

13/10/2013
BRATISLAVA

The Syrian civil war is an armed conflict between the government forces and various factions of opposition forces seeking resignation of the president Bashar al-Assad and his regime backed by Baath party. The conflict is considered to be a part of the so-called Arab Spring revolutionary wave in the Arab world. First bigger demonstrations erupted in March 2011 and have grown into armed struggle since mid-2011. By mid-July 2012, fighting had spread all over the country including the capital Damascus. Heavies and artillery were used against the revolting towns and cities inflicting heavy material losses. Since the very beginning the armed insurgency has fundamentally affected the lives of civil population with more than 120 000 reported dead. However, there is a massive evidence of tortures, executions and abuse of human rights on the both sides of the conflict, notably used by government forces as the mean of resistance suppression. What is more, in August 2013 chemical weapons were used against the civil population, what has caused a grooving concern in the global politics triggering a dispute about military intervention without UN SC approval.

The Syrian conflict has been dividing international community since its beginning, what has been preventing the international community to agree on an effective solution for the country and its population suffering by months of armed conflict.

The Syrian political system had been suppressing the political opposition and has established a dictatorship of the one man. Although the system was relaxed in 2012 by the change of constitution and a new multi-party parliament was elected, the Baath party has sustained its leading position. The rule of the Baath party resembling the pattern established by many other countries in region before 2010 has been favoring secularism with little or no tolerance to religious fundamentalism.

On the other side of the conflict, the umbrella organization of the movement - The Free Syrian Army still lacks a unified command and fails in terms of legitimacy. There are several inconsistent military groups fighting rather under their own banner than under the common banner of opposition. There are even conflicts and fighting inside the rebel movement among various leaders and their followers.

Syria is an ethnically mixed territory with majority of Arab Sunnis counting for approximately 60 % of the population. However, the ruling elite, most of military officers and high-positioned state employees are Alewives that claim a 12 % share of population. There are also Christians and Kurds, each of the group representing 9 % of population. Even though Syrian officials keep to assure that there is no sectarian conflict in the society, all mentioned elements might cause a serious tension among various ethnic groups and are likely to cause an another conflict in the future.

In March, April and August, there were reports by Syrian opposition accusing the government of using the chemical weapons against the civilian population. The most massive attack took place on 21 August 2013 in Ghouta region, where sarin killed 635 people. The findings of the following UN investigation were used as a basis for the debate about the international intervention, however the UN Security Council did not approve such action. On 14 September, the Syrian government accepted to put its chemical weapon under international control.

In good faith to put an end to the humanitarian crisis in Syria

delegates from the **European Union, Federative Republic of Brazil, League of Arab states People's Republic of China, Russian Federation,** and the **United States of America** gathered together within the **Forum for the 21st Century** to find an adequate solution in compliance with international law. The result of this conference shall be thus the preparation and final approval of resolution binding the international community to act.

Considering the alarming situation in Syria

the international community identifies the acute need to find a common ground in order to stop the violence and put an end to the ongoing conflict. The majority of the delegates acknowledged the exigence to support conditions allowing the peace negotiations between the Syrian government and the opposition forces. However, an accord regarding the rightfulness of the current Syrian government led by President Assad will be the subject of the further proceedings.

The Forum for the 21st century must therefore still reach an agreement in the following points:

- Position of the Syrian government in such negotiation
- Composition of the delegation representing the opposition forces
- Set a framework for the negotiation - identify the key proposals, that might be acceptable for both parties
- Means of enforcement of the agreement and monitoring of the negotiated commitments

The last mentioned point - means of enforcement of the agreement and monitoring of the negotiated commitments - is crucial for the restoration of peace in the country, as the both sides and their supporters are affected by mutual mistrust that might result in further escalation of the tension event after the potential agreement is reached. The stability risks in the country affected by the civil war were identified by some of the delegations. A further proceeding in this direction would be then favorable. For the success of such a delicate action, a mission under the guidance UN SC might be the most transparent and favorable setting in compliance with international law.

It is necessary to make provision for the fact

that the Syrian Government has been using lethal force towards its own people, while opposition is not likely to secure the peace in the country for the future. The opposition forces have no unified command and most of the groups are not seeking the goal to build an equal society with the rule of representative democracy. What is more, none of the groups has enough power to seize an effective control over the whole country and guarantee the security for the Syrian people. It is our task to find an effective solution that might reestablish the rule of law after the agreement is achieved.

With respect to the current situation,

Forum for the 21st Century does not favor any division of the country, as that might be a destabilizing element for the whole region. However, a single ethnical, national or religious group must not be privileged and all ethnical, national or religious group must be guaranteed the same treatment and equal rights. To achieve this, a democratic rule must be established with no discriminatory elements based on any religious or traditional legal systems. This might be a serious problem regarding the number of extreme Islamic groups in the opposition forces. The resolution must find a common solution acceptable for the most of the Syrian society with consideration of the local cultural and religious specifications.

Feeling solidarity with the Syrian people

Forum for the 21st Century embraced the position to support a war-torn country with all the possible means, including humanitarian assistance. To prevent the misuse of such aid, it shall not be distributed to the government or opposition forces. An independent channel of distribution being able to fulfill that task shall be found.

Regarding the need to establish the sustainable peace in Syria

all these points mentioned shall be the subject of further discussion within the Forum of the 21st Century. The **European Union, Federative Republic of Brazil, League of Arab states People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, and the United States of America** kindly approve to accept such a heavy burden of responsibility, showing good will to avoid a mutual confrontation and focus all above on the interest of the Syrian people.

Michal Klacik

Chair of the Global Security Issues Section

Peter Levdansky

Deputy Chair of the Global Security Issues Section