

Dear President Putin and President Obama,

Cc: Lakhdar Brahimi, Joint LAS-UN Special Envoy to Syria

As established Arab Civil Society organisations from across the Middle East, we are seriously concerned regarding the situation in Syria, which is worsening day by day. **We call on the international community to put differences aside, to reach a consensus and develop a credible and inclusive negotiated settlement for Syria as a matter of extreme urgency.**

The Syrian crisis is now threatening to destabilise the whole of the Middle East region, and not just Syria. If the fighting continues, by the end of the year the numbers of affected populations could reach 13 or 14 million. A quarter of this number would be in Lebanon, Jordan and other countries where Syria's crisis threatens their peace and development.

Taking effective and concrete measures now to find a political solution **to stop the bloodshed** could help secure a peaceful Syria today and peaceful region tomorrow. Therefore, we urge the international community - particularly **the US and Russia** - to use its influence **to encourage all parties to the conflict to come to the table to achieve a just and sustainable peace** for all Syrians. This should include:

1. **Calling for an immediate ceasefire.** The Government of Syria and all opposition groups should immediately agree a ceasefire with **clear objectives** to prevent violence against civilians and humanitarian workers; allow people to receive humanitarian assistance; and remove restrictions of movement on civilians and civilian goods. **This could build on and support the ceasefires which are presently being negotiated by local communities.** An immediate ceasefire is a condition for peace, and is the most effective way in preventing further escalation and human suffering on the ground.
2. Calling on all parties to ensure that **Geneva II/ Peace Talks are made reality**; this conference is an essential starting point for negotiations towards a political solution. A vision for Syria and a plan of implementation must be prioritised as outcomes of this meeting, and adapted as a road map for the future.
3. Ensuring that there is **a mechanism for peace that is transparent and inclusive. This should form the basis of a political process** that adequately represents men and women from all of Syria's diverse communities, including non-military, civil society voices. This is the key to building a peace in which all Syrians have a stake.

The international community has a responsibility to do its utmost to avoid further escalation of the conflict **and not take actions which undermine the push for peace.**

The window of opportunity is closing, the Syrian people have suffered much too long. As Arab voices we stand in solidarity with our suffering brothers and sisters in Syria. As Arab organisations, we urge the international community, specifically the US and Russia to demonstrate strong leadership now in order to bring peace to Syria, and to our whole region.

Yours Sincerely,

- **Arab Network for NGO Development (ANND) - Regional based in Lebanon (9 national networks members 32 National NGO and 12 Syrian partner organizations)**
- **Arab Coalition for Darfur (ACD) – Regional based in Cairo (134 members)**
- **The non-violence network – based in Lebanon (100 members)**
- **Arab Programme For Human Rights Activists (APHRA) – Regional based in Cairo.**
- **Middle East non Violence and Democracy Network (MENAPPAC) – based in Lebanon- across 17 countries.**
- **Tadamoun Council – Egyptian CSO, based in Cairo.**
- **Libyan Organisation for Human Rights- Libyan, based in Tripoli.**
- **Shams Centre- OPT, based in Ramallah**
- **Confederation of Civil Society organisation- Sudan**
- **Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARRD) – Jordan, based in Amman.**
- **Civil rights Observation Centre – Sudan.**
- **Arms Control Campaign – MENA Region – based in Lebanon**
- **Permanent Peace Movement (PPM)- Lebanon.**
- **Etana Relief organisation- Syrian- based in Lebanon.**
- **The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), based in Cairo.**
- **The Arab Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), Regional, Based in Cairo**
- **The Syrian Non-Violent Movement, Syrian, based in London.**