



**AESI Students' Comment on the
Official Convening of Syrian Constitutional Committee
held in Geneva on the 30th of October 2019**



**Official Convening of Syrian Constitutional Committee
held in Geneva on the 30th of October 2019**

30 October 2019 is a significant date on the international scenario. For the first time in eight and a half years of conflict, the United Nations (UN) Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Geir Otto Pedersen, the Head of the Syrian government's delegation, Mr. Ahmed Kuzbari, and the Head of the Syrian opposition's delegation, Mr. Hadi Bahara, discuss at the same table about the future of Syria.

150 are the members of the Committee and they are all present. Among these, 50 were chosen by the Syrian government, 50 by the opposition, and 50 by the UN Special Envoy - who requested 30% of the Committee to be made up of women. Each group has appointed 15 people to prepare and draft constitutional proposals to be submitted to the Committee for adoption. Ideally, adoption will be reached by consensus or with a majority of over 75% of voters.

No time limit has been set for the negotiations. The UN and the opposition are asking to conclude the dialogue within the presidential elections of 2021 on the basis of a long path traced by Security Council Resolution 2254 in 2015. These are probably quite ambitious predictions given that the previous agreements never have brought to a result.

The current constitution dates back to 2012 and is an amendment of the one adopted in 1973. The critical points of the current constitution lie in the excessive power that is granted to the President - given the absence of the tripartite division of power identified by Montesquieu in 1748 - and the consequent impossibility of accusing the President himself, who is also head of the Supreme Judicial Council. This picture leads to a clear democratic deadlock.

“The writing of the future constitution belongs to the Syrians” are the first words addressed by Mr. Pedersen to the representatives of the two factions. Although the goal is the creation of a constitution drafted by the Syrians, and subsequently voted by the Syrian citizens, the expressions on the faces of the participants are not fully relaxed. They are aware that the future of Syria will not be entirely in their hands, but will have to deal with decisions taken by external actors that currently play a decisive role in Syria.

The atmosphere is tense. The representative of the government, Mr. Ahmed Kuzbari, maintains the typical detachment of who abuses of political rhetoric. On the other side, the representative of the opposition, Mr. Hadi Bahara, has a fierce and determined attitude. Unfortunately, the UN Web TV shows only a few footages of the audience during the speeches. The general feeling is that not all Syrian society is represented and that the recriminations between the parties are still too strong.

Without common cultural, political and social foundations, the drafting of a constitution is a utopian project. A common problem among international organizations is that beautiful, emphatic, and passionate words often used by officials are vague and unrelated to reality. It is not enough to say that the UN wants to act to protect the Syrian people if the UN does not have the strength, the means, and the will to intervene. To this end, it may be useful to apply the approach promoted by AESI.

AESI believes in adopting a comprehensive approach that integrates the military world, the diplomatic world and the academic world, so as to have a complete view of a complex reality like Syria. This method allows to approach international crises with respect for the population, first of all, and for the protection of sovereignty, unity, independence, and territorial integrity of the countries where crises develop.

AESI believes in the necessity to listen to the needs of the populations that have suffered conflicts and to find in youth the solution to controversies. An activity of confrontation is needed between the new generations that have seen part of their future already destroyed by war and that can see hope only in peace. This cannot be achieved with beautiful words only but with opportunities for meetings in which real issues are discussed and where common interest prevails over partisan egoism.

For over twenty years, AESI has been engaged in dialogue between people with different backgrounds, different stories, different cultures, and different visions of the world. If peace is truly the final goal, dialogue is the only weapon that can be used in crisis resolution. It is up to us to help the international system - starting from the UN - to intercept these voices and to understand them.

Rome, 6 December 2019

AESI STUDENTS'

ROME



GENEVA – MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL UN 2015 - AESI UNOG FORUM 2016