**Joint Statement by Representatives of Iran, Russia and Türkiye
on Outcomes of the 21st International Meeting on Syria
in the Astana Format**

**(Astana, 24-25 January 2024)**

The representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Türkiye as guarantor countries of the Astana Format:

1. Examined the latest international and regional developments and emphasized the leading role of the Astana Process in promoting the lasting settlement of the Syrian crisis.

2. Acknowledged the negative impact of the escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. Underlined the importance of preventing the armed confrontation area from expanding and other states of the region from being dragged into the confrontation**.**

Expressed deep concern over the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and stressed the need to end Israeli brutal onslaught against the Palestinians and send humanitarian aid to Gaza.Called for the implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution A/ES/-10/L.27 (2023) demanding an immediate ceasefire and compliance by all parties with their obligations under international law.

3. Reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic as well as to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and highlighted that these principles should be universally respected and complied with.

4. Emphasized the importance of continuation of efforts for the restoration of relations between Türkiye and Syria on the basis of mutual respect, goodwill and good-neighborly relations in order to combat terrorism, create proper conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of Syrians with the involvement of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), revitalize the political process and ensure the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid to all Syrians. Welcomed the efforts of the Astana format guarantors to this end within the framework of quadrilateral format.

5. Expressed their determination to continue working together to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stand against separatist agendas aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and threatening the national security of the neighboring countries, including through cross-border attacks and infiltrations. Condemned activities of terrorist groups and their affiliates operating under different names in various parts of Syria, including attacks targeting civilian facilities that cause civilian casualties. Highlighted the need to fully implement all arrangements related to the north of Syria.

6. Reviewed in detail the situation in the Idlib de-escalation area and underscored the necessity to maintain calm on the ground by fully implementing all agreements on Idlib. Expressed their serious concern over the presence and activities of terrorist groups that pose threat to civilians inside and outside the Idlib de-escalation area. Agreed to make further efforts to ensure sustainable normalization of the situation in and around the Idlib de-escalation area, including the humanitarian situation.

7. Discussed the situation in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic and agreed that constant security and stability in this region can only be achieved on the basis of preserving the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Rejected all attempts to create new realities on the ground, including illegitimate self-rule initiatives under the pretext of combating terrorism. Reaffirmed their determination to confront separatist agendas that aim to undermine the unity of Syria and threaten the national security of neighboring countries, including through cross-border attacks and infiltration also from the west of the Euphrates.

Reiterated their opposition to the continued illegal seizure and transfer of oil resources that should belong to Syria. Denounced all unilateral sanctions that violate international law, international humanitarian law and UN Charter, including all selective measures and exemptions with the respect to specific areas in Syria that could lead the country to collapse by facilitating the separatist agenda.

Condemned the actions of countries supporting terrorism that undermines the unity of the Syrian state, including illegitimate self-rule initiatives in the north-east of Syria.

Expressed grave concern with all forms of oppression by the separatist groups against civilians in east of Euphrates which recently led to clashes with Arab tribes in the region, including forced conscription, suppression of peaceful demonstrations, and discriminatory practices in the field of education as well as restrictions placed on political activities, journalists, right to assembly and freedom of movement.

8. Condemned any efforts by any country to fuel terrorist and separatist aspirations of individual ethnic and faith groups of population, as well as provide them with weapons.

9. Condemned all Israeli military attacks in Syria. Considered these actions as a violation of international law, international humanitarian law, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, and recognized them as destabilizing and exacerbating tensions in the region and called for the ceasing of these attacks.

Reaffirmed the need to abide by universally recognized international legal decisions, including the provisions of the relevant UN resolutions rejecting the occupation of the Syrian Golan, first and foremost UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 497, especially that these Israeli decisions and actions in this regard are deemed null and void and of no legal effect.

