

MANIFESTO

by the
Syriac People of Syria
and the
Kurdisch People of Syria
concerning



**The right to fair
and democratic
representation
at negotiations
about the future
of Syria**

GENEVA | JANUARY 2014

The Syriac People of Syria together with the Kurdish People of Syria, consisting of up to 5 million people (20% of the population) are being represented by the ***Syriac National Council of Syria*** in alliance with the ***Syrian Kurdish Supreme Council***.



“Geneva II should not become a second Lausanne”

During nearly three years of conflict in Syria, the Syriac and Kurdish communities have been suffering under ongoing violence and destruction by the warring factions. Their houses and places of worship have been demolished and sacked. Attacks, harassment, abductions and assaults continue day by day. Political and religious leaders have been tortured and killed. Through all the atrocities, one clear message has been sent to Syrians and the international community: two key population groups have consistently paid the highest price for the meaningless war inflicted upon them.

The Syriac and Kurdish people in Syria together comprise up to 20% of Syria's population (approx. 5 million people). All national and international platforms dealing with the crisis to date, however, have denied participation by this specific section of the population in negotiations about the future of Syria.

‘True democracy is defined by the majority's respect for minority rights in society.’

The current political impasse needs an urgent and drastic paradigm shift regarding the role that Syrians and Kurds should play in negotiations. Failing to safeguard the political and human rights of up to 5 million people will render worthless any negotiated outcome.

In order to represent the Syriac and Kurdish people in all platforms, The **Syriac National Council of Syria** (SNCS, established on September 8, 2012) and the **Syrian Kurdish Supreme Council** have combined their efforts to force the warring factions and the international community to respect their civil rights concerning representation at negotiations about their own future in Syria. The alliance is working for a democratic, civil, pluralistic and multi-ethnic Syria. As two of the few groups that deliberately abstained from violence, it has based its policy on comprehensive respect for The Universal Declaration Of Human Rights, in which all citizens—regardless of ethnic, religion or sectarian background—have equal rights and responsibilities.

Among the opposition groups, Syrians, Kurds and other affected groups are neither included nor authentically represented in negotiation talks. Syrians and Kurds in Syria substantially outnumber other groups that have taken up arms and refuse peaceful negotiations. Almost entangled in skirmishes between Assad's forces and radical Islamists, no voice has been given to Syrians and Kurds on any platform to date.

Syria does not want to go the route of Afghanistan, Iraq and Egypt with a new constitution based on Sharia. In order to represent all sectors of Syrian society, the representation and participation of Syrians, Kurds and other religious and ethnic minorities must be increased. The Syriac and Kurdish people have great expectations of the United Nations, United States of America, Russian Federation, European Union countries and all democratic societies to demonstrate solidarity and cooperation on behalf of this basic human right.



“Without achieving the full rights of all the minorities of Syria, no new Syria will emerge and no political actor will win.”

Bassam Ishak, president of the Syriac National Council of Syria.



Recommendations and demands

We ask for your support, solidarity and cooperation at this critical moment by joining us in endorsing the following recommendations and by urging your governments to do so as well

The **Syriac National Council of Syria** in alliance with the **Syrian Kurdish Supreme Council** represents up to 5 million Syrian citizens who comprise up to 20% of Syria's population is urging the international community;

- to allow participation of a delegation representing the Syriac and Kurdish community at the ongoing 'Geneva Conferences' about the future of Syria, and;
- to incorporate the following recommendations and demands at the negotiations.

