

## POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE 3<sup>rd</sup> SESSION OF THE FORUM FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

The following document, which was adopted on 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2014, represents the official position of Russian Federation on *Syrian civil war*. With regard to this document, Russian Federation would like to express its gratitude that Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century recognized Russia as one of the major countries of the world and a key player in the field of international politics, capable of presenting the community with constructive and peacekeeping solutions to global issues. Russia welcomes this initiative, while it believes, such multilateral platform is the only relevant mean of resolving such conflict while respecting international law and human rights.

At the end of the year 2010, the world was presented with the new and ever growing phenomenon of revolutionary wave of protests, riots, civil wars and political upheavals that erupted across the Arab world, now commonly known as Arab Spring. Soon after, popular demonstrations emerged in Syria, seeking the resignation of president Bashar al-Assad, and clashes between the Syrian army and rebel groups followed.

Russia has historically strong, stable and friendly bilateral relations with Syria, which can be partially described as post-Soviet-era heritage and decades-long legacy of Russia's cultural, political and economic ties within the region. With regard to its vital role in forming the region's post-Soviet-era development, Russia is closely monitoring the situation in Syria and its neighbouring countries since the very beginning of the *crisis* and is maintaining its principal position in relation to *Syrian civil war*.

While Russia declares its central role in resolving the *Syrian civil war* issue, the country strongly supports the existence of The Forum for 21<sup>st</sup> century, which stands as an alternative platform in multilateral approach in the international politics. Russia believes the *crisis* no more belongs to regional agenda, but has grown into the global security challenge. Russia emphasizes the importance of resolving the issue by unanimous agreement by all relevant parties involved, while only such unifying collective engagement strengthens the legal framework for relations between states. With respect to "The Forum" and Russia's own values and beliefs, any unilateral action serving political interests of certain states is unacceptable and must be condemned.

With regard to Forum's agenda, Russia suggests and recommends following:

1. *"The hostilities are required to stop."* Since its beginning, the *Syrian civil war* has killed more than 100 000 and forced more than 2 million to flee their country. Russia is prepared to undertake any necessary action to suppress any forces in order to stop killings and sufferings, which paralysed the country and are threatening the lives of millions. At this point, Russia declares that any intervention in Syria, as a sovereign country of the world must be of unanimous agreement by member states of "The Forum". Russia recognizes current Syrian government and president Bashar al-Assad as the only legitimate representatives of Syria. *However, Russia is prepared to manage an open dialogue with the Opposition, which must be united in the role of its representatives and its peace-keeping agenda.* Thus Russia condemns cooperation and support to any other non-government bodies, paramilitary or rebel forces.

2. *"The end of hostilities is to be assured with a weapon embargo."* As a signature state of Geneva Protocol 1925, Biological Weapons Convention 1975 and Chemical Weapons Convention 1997, Russia strongly condemns any use of chemical weapons against civil population. Russia is prepared to give its full support and expert level assistance in effort of dismantling Syria's entire chemical weapons stockpile and disabling all chemical weapons production equipment in the country. However, this applies not only, but principally to chemical weapons embargo. Russia is committed to fulfil all its military contracts, which are still effective and were signed with the legal Syrian government. *Russia's main goal in the Syrian civil war issue is to promote peace and security. However, this goal cannot be achieved without the presence of effective and equipped army. Since Syria is by any means still a sovereign state, Russia has no other choice then to consider Syrian army as the only legitimate and effective force in effort of reinstalling peace and security.*
3. *"Free and equal elections shall decide the future of the country"* As a major democratic country of the world, Russia stands for all its democratic values and ideals. At the same time, Russia believes its own history and political record has shown and presented the international community with proofs, that democratization and introduction of such principles is a precarious issue, that has to be conducted as a common will and with utmost transparency, sensitivity and most importantly, democratically.
4. *"Armament-sector inspections must be allowed."* Russia is prepared to take part in any effort of installing an *effective peace and security* in Syria. While it is not confident and convinced about the positive impact of such inspections, their mission, methods and overall impact, since it declared a *proactive and co-operational approach* within the Forum, it will take part in such undertaking, but only after an unanimous agreement.
5. *"Humanitarian aid must be given."* As a *major economic power of the world*, Russia is prepared to dedicate necessary financial resources to improve the condition of civil population and refugees around the world, while bearing fair cost of any multilateral intervention in the country. Russia supports all humanitarian operations in Syria in order to improve the living environment of struggling population of this *civil-war-thorn country*. With respect to principles of international law and Syria, as a sovereign country of the world, any humanitarian action must be conducted in cooperation with the legitimate government of Syria and must intent to benefit the civilians, not rebel, military and paramilitary groups.
6. *"A memorandum must be signed"* Russia supports such efforts, while it believes; unanimous agreement is the only legitimate and necessary mean of resolving global security challenges within the international community.

Russia affirms its support to The Forum for 21<sup>st</sup> century, while it believes such multilateral platform is the only legitimate approach of solving this crisis and alike. Russia expresses the hope, all fellow member states will cooperate with effort to solve the crisis, while recognizing the very existence of norms of international law.

Representatives of Russian delegation