



Russia Supports the Inclusion of Syrian Kurds in Talks to Resolve Syria Conflict

OE Watch Commentary: On August 31, the Russian Foreign Ministry hosted two delegations from Syria. One was the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), a political wing of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the other was the People's Will Party (PWP), a pro-Moscow Syrian party. The delegations signed a joint memorandum to include Syrian Kurds in the discussions to find a political solution for the Syrian conflict. Russia has been looking into integrating Syrian Kurds into the political process and improving their ties with the al-Assad regime. Pictures of İlham Ahmed, the co-President of the SDC, next to Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov angered Turkish officials. Some reports have speculated that these talks were part of Russian efforts to include the SDC in the ongoing UN-facilitated talks between the Syrian opposition and the regime. The accompanying articles from Kurdish sources provide insight into the SDC delegation's visit to Moscow.

The first article analyzes the joint memorandum signed by the SDC and PWD with Russian mediation. According to the article, Russia seems to be pushing for the Kurds to be included in the Geneva peace process and this memorandum might be the first step in that direction. The article states that the memorandum pointed out the role the SDF played in the war against terrorism and stressed that the SDF should be incorporated into the Syrian Army. The memorandum includes five major points for a political solution in Syria. The first point focuses on equal citizenship for all peoples of Syria including Arabs, Kurds, Assyrians, Syriacs, Armenians, Turkmen and Circassians. The second point states that a political solution is the only way to solve the Syrian conflict. The third point emphasizes the need to find a democratic solution to the Kurdish issue. The fourth point presents the Kurdish autonomous region in Syria as a model for the future of Syria and the need to benefit from the experience of this region. The final point addresses the role of the SDF and the Syrian army in the future of Syria.

The second article reports the statements made by SDC Executive Committee Vice Chairman Hikmet Hebîb who was in the delegation. As Hebîb stated, the Russian Foreign Ministry indicated that without the participation of the SDC, finding a political solution in Syria might not be possible. According to Hebîb, during the meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov stated that it is the SDC's right to join efforts such as the

Astana and Geneva peace processes to find a political solution to the Syrian conflict. Additionally, as the article portrays, Turkish military activities in Syria were among the issues the parties discussed with Russian officials. Russia hosting the Kurdish delegation on the same day when a Turkish delegation was in Moscow led to speculations, whether this was a message to Turkey, which considers the Syrian Kurdish groups controlling the self-declared autonomous region in Syria to be terrorists, or whether this was another Russian effort to drive a wedge between Syrian Kurds and the United States by brokering a deal between the Kurds and al-Assad's regime. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gündüz)**



Seal of the Syrian Democratic Council.

Source: Syrian Democratic Council, public domain; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Seal_of_MSD.png



Ilham Ahmed in Tabqa.

Source: Voice of America via Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ilham_Ahmed_in_Tabqa.jpg, CC-PD-Mark | PD VOA

“The [Russian Foreign] Ministry will support the participation of representatives of North and East Syria in the upcoming political process...”



Continued: Russia Supports the Inclusion of Syrian Kurds in Talks to Resolve Syria Conflict

Source: “Rojava heyeti’nin Moskova’da imzaladığı müzakerenin ayrıntıları (Details of the negotiation signed by the Rojava delegation in Moscow)” Rudaw, 1 September 2020. <https://www.rudaw.net/turkish/middleeast/syria/010920201>

For the first time [Russia] officially invited a delegation from the Rojava Autonomous Administration [to Moscow]. In addition to İlham Ahmed, DSM Deputy Co-chair Hikmet Habib, Syriac Union Party President Sanherib Barsoum and DSM Egypt Representative Sihanok Dibo were also present in the Rojava delegation.

İlham Ahmed in a statement said, “In fact, there were always meetings, but this is the first time it has been official... We must see this as a very important step... [and] an intention to solve [the Kurdish issue].

