

Joint statement from the Deputy Ministers and Special Envoys on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) – Brasília, 5 July 2019

1. The BRICS Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) met on 5 July 2019 in Brasília, Brazil, to exchange views on the current situation in the Middle East and North African regions.

2. They expressed concern over continued conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, which undermine stability and security, provide fertile ground for terrorist and extremist activities and result in internally displaced persons (IDPs) and large movements of refugees and migrants. They agreed that the conflicts in the region should be addressed both through political mechanisms that include dialogue and negotiations and also through a prospect of social development and prosperity for the peoples living in the conflicted areas. They also opposed illegal use of force or interference by external powers in the region.

3. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys reaffirmed their commitment to the basic principle that international peace and security should be achieved and sustained solely in accordance with, and in full respect of, international law, including the UN Charter and the role of the UN Security Council. They stressed the need to stand for multilateralism and oppose unilateralism and uphold the international order and international system with the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter with the aim of promoting peace, stability and development in the MENA region. Underlying their deliberations was the conviction that lasting peace could only be achieved with due respect for the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of each of the countries of the region.

4. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys agreed that in each of the countries in the region, citizens have legitimate aspirations to enjoy full civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and fundamental freedoms.

5. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations from all quarters and in the name of any cause. They reiterated their countries' commitment to supporting inter-BRICS and other evolving multilateral efforts under UN auspices in countering the global threat of terrorism. They stressed that the fight against terrorism, including counter-terrorism measures, must be conducted in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and relevant UNSC Resolutions and opposing double standards. They called for an expedited adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the UN General Assembly.

6. The BRICS Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys, regarding the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, reaffirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country. They expressed their conviction that there can be no military solution to the Syrian conflict. They also reaffirmed their commitment to advancing a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, UN-facilitated political process in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015), which is to culminate in constitutional reform and free and fair elections. They expressed their support to the creation as soon as possible of the Constitutional Committee, in accordance with decisions of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi and welcomed in this regard the efforts of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for Syria, Mr. Geir Pedersen.

While welcoming the Memorandum on stabilization of the situation in the Idlib de-escalation area, they expressed deep concern with the escalation of violence in the region, continued attacks of the terrorist groups and called on all parties to fully implement the Memorandum on Idlib, including a sustainable ceasefire regime and allowing for unhindered humanitarian aid. They reaffirmed the international obligations to fight terrorism in all its forms and highlighted the importance of unity in the fight against terrorist organizations in Syria as designated by the UN Security Council. They emphasized the fundamental importance for post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation of Syria: such a commitment will build conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees as well as internally displaced persons and will provide ground for achieving a sustainable and long-lasting peace. They also expressed concern with vulnerable populations, especially the religious minorities.

7. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys expressed their serious concern about the political, humanitarian and security situation in Libya. They urged all parties to immediately cease all military action to avoid an escalation of violence and to engage with the Special Representative of the UN's Secretary General, Ghassan Salamé, the AU High Level Committee on Libya and relevant international and regional stakeholders, to ensure a peaceful dialogue and a political solution to the conflict through a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned process in pursuance of the Libyan Political Agreement and the UN Action Plan for Libya. They reaffirmed their conviction that the absence of a political commitment undermines the security and stability of the neighboring countries, leading to terrorism and transnational crime in the region. They expressed their support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial unity of Libya and stressed the critical importance of convening the Libyan national conference at the earliest possible opportunity, in order to promote national reconciliation and draw up a road map for Libya's political transition and subsequent elections.

8. The BRICS Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys reaffirmed their full support for efforts made by the Iraqi Government towards national reconstruction and development. They acknowledged the importance of stability in Iraq for regional and international security. They further condemned in the strongest possible terms the heinous and inhumane acts of violence perpetrated by terrorist and extremist groups, such as the self-styled ISIL, in the territory of Iraq and reiterated the need for strong international support to the Iraqi Government and people in their relentless efforts to fight against terrorism, to revitalise their economy and to implement reconstruction and development projects.

9. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys reaffirmed their grave concern about the ongoing conflict and consequent humanitarian crisis in the Yemen Republic and called on the parties to facilitate the rapid, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian personnel and supplies across the country. They recognised that the Yemeni conflict has a significant impact on the security and stability of the region. They welcomed the Stockholm Agreement and the establishment of the UN Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA) through UNSC Resolution 2452 (2019) and reiterated their support for the efforts being made by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict. They expressed their concern about the delay in the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and urged all parties to refrain from measures that lead to ceasefire breaches and to an escalation of violence.

10. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys were unanimous in their resolve that the conflicts elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa should not be used as pretext to delay resolution of the long-standing Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys, guided by the international legal framework previously in place, such as the relevant UN resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, reiterated that the two-state solution will enable Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side, in peace and security. In this regard, they expressed, furthermore, the need for new and creative diplomatic efforts to achieving a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in order to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East.

11. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys expressed their serious concern about the ongoing crisis in the Gulf region, including one-sided actions. They reaffirmed their support for the resolution of the existing disagreements through negotiations and diplomatic engagement. They stressed the need for promoting a positive, constructive agenda in that part of the world, in which all countries of the region jointly respond to common threats and challenges.

12. Regarding the Republic of the Sudan, the Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys acknowledged the Sudanese people's strong aspiration for social and political reform and the pursuit of a better life, and highlighted the importance of stability for peace in Sudan and the neighbouring countries. They emphasized the importance of the principle of non-interference and called on the Sudanese stakeholders to work together in good faith to develop an inclusive and consensual solution for political transition, which contemplates the swift implementation of a civilian government. They, furthermore, expressed their serious concern of the recent episodes of violence in the country and called upon all the parties to preserve peace and nurture national dialogue. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys indicated their support for the role of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in overcoming the current crisis. In this regard, they took note of the power sharing agreement reached on 4 July 2019 between the Military Council and the opposition coalition to establish a sovereign council to be run on rotation during a 3-year transition period until elections, as well as the launch of a transparent and independent investigation into the violence that began on 3 June 2019, and expressed their hope that it will lead to the sustainable stabilization of the situation in the country.

13. The Deputy Ministers/Special Envoys took note of the recent political developments in Algeria. They expressed their hope that the ensuing transition would culminate in a social compact that addresses Algeria's socio-economic and political aspirations.

14. The participants committed themselves to convene again at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers/Special Envoys of BRICS countries in Russia during its rotating Chairship in BRICS in 2020. They also agreed on the advisability of holding regular consultations on the Middle East and North Africa at various venues, including the UN. They confirmed their support for the hosting of informal meetings of their representatives when required.