

“Implementing Syria’s Cessation of Hostilities: Syria’s Opposition Speaks”
Arria Formula Meeting hosted by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland and France
Monday 12 March 2018
Conference Room 3
14.30-16.30pm

Objective

To draw attention to the urgent need for full implementation of Security Council resolution 2401 and the ongoing siege in Eastern Ghouta through an informal dialogue with members of the Syrian opposition and civilians on the ground.

Background

On 24 February, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2401, calling for a nationwide cessation of hostilities without delay. Despite this resolution, however, the cessation of hostilities has not been implemented. Violence continues throughout Syria and there has been an escalation of fighting. Notably Eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus with a population of approximately 400,000 people, remains under siege. In recent days, more than 100 civilians have been killed across Syria, hospitals and medical facilities have been bombed and allegations of chemical weapons attacks have surfaced.

The widespread violations of UN Security Council resolution 2401 threaten not only the lives of Syrian civilians but also efforts to achieve a political solution. As the UN Special Envoy made clear during his briefing to the Council on 14 February, “What we are seeing in Syria today not only imperils de-escalation agreements and regional stability – it also undermines the efforts for a political solution.” If the UN-led process is to have a chance at success, it is imperative that the violence stop and the cessation of hostilities take hold.

This Arria event will bring together members of the Syrian opposition who are working not only to end the violence in Syria, but also to achieve a credible political process that meets the aims and expectations of the Syrian people. In addition, the event will include an eye-witness account from a civilian on the ground inside besieged Eastern Ghouta, to expose the harrowing reality of life under siege. Syrian opposition panelists will discuss the ongoing obstacles to full implementation of UNSCR 2401 and present constructive solutions for how to make progress on implementation of 2401 and how to put the UN-led political process back on track.

Proposed Speakers

Hadi al Bahra, Syrian Negotiation Commission (SNC)
Fadwa Mahmoud, Syrian Negotiation Commission (SNC) - *tbc*
Resident of Eastern Ghouta (via VTC)

Media

This event will be open to the press and attendees and others will join the conversation using the social media hashtag #WithGhouta