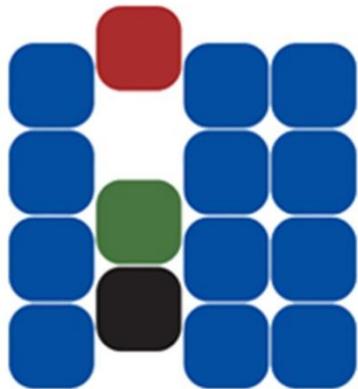


Syria: 5 Recommendations for Brussels Conference VI 2022



**Supporting the future
of Syria and the region**

Brussels Conferences

05 May 2022

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Syrian organizations call on stakeholders to protect aid from abuse, prevent the deportation of refugees to Syria, support an inclusive peace process, systematically investigate the impact of sanctions on civilians, and prioritize Syrians' food and water security

In May 2022, Brussels will host the [sixth annual Brussels Conference](#). Organized by the European Union, the Brussels Conference raises vital funds for the humanitarian support of Syrians, provides a valuable forum for international dialogue concerning the future of Syria and the region, and sets the tone for global engagement with the Syrian crisis for the next year.

The humanitarian crisis in Syria this conference will address is just as desperate as it was six years ago when the first Brussels Conference was organized. 11 years into the Syrian conflict, [14.6 million](#) Syrians rely on humanitarian aid to meet their daily needs and [97%](#) of Syrians live below the poverty line.

With so many Syrians in need, it is vital for participants of this year's conference to protect aid distribution from politicization and abuse, and to use this conference to empower Syrians on the path towards truth, justice, and peace. Keeping this in mind, the undersigned Syrian organizations offer the following recommendations:

1. Protect Aid from Abuse and Politicization

As donors pledge aid, the United Nations and the European Union, who fund and oversee much of this aid, must consider which projects to fund. They should take special care that individuals and groups accused of human rights violations are not allowed to profit from the humanitarian vulnerability of civilians. Multiple parties to the conflict have used aid distribution for political purposes, withholding aid for retaliatory purposes. Humanitarian aid must remain apolitical and nondiscriminatory. All Syrians, wherever they live in the country, or whatever their demographic background, are entitled to life-saving support.

Furthermore, donors should take special care that their funding does not support projects which aspire towards demographic engineering. [13.5 million](#) Syrians have been displaced over the course of the conflict. As the international community works towards creating a Syria which is safe to live in and return to, donors should support projects which honor the rights of the original inhabitants and support them in their efforts to rebuild and strengthen their communities. One way to monitor this issue would be the creation of an independent mechanism, overseen by the United Nations, which verifies that projects do not contribute to demographic engineering by any party to the conflict.

2. Safeguard the Rights of Refugees and Asylees and Prevent their Deportation

Syria is not safe and will not be safe for the foreseeable future. Despite this fact, countries continue to forcibly deport Syrians back to Syria, where they may be abused, detained, and/or forcibly disappeared. All refugees and asylum seekers, regardless of their country of origin, their religion, or their demographic background, deserve to be treated with dignity and empathy. It is imperative that the participants in this year's Brussels Conference reaffirm their commitment to Syrian refugees and condemn initiatives to forcibly deport them without grounds.

Countries which have become home to Syrian refugees and asylum seekers must be provided the support they need to protect and care for these vulnerable communities; however, donors should stipulate that aid should go directly towards the support of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers, not towards deportation camps and initiatives which forcibly return them to Syria.

3. Support an Inclusive Peace Process

The UN and the EU, along with all participants to Brussels Conference VI, must push for a comprehensive political solution that incorporates the many components of Syrian society, even if that requires amending Syria Resolution 2254 (2015).

A long-lasting, true, and successful peace process cannot happen without the involvement of all of Syria's diverse communities.

The UN should also expand the representatives who compose the Syrian Constitutional Committee, and especially provide seats for communities in northeast Syria who are currently underrepresented; a constitution written without the input of all of Syria's communities cannot hope to be a productive step on the path towards an inclusive peace process.

4. Critically Engage with Sanctions

The fight for accountability is pivotal towards transitional justice efforts. Considering this, the UN, the EU, and participating states should support Syrian civil society initiatives to achieve accountability by holding all perpetrators of human rights violations accountable by putting them on sanctions lists.

However, the sanctions which are approved must not harm the very Syrian civilians they seek to support. To ensure this does not happen, an independent mechanism, overseen by the United Nations, should be created to impartially and regularly assess the efficacy of sanctions and determine their impact on civilian populations.

5. Prioritize Food and Water Security

The food and water security crisis in Syria has worsened daily since the beginning of the Syrian conflict. Communities have been deliberately, and often discriminatorily, denied their right to access clean water. Acres of crops have been burned throughout the course of the conflict – often as a form of revenge on the people and communities who rely on them. Across Syria, water has become scarce because of drought, critically affecting food and water security. Syrians' access to the fundamental rights of food and water should not be politicized.

Participants in the Brussels Conference must therefore prioritize food and water security, and work to ensure that all Syrians have access to clean water. Donors should also support projects which will reform agricultural production facilities to secure Syrians' basic needs for the cultivation of vital crops like wheat, and advocate for the development of secure and modern irrigations systems across Syria.

Undersigned Syrian Organizations:

1. Better Hope for Tabqa
2. Furatna for Development
3. Hevdestî-Synergy Association
4. Sêl for Media and Development
5. Serê Kaniyê/Ras Al-Ain Platform
6. Syrian Center for Studies and Dialogue
7. Syrians for Truth and Justice
8. Vision Organization
9. Wheat and Olive Platform