
International Peace Initiative for Syria
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Clarification on the Vienna Syrian Civil Society Convention for a Political Solution

On February 20 some websites published articles on a Syrian meeting scheduled to take place on 8-9 March close to Vienna containing several distortions.

The organizers offering the frame for talks between the most diverse sectors of Syrian society are neither “European Center Left” let alone “American right-wingers”. It is a clearly defined international initiative for a political solution (www.peaceinsyria.org). It is based on political solidarity against any foreign intervention into Syria and in support of the democratic demands of the Syrian people. It has garnered the endorsement of several thousand personalities including the Nobel Prize laureate Perez Esquivel from Argentine, the poet and minister of the Nicaraguan revolution Ernesto Cardenal or the former German UN diplomat Hans von Sponeck who refused to continue the embargo on the Iraqi people.

Financially the event is based on donations from a wide range of sources following the principle that many small donors will guarantee the complete independence of the deliberations. We have never heard of those Syrian businessmen named as being behind the funding. We categorically exclude that any side of the warring parties gave or will give any money.

Politically the Vienna event is not a smaller replica of the failed Geneva talks which reduced the Syrians to proxies of foreign state powers. It does not pretend to facilitate “reconciliation between government and opposition”. It does not act in the interest of the US, Russia or any global or regional power. On the contrary we want to provide a frame where the different elements of the Syrian society can come together to discuss how to overcome the bloody conflict and start a democratic transition as the vast majority of all sides is longing for. We want to make the diversity of voices of the Syrian people audible also for the outside world.

If this dialogue from below will take place, we will consider it already a success. We hope that it will facilitate urgently needed humanitarian relief. If some common ideas emerge how to live together in accordance to the social and political interests of the vast majority also with its different identities, it will exceed our expectations – always abiding by the premise of the right to self-determination.

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