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SYRIAN EXPERT HOUSE DELEGATION MEETS WITH DEPUTY MINISTER BOGDANOV

Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Briefed on *Syria Transition Roadmap*

Washington, DC – On April 16, 2014, [Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies](#) (SCPSS) Executive Director Dr. Radwan Ziadeh and a delegation from the [Syrian Expert House](#) met with [Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mikhail Bogdanov](#) and other representatives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Syrian Expert House Delegation included:

Dr. Radwan Ziadeh - Executive Director of the [Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies](#), President of the [Syrian Commission for Transitional Justice](#)

Dr. Osama Kadi – President, [Syrian Center for Political and Strategic Studies](#); Head, [Assistance Coordination Unit](#)

Dr. Monzer Makhous – Representative in Paris, [National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces](#)

Dr. Mahmoud al-Hamza – Chairman of the National Council of the [Damascus Declaration](#) Abroad

In the meeting, the delegation gave 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 political transition in Syria. The Roadmap covers constitutional reform and rule of law, political and administrative reform, electoral reform and political parties law, security sector reform, economic reform, and transitional justice and national reconciliation. The delegation highlighted the Syrian Expert House's recommendations on electoral reform, explaining that future elections should be conducted in small districts and be based on a system of proportional representation. In addition, Dr Ziadeh stressed the necessity of reforming the security forces and dividing them into two branches: the national security forces and military intelligence.

Deputy Minister Bogdanov expressed appreciation for the usefulness of [Syria Transition Roadmap](#)'s as a vision for the future of Syria, and declared, "This is a very important document and we shall read it thoroughly."

Deputy Minister Bogdanov raised the importance of finding a political solution and conducting dialogue in order to stop the violence and the killings. Deputy Minister Bogdanov also focused on the threat of terrorism caused by Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and other al-Qaida militias. Bogdanov also implied that Russia is not necessarily invested in maintaining Bashar al-

Assad personally as president of Syria. According to Bogdanov, Syrians themselves should decide Bashar al-Assad's fate.

In response, the Syrian Expert House delegation described and explained the numerous links between the terrorist organizations the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) and the Syrian government, illustrating to the Russian officials that the Syrian government is not a viable partner for Russian counter-terrorism efforts.

Dr. Osama Kadi highlighted the ongoing and unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in Syria and urged Russians policy makers and officials to support the creation of humanitarian corridors that could provide aid to the ever-growing number of desperate Syrians. The delegation called on the Russian government to exert more pressure on the Syrian regime to grant additional humanitarian access to the besieged cities of Syria.

Dr. Mounzer Makhous gave an analysis of the ongoing geopolitical chess match in Syria and pointed out Russia's inability to successfully pressure during the Geneva II negotiations. In fact, according to Joint Special Envoy to Syria Lakhdar Brahimi, the Syrian government delegation was responsible for the failure of the conference.

Dr. Mahmoud al-Hamza, clarified that progress towards a political solution will be impossible as long as the regime continues to drop barrel bombs indiscriminately against civilians. Dr. al-Hamza urged the Russians to pressure the Syrian regime to stop its use of barrel bombs as soon as possible.

While in Moscow, the Syrian Expert House delegation also met with US Chargé D'affaires Sheila Gwaltney at the American Embassy, Vitaly Naumkin, Director of the [Institute of Oriental Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences](#), representatives from the Institute for [US and Canadian Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences](#), and Dmitri Trenin, director of the [Moscow Center of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#).

Additionally, on April 17, the Syrian Expert House delegation participated in a public event on [Syria Transition Roadmap](#) hosted by the Carnegie Endowment's Moscow Center. At the event, attendees also [viewed a documentary on the indiscriminate shelling of civilians in Darayya, Syria](#).

[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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