

## 12 Living Intra-Syrian Essential Principles

[As of 30 November 2017 and subject to further development and updating by the Special Envoy as the UN-facilitated intra-Syrian talks process proceeds]

1. Respect of and full commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the [Syrian Arab Republic / state of Syria<sup>1</sup>] as a land and a people. In this regard no part of the national territory shall be ceded. The people of Syria remain committed to the recovery of the occupied Syrian Golan by all lawful means in accordance with the UN Charter and international law;
2. Respect of and full commitment to Syria's national sovereign equality and rights regarding non-intervention. Syria shall take its full role in the international community and the region, including as part of the Arab world, in conformity with the UN Charter, and its purposes and principles;
3. The Syrian people alone shall determine the future of their country by democratic means, through the ballot box, and shall have the exclusive right to choose their own political, economic and social system without external pressure or interference, in line with Syria's international rights and obligations;
4. The [Syrian Arab Republic / state of Syria<sup>2</sup>] shall be a democratic and non-sectarian<sup>3</sup> state based on political pluralism and equal citizenship irrespective of religion, ethnicity and gender, with full respect for and protection of the rule of law, the separation of powers, judicial independence, the full equality of all citizens, the cultural diversity of the Syrian society, and public freedoms, including freedom of belief, featuring transparent, inclusive, accountable and answerable governance, including before the national law, with necessary effective measures to combat crime, corruption and mismanagement;
5. A state committed to national unity, social peace, and comprehensive and balanced development with fair representation in local administration;
6. Continuity and improved performance of state and public institutions, with reforms where necessary, including the protection of public infrastructure and property rights and provision of public services to all citizens without discrimination, in accordance with the highest standards of good governance and gender equality. Citizens shall benefit from effective mechanisms in their relations with all public authorities in such a way as to ensure full compliance with the rule of law and human rights and private and public property rights;
7. A strong, unified, meritocratic and national army that carries out its duties in accordance with the constitution and the highest standards. Its functions are to protect the national boundaries and the people from external threats and terrorism, with intelligence and security institutions to maintain national security subject to the rule of law, acting according to the constitution and the law and respecting human rights. The use of force shall be the exclusive prerogative of competent state institutions;
8. Unqualified rejection of - and active commitment to combat - terrorism, fanaticism, extremism and sectarianism in all its forms and to tackle conditions conducive to their spread;
9. Respect and protection of human rights and public freedoms, especially in times of crisis, including non-discrimination and equal rights and opportunities for all without regard to race, religion, ethnicity,

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<sup>1</sup> The Office of the Special Envoy notes that the Syrian Arab Republic is a Member State of the United Nations and the United Nations refers to the Syrian Arab Republic in all dealings. The terminology reflects options presented to the Special Envoy by the delegations in the context of the mediation process.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>3</sup> The Office of the Special Envoy has not used the term secular. It notes that the term non-sectarian is provided for in Security Council Resolution 2254 and that the term secular is not provided for in the Syrian Constitution, which has both secular and religious features. This is a matter to be solely determined by Syrians.

cultural or linguistic identity, gender or any other distinction, with effective mechanism for their protection, which give due regard to the political and equal rights and opportunities of women, including by the taking of active measures to ensure representation and participation in institutions and decision-making structures, with mechanisms aimed to achieve a level of representation of at least 30% for women, and the goal of parity;

10. A high value placed on Syria's society and national identity, its history of diversity and the contributions and values that all religions, civilizations and traditions have brought to Syria, including the coexistence among its various components, along with the protection of the national cultural heritage of the nation and its diverse cultures;
11. Combatting and eliminating poverty and providing support for the elderly and other vulnerable groups, including persons with special needs, orphans and victims of war, which shall include ensuring the safety and refuge of all displaced persons and refugees, as well as protecting their right to voluntary and safe return to their homes and lands;
12. Preservation and protection of national heritage and the natural environment for future generations in accordance with environmental treaties and the UNESCO declaration concerning the intentional destruction of cultural heritage.