1. The new Syria is a united Syria with its land and people. It is a democratic state that achieves equal citizenship and social justice, it is proud of all of its peoples (Arabs, Assyrians, Syriacs, Kurds, Armenians, Turkmen, Circassians).

2. The political solution is the only way out of the Syrian crisis... In this context, the two parties support and work to fully implement [UN Security Council] Resolution 2254, including the implementation of the Geneva Declaration and inclusion of other opposition platforms in the Syrian political process, including the Syrian Democratic Council, as this resolution is a tool to enforce the right of the Syrian people to regain Syrian sovereignty, and work to end...all occupations and forms of external intervention... leading to departure of all foreign forces from Syrian territory.

3. Affirm Syria’s diversity, and commitment to finding a just, democratic solution to the Kurdish issue in Syria in accordance with international covenants and the constitutional recognition of their rights ... within Syria’s unity and territorial sovereignty.

4. The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria is a necessity... It is important to benefit from the experience of the Autonomous Administration...

5. The Syrian army is a national institution in which carrying of weapons is limited and does not interfere with politics. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which have seriously contributed to the war on terror and are still working to promote coexistence should be involved within this institution...

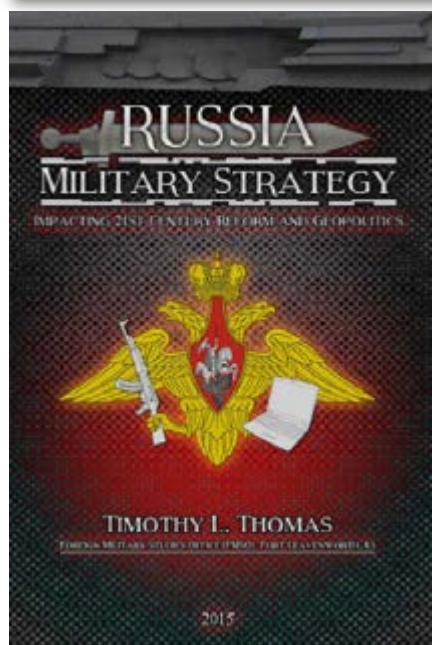
Source: “MSD’ê encamên civîna bi Wezareta Karê Derve ya Rûsyayê re eşkere kir (SDC announced results of the meeting with Russian Foreign Ministry)” Hawar News Agency, 31 August 2020. <https://www.hawarnews.com/kr/haber/msd-encamn-civna-bi-wezareta-kar-derve-ya-rsyay-re-eskere-kir-h35508.html>

After signing a protocol with the People’s Will Party on a political solution in Syria, the SDC’s delegation met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow.

Giving information about the details of the meeting, SDC Executive Committee Vice Chairman Hikmet Hebîb said, “We discussed the political situation and projects with the Russian Foreign Minister according to the UNSC’s resolution 2254.

The [Russian Foreign] Ministry will support the participation of representatives of North and East Syria in the upcoming political process...

In his assessment of the meeting, Hebîb said, “We understood that during the meeting, the Ministry is of the opinion that the political solution in Syria will not be possible without the participation of the peoples, especially the Autonomous Administration and SDC. During the meeting, Lavrov said that participation in the political process regarding finding a solution in Syria is the right of the SDC and that meetings on Syria such as Astana and Geneva will be incomplete if the SDC does not participate.”



RUSSIA MILITARY STRATEGY: IMPACTING 21ST CENTURY REFORM AND GEOPOLITICS by TIMOTHY L. THOMAS

Russian military’s main tasks are to maintain the combat readiness of the Armed Forces and to ensure the Russian Federation’s defensive capability. Russia’s military heritage will assist this process tremendously. Combat readiness includes updated strategic thought, new equipment revelations, and future-war projections. Defensive capability includes not just protecting Russia’s territory, but also the security of the nation’s national interests and conduct of geopolitics. Capturing the essence of these developments is the goal of this book. In the process a few templates for understanding Russian military thought and actions are offered for further consideration and use.

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