



Statement

Brazil must support a comprehensive approach to peace in Syria

The Syrian conflict is escalating dangerously. More than two hundred thousand Syrians have been killed since 2011. Millions more Syrians are displaced in and outside the country and in neighboring states. The United Nations reports that more than two thirds of all Syrian residents require humanitarian assistance, Refugees and internally displaced people are living in horrific conditions, many of them starving, in flagrant disregard of international humanitarian law. The crisis in Syria is spilling across the Greater Middle East and around the world with devastating effect.

There are considerable disagreements over the most appropriate response to the armed conflict. The United Nations has consistently been urging a political solution as a precondition to peace. Meanwhile, many member states are actively militarizing their response, including Russia, with continuing suffering of civilians as one of the consequences. The international media is reinforcing a hard line in the wake of ISIS-led attacks in France, the U.S. and Turkey. The risk of a major confrontation between NATO-affiliated states and others is rising.

A comprehensive approach is urgently required to stabilize Syria and the region. Bombing campaigns and ground troops will almost certainly result in spiraling civilian casualties and fuel conflict and extremism in Syria and beyond. A diplomatic solution to the crisis in Syria is the only rational pathway to ensuring a minimum level of stability. It must also be accompanied by significant investments in inclusive recovery and reconciliation in both Syria and Iraq, including a plan to protect returning refugees and minority groups fearing further persecution and promote justice and accountability.

Critical political measures are also required in Syria and the surrounding region to promote stability. In addition to implementing a peace and recovery process, Gulf states and others in the international community must immediately cease the arming extremist terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq. Neighbouring states must also reverse their track record of interference and proxy wars in Syria, and contribute constructively to ensuring a stable political settlement. For their part, NATO members must reduce the flow of new (foreign) recruits to ISIS. Greater efforts are required to also end the financing of terrorist groups, including the illegal sale of Syrian and Iraqi oil.

Brazil is a vocal supporter of greater stability in Syria and the greater Middle East. Brazil has forcefully condemned acts of acts of terrorism, systematic violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law -particularly the indiscriminate use of force against civilians. Brazil supported efforts to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria since 2013 and also supported UN Security Council Resolution 2249 in 2015 calling on member states to take all necessary means, according to international law, to combat ISIS.

In addition to urging for a diplomatic solution to the conflict, Brazil is calling for restraint in the application of military force in Syria and other conflicts around the world. The Ministry of External Relations has underlined how military solutions alone will not resolve the Syrian conflict. At present, the Ministry actively defends Syria's sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity. This is in keeping with Brazil's traditional emphasis on conflict prevention, early diplomacy and the so-called Responsibility While Protecting.

Brazil is investing in humanitarian aid assistance to alleviate suffering in Syria and the surrounding region. Since 2011, Brazil has provided significant donations of food assistance, medicine and resources to internally displaced people in Syria and refugees in neighboring countries. The country has resettled more than 2,000 Syrian refugees and announced visas for another 8,500. Brazil must do more to share the burden, given the unprecedented nature of the refugee crisis, and ensure more durable solutions abroad and at home.

Brazil would do well to support a comprehensive approach to stability and reconstruction in Syria as advocated by the so-called Vienna Process since October 2015. It must urge the Security Council to exercise its responsibilities in Syria. Brazil is right to counsel for measured and proportionate use of force. The country has considerable experience in peace operations around the world. But it must not stop there. Brazil's constructive engagement must also focus on the elimination of extremism in line with UNSC 2249 together with political, humanitarian and development support in Syria, and the wider region.

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Facebook: /institutoigarape | Twitter: @igarape_org

Tel.: +55.21. 3496-2114

Endereço: Rua Conde de Irajá, 370 - 3º andar - Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro - RJ - Brasil

CEP.: 22271-020