

Regional outreach Berlin February 2024

Summary Report

SUMMARY

As part of the Civil Society Support Room (CSSR) outreach in 2024, a regional consultation led by the Deputy Special Envoy Najat Rochdi was organized on 13 February in Berlin with Syrian organizations based in Germany.

Through a series of meetings with a diverse range of active civil society actors, independent activists, and diaspora networks based in Germany, the team held a total of 5 group meetings on a diverse range of thematic areas. During the discussions, participants covered a wide range of topics. Throughout these engagements, representatives discussed multifaceted topics including - youth engagement, education, efforts regarding detained and missing persons, diaspora network engagement, and updates on the political process.

Youth interlocutors briefed about youth initiatives, including the Young Global Citizens Assembly. They called for mechanisms that provide protection to youth participants, ensuring they can engage without fear in political and civil activities and receive necessary capacity support.

Syrian Kurdish participants spoke of the challenges faced by Kurdish communities, particularly in regions like Afrin, where violations persisted. They emphasized the need to protect Syria's cultural heritage and the diversity of its population, while addressing wider issues and Kurdish concerns in the broader political process. Participants also raised the education challenges and needs for children in North-East Syria areas.

DSE Rochdi had an in-depth discussion with Syrian families representing the detained and missing, human rights lawyers and women activists on ongoing efforts regarding the detained and the missing and the importance of the establishment of a new Independent Institution on Missing Persons (IIMP). They asked that obtaining information regarding those missing and disappeared be considered as a priority in the political process. Discussion also focused on the meaningful participation of women in the political process and the role of the Women's Advisory Board (WAB).

Yezidi representatives raised the lack of representation of the Yezidi community within the UN process and especially the Constitutional Committee and called on the establishment of a future constitution that protects the rights of Yezidis. They briefed about violations against the Yezidi communities during the conflict, including forced displacement, which were documented in UN reports. They noted the importance of unity of Syria and reiterated that the Yezidi community was advocating for the preservation of the territorial integrity of Syria.

They demanded a society founded on equal rights for all, centered on the pillars of social justice and equality. They noted the specificities of the Yezidis culture, religion and customs and called on the need for a reform the personal status law.

Representatives of the diaspora networks talked about the importance of streamlining the work of the diaspora into the tracks of the political process. Discussion focused on the lack of progress on the political process, the impact of the Gaza conflict and dwindling funding for Syria. Participants raised the need to invest in the education sector to avoid a lost generation. They also briefed about the importance of documenting human rights violations and welcomed the first prosecution cases of persons responsible of suspected crimes in Syria.

DSE Rochdi briefed on the state of play of the political process and the Constitutional Committee. She emphasized the two important pillars of 2254, the first being the strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria, and second, that any political solution should be in accordance with the aspirations of the Syrian people and be Syrian-led and Syrian-owned. She stressed the importance of this engagement as it as opportunity for participant to channel the diverse voices of Syrians they represent. She provided an update on the WAB and the rotation of membership.

Key recommendations by the participants:

1. Ensure further youth participation in the CSSR while ensuring their safety and capacity development.
 2. Prioritize the protection of Syria's cultural heritage and diversity, and address challenges faced by the displaced communities in northern Syria.
 3. Address education challenges and needs for children in NES areas by improving access and the quality of education.
 4. Enhance information sharing on the missing persons and detainees by laying the foundation for the new independent institution.
 5. Ensure meaningful participation of women in the political process including through, but not limited to, the Women's Advisory Board.
 6. Ensure the representation of the Yezidi community within the UN process, particularly at the constitutional committee.
 7. Streamline diaspora engagement in the political process and dedicate resources to education for the new generations.
 8. Advocate for continued documentation of human rights violations and support prosecution of perpetrators.
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CSSR, 2023

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. swisspeace Foundation has been mandated by the OSE to provide methodological expertise, operational and technical support to the process.

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