Recommendations and demands:

1. Insist that duly elected representatives of the Syriac & Kurdish people are invited to participate in any negotiated political settlement regarding the Syrian question (including the Geneva II Conference), guaranteeing the legitimate rights of the Syriac & Kurdish people in accordance with international legal norms.
2. Guarantee that the Syriac & Kurdish people, along with other Syrian ethnic and religious minorities, receive the universal protections described in international treaties and conventions (Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Convention on Rights of the Child; etc.) pending any resolution of the conflict whether living inside or outside Syria.
3. Provide the necessary means and assistance to Arabs, Syriacs, Kurds and other minorities to advance and ensure their development.
4. Urgently seek an immediate cease-fire in Syria by all belligerents and exclude all groups that refuse to participate in or violate the cease-fire (including the existing government) from participation in the peace process.
5. Ensure that any peace treaty includes an ironclad commitment by all participants to a new and democratic constitution for Syria.
6. Draft a new and democratic constitution in Syria which enshrines the rights of all minorities, consistent with a democratic system of government, including a balance of powers, a decentralized political structure (giving ethnic groups an active role in regional government) and mechanisms for accountability of governments to the governed.
7. The new Syrian constitution should guarantee individual rights consistent with international standards (free speech, freedom of thought and belief, equality before the law regardless of race, religion, sex, or political beliefs).
8. There should be a new election law providing for political representation of all ethnic and religious groups, the free formation of new political parties and free and fair elections within a reasonable period, in which new political parties can freely and properly organize themselves and their supporters.



9. Replace or renovate existing governmental structures so that all relevant laws, regulations, codes and administrative principles not only adhere to the new constitution and international standards but are upheld and promoted by all holders of public office.
10. Provide amnesty for political detainees and create means for refugees to return to the country in an orderly fashion, compensating or assisting those who have suffered severe losses of property, family members or disabling injuries.
11. Establish a system of justice, with international oversight, to provide punishment, compensation, and restorative justice on behalf of those who suffered from war crimes and crimes against humanity.
12. Provide the necessary means and assistance to all Syrians to reclaim their damaged, destroyed or confiscated property and to rebuild the national infrastructure.

January 23, 2014



Partners

The **Syriac National Council of Syria** (SNCS) and the **Syrian Kurdish Supreme Council** partner with the following entities within Syria:

Syriac Union Party of Syria
Syriac Cultural Association in Syria
Civil Society in Syria
Syriac Women Union of Syria
Syriac Youth Union of Syria
Syriac Red Cross
Universal Syriac Union Party Lebanon
Bethnahrin Women Union Europe
Syriac Movement
European Syriac Union
Suryoyo (Syriac) American Association
Arab National Body
Arab National Mass
National Coordination Body for Democratic Change
Democratic Union Party in Al-Hassaka and Aleppo
Democratic Society Movement in Al-Hassaka
Kurdistan Democratic Party in Aleppo and Al-Hassaka
Kurdistan Democratic Progressive Party in Al-Hassaka
Kurdish Left Party
Liberal Party of Kurdistan
Akhti Association for Culture
Kurds Student Union
Kurdish Students Confederation
Revolutionary Youth Movement
Kurdish Spring Committees
University Students Organization in Aleppo and Damascus
Michael House for people with special needs in Damascus
Al-Hesen Cooperative Association in Homs
Women's Star Union
Syrian Women's Initiative 'founders'
Sara Organization for Combating Violence against Women



The organizations in the
Democratic self-management Arab National Body:

Arab Socialist Movement
 Kurdish Leftist Party
 Kurdistan Democratic Party
 The leftist Kurdish Democratic Party
 Kurdistan National Democratic Assembly
 Peace and Democracy Party
 Communist Labor Party
 Liberal Party of Kurdistan
 Syrian National Mass
 Kurdish Democratic Party
 Women's Star Union
 Syrian Women's Initiative
 Organization of Women Jurists in Western Kurdistan
 Kurdistan Communist Party
 Democratic Society Movement
 Kurdish Upper Body
 Roj-Ava Center for Strategic Studies
 Kurdish Students Confederation
 The Movement of the Young Woman
 Revolutionary Youth Movement
 The National Civil Peace Body
 Democratic Union Party
 Shorash Women's Organization
 Civil Society Organization to build a state
 Sara Organization to combat violence against women
 Youth Caucus Syria Independent
 Kurdish clan gathering
 Kurdistan Green Party
 Student Affairs Organization
 Federation of Syriac academics
 Syriac Progressive Youth Union
 Syriac Union Party
 Syriac Cultural Association in Syria
 Syriac Women's Union
 Independent