to be involved in the killing of Syrians.
 6. We emphasise the need to share the agendas of Geneva meeting one week before the actual meetings, as well as the right of Syrians to add, modify or delete items based on Syrian ownership of the CSSR.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

In the closing session, the participants at the meeting made recommendations to the SE, which are summarised as follows:

1. The need to redirect all the negotiation files back to Geneva and not to leave negotiations to other processes such as Astana and Sochi. On detainees, the SE mentioned exchanges of detainees in some of his Security Council briefings, and we – as members of Syrian civil society – reiterate our rejection of such exchanges as a solution to this file and we call for the release of all political detainees without conditions or restrictions.
 2. The need for regular meetings with the UN SE.
 3. The need for monthly meetings – or whatever is appropriate – of the CSSR in coordination with the OSE-Syria and with the members of the CSSR in Turkey-Beirut-Erbil to exchange information and expertise and to develop joint working papers.
 4. The need to establish a follow-up office of the OSE-Syria that shares information periodically with the various CSSRs on the periodic reports submitted to the SE by all the updated CSSRs.
 5. The need for an electronic database run by the OSE-Syria that would include the archives of all hubs and meetings to activate the CSSR's informative role, because we cannot be expected to spread awareness and knowledge of the role of the CSSR among Syrians while our own knowledge is so limited.
 6. The need to find a clear and transparent mechanism for the selection of civil society members of the Constitutional Committee in the negotiating rounds in Geneva or Brussels. We must be empowered to advise on such a mechanism, since many of us feel that the selection process is based on nepotism and criteria that are not clear to all.
 7. The need to work on the selection of coordinators of CSSR based in Jordan to communicate with the CSSRs in Erbil, Beirut and Turkey in order to activate the advisory role of the Middle Third and to exchange reports and discussions and thus come up with a common agenda for all CSSRs.
 8. The need to increase the number of Jordanian CSSR members participating in the Geneva and Brussels meetings. It is unfair that one or two representatives are chosen from Jordan, while a team of more than ten people often participates from other CSSRs. On this point the SE reiterated that all members of Syrian civil society are equal, and stated that his team will look into the matter to ensure more equality.
 9. The need to establish a secretariat office for each CSSR that writes, coordinates and archives records and carries out other administrative work.
 10. The need to provide the necessary and required means to conduct research studies on Syrian refugees, to be carried out by the Jordanian CSSR.
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11. The need for regular meetings of the members of the CSSR with one another facilitated by swisspeace and NOREF through secure social media platforms for the current stage, and the need to ask the the Jordanian authorities to approve our movement and attend a real physical meeting with us. We recommend that the members of the CSSR in Jordan should be issued with an official identification card and that the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be informed of their names to facilitate their communication with the grassroots and each other, otherwise what is the point of being in a CSSR if we cannot communicate with Syrians in our capacities as members?
12. Many women's initiatives are active in Turkey, Erbil and Beirut, but we hardly hear about them in Jordan, nor are we asked to participate in such initiatives. Some of these initiatives are supported by UN organisations or the OSE-Syria. We hope that there will be a larger activation of our women's roles, and we stress the importance of preventing our exclusion, because we have a lot of experience and communication channels with refugees, which could help the other CSSRs to achieve their objectives. The SE mentioned that the point is well noted.
13. We emphasise the outputs of the report of our colleagues from the Beirut CSSR on the roles of the CSSR, which are expressed by the acronym "TAMAM/CKCA", which stands for Coordination - Knowledge - Consultation - Advocacy. These concepts are explained in the report.

CSSR, 2020

The Civil Society Support Room (CSSR) was established in January 2016 by the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria as a mechanism to consult with a broad and diverse range of civil society actors. Through the CSSR, civil society actors can meet, interact and provide their insights and ideas to the Office of the Special Envoy, relevant United Nations actors, as well as international stakeholders.

This mechanism aims at rendering the UN mediation process more inclusive.

The overall supervision and guidance of the CSSR rests with the OSE-Syria. NOREF Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution and Swiss Peace foundation have been mandated by the OSE to provide methodological expertise, operational and technical support to the process.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the UN standpoint.

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