



## Syria Constitutional Committee press conference 22 January 2021

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### Shotlist

Continuity: Audio CH1 (L) English / CH2 (R) Arabic

Edited story shotlist:

1. Exterior wide shot, Palais des Nations, Flag alley, a cloudy day.
2. Wide shot, press briefing room
3. **SOUNDBITE (English) — Geir Pedersen, U.N. Special Envoy for Syria: “This is a fragile calm. All of these issues cannot be sorted out by the Syrians alone. It needs an international cooperation, and what I have said we need real negotiations, and for the different parties to sit down and have a real exchange of views on how to move this process forward. And if that political will is lacking it will be very very difficult to move this process forward”.**
4. Medium shot, staff of the Office of the UN Envoy
5. **SOUNDBITE (English) - Geir Pedersen, U.N. Special Envoy for Syria: “The time has come for the co-chairs to establish what I call more effective and operational working methods, so that the meetings can be better organized and more focused. We need to ensure that the Committee begins to move from preparing a constitutional reform into actually drafting one. “**
6. Medium shot, Geir Pedersen and spokesperson
7. **SOUNDBITE (English) - Geir Pedersen, U.N. Special Envoy for Syria: “The political process so far is not yet delivering real changes in Syrian’s lives nor a real vision for the future. As I emphasized many times, it is now clear that no one actor or group of actors can impose their will**

**on Syria or settle the conflict alone. They must work together”.**

8. Close up, journalist in press briefing room at the UN Palais
9. **SOUNDBITE (English) - Geir Pedersen, U.N. Special Envoy for Syria: “I have called for a more serious and a cooperative international diplomacy and indeed that is needed. It is not only needed. I strongly believe that it should be also possible. After all, despite the differences, key states are continuing to reaffirm their commitment to resolution 2254”.**
10. Medium shot, camera with view finder and Geir Pedersen on the podium in background
11. **SOUNDBITE (English) - Geir Pedersen, U.N. Special Envoy for Syria: “My hope has been that the Constitutional Committee, you know if it’s handled in the correct manner, that it could start to build trust and it could be a door opener for a broader political process. But the Constitutional Committee cannot work in isolation from other factors. We need a political will from the different parties to be able to move forward”.**
12. Medium shot, journalist with cell phone in press briefing room
13. Wide shot, Geir Pedersen at podium
14. Close up, Geir Pedersen at podium

## Story

Talks on new Syrian Constitution restart in Geneva on Monday, as a “door opener for a broader political process” – says UN Special Envoy for Syria

As another round of talks on Syria’s future constitution begins at United Nations premises in Switzerland on Monday, Geir Pedersen, the U.N. Special Envoy for Syria, expressed his hope that the co-chairs of the 45-member committee, known in diplomatic parlance as the Small Body, will agree on “work plans with clear agendas and topics and with an urgency in delivering progress in this process”.

The so-called Small Body refers to the 45 people (15 representatives from each of three groups: the Syrian government, the opposition and civil society) who undertake the talks in Geneva on Behalf of the larger Constitutional Committee (also known as the “Large Body”, comprising the same three group with 50 representatives each), who are charged with drafting a new constitution ahead of UN-supervised elections.

**“My hope has been that the Constitutional Committee, you know, if it’s handled in the correct manner, that it could start to build trust and it could be a door opener for a broader political process,”** Pedersen said. **“But the Constitutional Committee cannot work in isolation from other factors. We need a political will from the different parties to be able to move forward,”** he added.

In his briefing last Wednesday to the UN Security Council, the Special Envoy described next week’s meeting as “very important”. Many topics on the agenda have been under discussion discussed for more than a year in the Constitutional Committee.

**“The time has come for the co-chairs to establish what I call more effective and operational working methods, so that the meetings can be better organized and more focused. We need to ensure that the Committee begins to move from preparing a constitutional reform into actually drafting one“,** Pedersen said.

Although the last 10 months have been the calmest in almost a decade of conflict in Syria, and frontlines have barely shifted, the situation could break down at any moment, Pedersen warned.

**“This is a fragile calm”,** he said. **“All of these issues cannot be sorted out by the Syrians alone. It needs an international cooperation, and what I have said we need real negotiations, and for the different parties to sit down and have a real exchange of views on how to move this process forward. And if that political will is lacking it will be very very difficult to move this process forward”.**

After nearly a decade of conflict, death, displacement, destructions, detention, millions of Syrians in the country and millions of refugees abroad are having to deal with deep trauma and a lack of hope for the future.

The UN’s Syria Envoy admitted that **“the political process so far is not yet delivering real changes in Syrian’s lives nor a real vision for the future.”** He said that a willingness to collaborate is essential to moving the peace process forward. **“As I emphasized many times, it is now clear that no one actor or group of actors can impose their will on Syria or settle the conflict alone. They must work together,”** he stated.

Pedersen said the Committee can start considering specific constitutional issues and draft provisions and agree on future meetings on specific topics. He appealed for “a more serious and cooperative international diplomacy,” saying that despite their differences key countries remain committed to the UN Security Council resolution that guides his work.

**“I have called for a more serious and a cooperative international diplomacy and indeed that is needed,”** Pedersen said. **“It is not only needed. I strongly believe that it should be also possible. After all, despite the differences, key states are continuing to reaffirm their commitment to resolution 2254”**.

Resolution 2254 was adopted by the UN Security Council in December 2015, and unanimously endorsed a road map to peace in Syria. Through this resolution, the Security Council endorsed the 30 June 2012 agreement known as the Geneva Communiqué, as the basis for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political transition to end the conflict.