



## **Pugwash Consultation on Geneva II**

**28 January 2014, 9.00 am – 5.30 pm**

**Green Cross International Headquarters**

**Geneva**

### **Summary of Main Points<sup>1</sup>**

The Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs convened a meeting in Geneva on January 28, 2014 to discuss possible contributions to resolving the ongoing conflict in Syria. The meeting was co-hosted by Green Cross International, which kindly provided meeting facilities. Invitees from the region and beyond included current and former policy makers and a range of regional, legal, humanitarian, and chemical weapons experts from NGOs, civil society, and academia. Given the intense complexities of the situation, most felt that at this time primary focus should be given to steps that can improve the current situation and which can serve as confidence building measures, rather than focusing negotiations on responsibility for the fighting or the legitimacy of the warring parties. As a result, without diminishing the importance of such issues, our discussion addressed relevant factors and steps including:

#### **1. Geneva II Negotiations**

- a. Participants generally agreed that at this stage the most important subject for talks should be ending the fighting, dealing with humanitarian issues and thus creating a space for a political process to happen.
- b. The Geneva II process of talks between the warring parties is important and must be encouraged to continue, despite their current limitation as to the range of participants or to the magnitude of issues.
- c. One of the apparent problems of Geneva II negotiation has been the spotlight of the International media that put both the Government of Syria and the opposition in a dilemma, by which talking would have been equated to mutual recognition.
- d. Civil society will be important to the construction of a democratic Syria, and civil society activists and movements inside Syria, including women's movements, should be included as part of the political process towards peace to ensure the efficacy of that process.

#### **2. Legitimate Government for Syria**

- a. The question of the legitimacy of the current government should not be allowed to prevent discussion of urgent issues to improve the situation on the ground.
- b. The government should be encouraged to initiate itself a process of transition that can lead to the creation of a government recognised by all Syrians. This could involve the proclamation of a State of Emergency, suspension of the constitution and the beginning of the process of transition to a wider based system of governance. In this way sovereignty of the state would be maintained throughout.

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<sup>1</sup> This report was prepared by Martin Butcher, Policy Advisor on Arms, Oxfam, who has sole responsibility for the content. The meeting was held according to traditional Pugwash/Chatham House rules: participants took part in their individual capacities; statements are not attributed to any individual; and distribution of the substance of discussions is encouraged.

- c. To make such a process effective, it has been suggested that there is a need for a significant group of 'wise men', honest, competent technocrats, representing all different sects and ethnic groups of the country, to manage the transition from current government to a future elected, representative government. They could form the core of transitional authorities, but it will be premature and counter-productive to start the process from sorting out the fate of the current president (this would put the debate into win-lose context, while it should be in the win-win context). Of course the selection of such group of wise men and women must be discussed and understood thoroughly.
- d. At the local level, in both government and opposition controlled areas, there is a need for honest and effective administration which will contribute to the creation of a power sharing government at the national level.

### 3. The Role of Outside Parties

- a. While the war was not caused by outside parties (incidentally there is not such a thing as a proxy war) it was noted that arms, training and money from outside parties, as well as the presence foreign fighters are shaping the conflict and keeping it going.
- b. In this context, it was generally agreed that there is a need for outside parties to concentrate efforts on constructing the parameters for the negotiations and supporting Syrians to find solutions to resolve their conflict and end the war.
- c. There was no support amongst Syrian participants for foreign military intervention in the conflict.

### 4. Ceasefires

- a. It was felt that there is a danger that the kind of evacuation being proposed by the government for Homs will not play a constructive role in ending the fighting.
- b. Local and regional ceasefires can play a role in reducing the humanitarian harm caused by the war and in building confidence between warring parties.
- c. It may be possible to begin with areas of the country which are having relatively low levels of violence and to keep them as safety areas.
- d. If observed, these would have the advantage of building confidence for substantive talks; of protecting internally displaced people in these areas; of facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid; and of providing a basis for discussion of extending ceasefires to other areas.

### 5. Peacekeeping and Monitoring Forces.

- a. International peacekeepers or monitors with a Chapter VI (UN Charter) mandate would be useful to observe and help maintain ceasefires as described above. However, it is unlikely at present that a UN mandate for a peacekeeping or monitoring force would be agreed, and countries may be unwilling to provide forces absent a total ceasefire or peace agreement. It may be necessary, though, to depart from usual UN practices of deciding upon and organising peace-keeping formation. In this context one might explore joint foreign and local units. Perhaps, a different term (other than peace-keeping) should be used. Incidentally in all the issues discussed here the use of terminology is a very sensitive one and every effort should be made to avoid terms that may look biased or one-sided.
- b. Absent agreement for an international force, **consideration should be given to a Syrian composed civil society-based monitoring force, again formed with the participation of all**

**religious and ethnic groups, which could observe and assist with the implementation of ceasefires, aid delivery and other humanitarian tasks.**

- c. **If these arrangements can be put in place, then the international community should insist that those warring parties inside Syria, that they support, respect local ceasefires and the work of the Syrian monitors.**

## 6. The Role of the Economy

- a. Economic interests did not start this war, although the economic situation inside Syria before the outburst of protests and hostilities was a major contributing factor to enabling the conflict to happen. Since it has started many people are trying to benefit economically from the war, for example, control of oil has become important as a source of money in the war economy.
- b. There is a need for careful consideration of addressing resources and their role in a post-war economy as part of a solution to the crisis.
- c. **The dismal economic situation in some areas is forcing many young men to join various military formations, including those related to Al Qaeda, thus fuelling the conflict further.**

## 7. Economic Sanctions

- a. Participants were clear that the blanket imposition of sanctions has assisted in the development of the war economy, and also of a 'gangster' economy. It was felt that general sanctions are contributing to the war economy rather than adding pressure for a solution to the conflict, and that consideration should be given to careful lifting of some sanctions, although not those targeted on individual government members.