10. Expressed their conviction that there could be no military solution in Syria and reaffirmed their commitment to advance a viable and lasting Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated political process in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

11. Underlined the important role of the Syrian Constitutional Committee, established with the decisive contribution of the guarantor countries of the Astana Format for the implementation of the decisions of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi, in promoting the political settlement in the Syrian Arab Republic. Called for an early resumption of its work and holding the 9th round of its Drafting Commission while ensuring the constructive approach by the Syrian parties. In this regard, reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the Committee's work through continued engagement with the Syrian parties to the Committee and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria Geir O. Pedersen as facilitator to ensure its sustainable and effective work.

Stressed the need for the Constitutional Committee to pursue its activities without any bureaucratic and logistical barriers. Urged to immediately ensure all the necessary conditions for the unimpeded work of the Committee.

Expressed their conviction that in its work the Constitutional Committee should abide by the Terms of Reference and the Core Rules of Procedure to enable it to carry out its mandate of preparing and drafting a constitutional reform.

12. Expressed serious concern over the humanitarian situation in Syria further aggravated by the consequences of the devastating earthquake on 6 February 2023.

13. Emphasized the importance of continuing and increasing humanitarian assistance to Syria in line with international law and UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182. Called for providing adequate donor funding for humanitarian assistance to all Syrians taking into account the increased risk of food insecurity stemming from the reduction in the assistance programs implemented by the WFP due to the budgetary restraints.

Took note of the decision by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to extend the authorization for UN humanitarian agencies to use border crossing point Bab al-Hawa with Türkiye from 13 January to 13 July 2024 to carry out cross-border operations to deliver aid to the civilian population in the north-western areas of the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as two border crossing points with Türkiye – Bab al-Salam and Al-Rai until 13 February 2024, in order to provide assistance to the areas affected by the earthquake of 6 February 2023; highlighted the importance of continuing uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance to all Syrians through all UN approved modalities including UN cross-border and cross-line aid to northwest of Syria.

Emphasized the need to remove barriers and increase humanitarian assistance to all Syrians throughout the country without discrimination, politicization, or preconditions.

14. In order to help improve the humanitarian situation in Syria and achieve progress in political settlement, called on the international community, the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies to increase their assistance to all Syrians through the implementation of the early recovery and resilience projects, including through the restoration of basic infrastructure assets – water and electricity supply facilities, sanitation, health, education, schools and hospitals as well as the humanitarian demining projects in line with international humanitarian law.

15. Stressed the need to facilitate the safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees and IDPs to their places of residence in Syria, and to ensure their right of return and right to be supported. Called on the international community to provide the necessary support to the Syrian refugeesand IDPs and reaffirmed their readiness to continue engaging with all relevant parties, including the Office of the UNHCR and other specialized international agencies. Noted the importance for continuation of work to create necessary conditions in Syria for voluntary and dignified return of Syrians.

16. Reiterated their determination to continue operations on the mutual release of detainees/abductees within the framework of the Working Group on the Release of Detainees/Abductees, the Handover of the Bodies and Identification of Missing Persons, which is a unique mechanism that has proved both necessary and effective in building confidence between the Syrian parties. Decided to intensify joint efforts to ensure the release of detainees/abductees. Agreed on the need to expand the activities of the Working Group by including the issues of the handover of bodies and establishment of identity of missing persons. Welcomed the aspiration to step up the activities within the Group.

17. Welcomed the participation of the delegations of Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon as observers of the Astana Format as well as representatives of the United Nations and the ICRC.

18. Expressed their sincere gratitude to the Kazakhstan authorities for holding the 21st International Meeting on Syria in Astana.

Emphasized the special role played by the Kazakhstan side as a country hosting the International Meetings on Syria, which had been an initiator of the Astana process and had always provided venue and hospitality to ensure the smooth functioning of this unique multilateral mechanism.

19. Noted the agreement to hold the next Summit in the Russian Federation as enshrined in the Joint Statement of the Tripartite Summit of 19 July 2022.

20. Agreed to convene the 22nd International Meeting on Syria in the second half of 2024 in Astana.