

# Syria Opposition Group: No to Ouster of Assad

March 29 (EIRNS)—A well-known Syrian opposition group has called for a U.S.-Russian summit meeting to take place as soon as possible to reach a solution in the Syrian civil war. In a statement posted on the website of the Syrian Civil Democratic Alliance (DCA), whose members visited the United States March 15-20, on the anniversary of the Syrian opposition's first actions, Haytham Manna, one of the leaders of the delegation, wrote:

“We realize that after two years of the revolution, Syria now experiences its most challenging existential test since the Syrian Conference that took place during the 1920s; and the difficult and complex situation is no longer a Syrian problem but rather a regional and international one that necessitates a U.S.A.-Russia summit that could produce an understanding based on the Geneva Declaration.”

During their visit, members of the Syrian DCA were in New York, meeting with members of the UN Security Council, and in Washington, D.C., meeting with Congressional offices and the State Department, to promote a peace plan that would implement the Geneva Agreement negotiated in early 2012. The group, which held a press conference at the National Press Club on March 19, is not only lobbying in the United States, but also in Russia, reported the online publication Truthout on March 27.

The Syrian Civil Democratic Alliance, a confederation of political parties, has been urging the United States and Russia to agree to encourage factions to negotiate an end to the fighting, *without* making President Bashar al-Assad's resignation a precondition, Truthout



*Haytham Manna*

said. In addition to Manna, the delegation was headed by Rim Turkmani, an astrophysicist at Imperial College London.

In a March 15 interview on Democracy Now!, Turkmani went through a history of the Syrian opposition being taken over by the violent fighters after March 2011, and emphasized that only a peaceful solution without arming the rebels can lead to peace.

“I see all these statements, you know, from France and Britain, and even the U.S., are very contradicting and saying that we want to arm the rebels; however, we want a political solution,” Turkmani said. “I mean, for me, a political solution means a peaceful solution. Peace can only be reached through peaceful ways, peaceful means, and can’t be used through fueling the violence. So, I don’t think their efforts will help in calming the situation or dropping the number of casualties in the country.”

## **The Non-Violent Opposition**

She also emphasized that the fighting in Syria has become a proxy war with outside forces arming the rebels. It’s more of a geopolitical struggle, really, over Syria than responding to the needs of the people. “I am a member of the opposition, as well. All my group, very active inside Syria, is in opposition, but it’s a nonviolent opposition. That is very clear in its aim to reach democracy. However, we don’t reach any—we don’t get any support. We are—*there’s systematic efforts to marginalize people like us inside Syria and focus only on the armed rebels. And they are the ones now who are stealing all the headlines.* Now, why? Because, yes, there are certain actors, regional and international, who see this as proxy wars, and it’s an opportunity to fight their international opponents. It’s a struggle over Syria, over power, and the Syrians are falling victims to that” (emphasis added).

The visit has been blacked out by the U.S. national media—despite the high-profile event at the National Press Club on March 19. According to the group, they had a large range of meetings, including with members of the UN Security Council, the offices of Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Mark Udall (D-Colo.), and with the U.S. Institute for Peace, the Atlantic Council, and a number of Arab-American organizations.