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SYRIAN EXPERT HOUSE DELEGATION MEETS WITH FRENCH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ambassador Chevallier and Senior French Officials Briefed By Syrian Expert House

Washington, DC – On March 28, 2014, [Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies](#) (SCPSS) Executive Director Dr. Radwan Ziadeh and a delegation from the Syrian Expert House were invited to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris, France to give a presentation on [Syria Transition Roadmap](#), a document recently published by SCPSS and the [Syrian Expert House](#) detailing the Syrian opposition's vision of the democratic transition in Syria.

The Syrian Expert House delegation included Badr Jamous, Secretary General of the Syrian National Coalition and a member of the Syrian Expert House, Monzer Makhous, Syrian National Coalition Representative to France, Ekhlas Badawi, a former member of the Syrian parliament and member of the Syrian Expert House, and Rania Kisar, a Syrian activist and founder of the Women's Revolution Committee.

The delegation outlined key aspects of [Syria Transition Roadmap](#) for Ambassador Eric Chevallier, and a number of other high-level officials in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The briefing included an outline of plans for the immediate implementation of the report's recommendations in liberated Syria, particularly with regard to rule of law and transitional justice. Badr Jamous detailed the Syrian Interim Government's plans to expand its provision of services to civilians in need in the liberated areas, noting the National Coalition's success in restoring electricity and telecommunications to the town of Azaz in northern Syria. However, Secretary General Jamous also stressed the dire security situation in the liberated areas, pointing to the serious threat posed by the extremist group the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Former MP Badawi described the role of women in the development of *Syria Transition Roadmap* and the role of women in the Syrian revolution, underlining the point that women should not be treated solely as victims – they will in fact be critical leaders of future Syria. Rania Kisar gave an update on events from the ground, describing the great necessity for planning on the transition, particularly with regard to addressing the devastating humanitarian catastrophe and providing for the needs of displaced Syrian civilians. The Syrian Expert House delegation repeatedly made clear that the top priority for the international community should be to stop the killing of Syrian civilians caused by the Syrian government's extensive and indiscriminate use of its air force. With the Free Syrian Army currently engaged in conflict on two fronts (against both the Syrian government and extremist terrorist groups), only strong leadership from the international community will bring a hasty end to Syria's humanitarian tragedy.

Finally, Dr. Ziadeh, who was appointed last fall as President of the Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice by the opposition Syrian Interim Government, outlined for the ministry his plans for initiating a comprehensive Syrian transitional justice program, including means for ensuring accountability. Dr. Ziadeh noted that, although there remains little chance of referring Syrian criminals to the International Criminal Court due to the Russian and Chinese vetoes on the UN Security Council, pursuing justice

should be a complementary process, in which accountability is sought on both an international and national level.

Ambassador Eric Chevallier praised [Syria Transition Roadmap](#) for its wide base of support and the inclusive process by which it was developed, also noting the importance of having a vision of the future for informing action in the present. Additionally, the Ambassador stressed that the French government fully supports the premise that a Syrian-led transitional justice process will be key for ensuring that perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity are held to account.

While in Paris, the Syrian Expert House delegation also participated in a number of events. On March 27, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network hosted the Syrian Expert House delegation for a meeting with Paris-based non-governmental organizations engaged in human rights. The informal discussion covered a wide variety of topics in addition to *Syria Transition Roadmap*, including transitional justice and the creation of a Syrian Special Court, Syria's upcoming sham presidential elections, the role of women in the Syrian opposition, and support for media and civil society organizations during the democratic transition in Syria. The Syrian delegation then met with the president and members of the board of directors of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), discussing prospects for a political solution to the Syria conflict, as well as the Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice and its plans for establishing a Syrian Special Court.

On March 28, the Syrian Expert House delegation held an event at the Arab World Institute in which it introduced *Syria Transition Roadmap* to journalists and interested members of the public. After a detailed presentation on the Roadmap, means for the implementation of its recommendations, and a general overview of the current situation on the ground in Syria, the delegation and attendees discussed security and rule of law during the democratic transition and the role of women in Syria's political future.

[Syria Transition Roadmap](#) is the result of a year-long consensus-building research process conducted by the Syrian Expert House, a group of approximately 300 Syrian human rights activists, academics, judges, lawyers, leaders of the political opposition, defected government officials, defected military officers, members of local revolutionary councils, and commanders of the armed opposition.

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