## 8. Revenge and traditional justice

- a. While the war continues, and even in its aftermath, it will be impossible to completely eliminate revenge attacks for the deaths of family or friends. **Action to minimize risks of revenge attacks should concentrate on cross community work to minimise the risk of sectarian attacks.**

## 9. The danger from ISIS and other Al Qaeda elements

- a. There is a definite danger to Syria and Syrians from the presence of non-Syrian Al Qaeda forces, most notably ISIS, in Syria. Syria has a great tradition of religious tolerance within and between religious communities. All felt that maintenance of this tradition was essential to the character of the country and should be one of the cornerstones of transition process.
- b. A distinction should be drawn between young locals who join these groups for money, and the mostly foreign elements who join these groups for ideological reasons.
- c. Peace efforts between Syrian warring parties should not be delayed by the need to combat Al Qaeda in Syria.
- d. Following a peace agreement, a national army reconstructed from government forces, defectors from the army and opposition forces would be largely sufficient to fight Al Qaeda in Syria.

10. All participants felt that the meeting was useful and that it would be helpful for Pugwash to convene further meetings in the region and elsewhere, as well as delegations to communicate the results of meetings to interested governments.





## Pugwash Consultation on the Geneva II Process

28 January 2014

Geneva, Switzerland

**FINAL participant list**

*Per Pugwash tradition, all participants take part as individuals and not as representatives of any group or affiliation. Biographical information is provided for background purposes only.*

**Amb. Sergey Batsanov (Russia)** – Pugwash Council member and Director of the Geneva Office of International Pugwash; Member of the Pugwash CBW Steering Committee; Member of the International Advisory Board of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF); Senior Fellow at the United Nations Inter-regional Crime and Justice Research Institute [formerly: Director for Special Projects at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), The Hague; Representative of the USSR/Russian Federation to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva (1989-93)]

**Dr Saleem Bshara (Syria)** - Board member, Matar civil society offices

**Mr. Martin Butcher (UK)** - Policy Adviser, Oxfam and Research Associate, Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, SOAS; He has worked in the field of security, arms control and disarmament for over 25 years, in London, Brussels and Washington DC.

**Dr. Nedal al Chaar (Syria)** - Former Syrian Minister of Economy and Trade and Chairman of the Higher Investment Council; former Secretary General of AAOIFI; Former Director of Market Performance Analysis, Fannie Mae, and Vice President, Johnson & Higgins in Washington D.C. Former professor of Economics and Finance at The George Washington University

**Prof. Paolo Cotta-Ramusino (Italy)** - Secretary General, Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs; Professor of Mathematical Physics, University of Milan, Italy formerly: Secretary General, Union of Italian Scientists for Disarmament (USPID); Director, Program on Disarmament and International Security, Landau Network – Centro Volta, Como, Italy]

**Dr. Paolo Foradori (Italy)** - Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Trento

**Mr. Paul Garwood (Australia)** - Director of Communications, Green Cross International, Geneva

**Dr. Na'el Hariri (Syria)** - Damascus based founder of the Bloggers for Syria website. Co-founder of Madani

**Mr. Osman Kavala (Turkey)** - Chair, Anadolu Kultur; Board member, Open Society Foundation-Turkey

**Ms Ellie Kemp (UK)** - Acting Humanitarian Affairs Representative Geneva, Oxfam; formerly Oxfam Policy Lead DRC and Somalia; some 15 years' experience of humanitarian and development programming and policy, chiefly in Africa and Central Asia.

**Dr. Alexander Likhotal (Russia)** - President of Green Cross International

**Mr. Robbie Marks (US)** -Refugee Officer, U.S. Mission to the UN – Geneva

**Ms. Nadia Oulaby** - Project officer, Humanitarian Dialogue Centre; Formerly Action Aid, UNHCR (DRC) and Oxfam GB (Yemen)

**Prof. Elias Samo (Syria)**

**Ms. Madeleine Rees (UK)** - Secretary General, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

**Dr. Nour Saadi MD (Syria)** - Syrian Women's Net (SWN); Syrian Women's League

**Dr. Rim Turkmani (Syria)** - President of Madani; Syrian-born astrophysicist; Visiting Researcher, Imperial College London and Dorothy Hodgkin Royal Society Research Fellow in the Astrophysics Group

**Mr. Aleksey Nikolaevich Uslughin (Russia)** . First Secretary in The RU Mission to the UN & other international Orgs in GE

**Claudia Vaughn (US)** - Program Coordinator, Pugwash Conferences

**Mr. Andrey Vlasov (Russian Federation)** – Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the Office of the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva

**Dr. Jean Pascal Zanders (Belgium)** -Pugwash Council member; Owner and operator of The Trench ([www.the-trench.org](http://www.the-trench.org)) [formerly: CBW Project Leader, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI); Director, BioWeapons Prevention Project; Senior Research Fellow responsible for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation questions at the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)]

