

**Joint Communiqué on the Meeting of BRICS Special Envoys on Middle East,
Visakhapatnam, April 12, 2017**

BRICS Special Envoys on Middle East expressed their concern about internal crises that have emerged in a number of states in the region in recent years. They firmly advocated that these crises should be resolved in accordance with the international law and UN Charter, without resorting to force or external interference and through establishing broad national dialogue with due respect for independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the countries of the region. The participants emphasized the legitimacy of the aspirations of the peoples of the region to enjoy full political and social freedoms and for respect to human rights.

They strongly condemned recent several attacks, against some BRICS countries, including that in the Russian Federation. BRICS members stand for consolidating international efforts to combat the global threat of terrorism. They stressed that counter-terrorism measures should be undertaken on the firm basis of international law under the aegis of the UN and its Security Council.

In the course of the meeting, the role of the UN Security Council as the international body bearing the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security was underlined. It was also stressed that military interventions that have not been authorized by the Security Council are incompatible with the UN Charter and unacceptable.

BRICS Special Envoys expressed their deep concern with regard to the continuing violence in Syria, deterioration of humanitarian situation and growing threat of international terrorism and extremism in that country.

The participants confirmed their strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria and the need for a peaceful solution, led by the Syrians, to the conflict. They supported all efforts towards a political and diplomatic solution in Syria through talks based on Resolution 2254 of the United Nations Security Council. They welcomed the three rounds of talks held in Astana and the outcome of fifth round of talks in Geneva. They acknowledged that Astana talks paved the way for resumption of Geneva talks. They expressed resolve for renewed and committed efforts to find a political and diplomatic solution in Syria. In this regard, the efforts of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General Staffan de Mistura aimed at resumption of Geneva process were welcomed. The efforts of BRICS countries in providing humanitarian aid to Syria were welcomed. They called for continuing humanitarian assistance to Syria by BRICS countries and collaborating in the reconstruction of Syria.

While strongly condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, they called upon all Syrians to join hands in the face of this dangerous threat and urged the international community to strictly abide by all the obligations pursuant to various relevant UNSC resolutions.

While strongly condemning the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances, they called upon the international community to remain united while addressing any use or threat of use of chemical weapons and stressed the importance of continued cooperation between OPCW Technical Secretariat, OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism with the Syrian authorities.

They expressed serious concern about the political and security situation and escalation of the armed conflict in Libya, highlighting its extremely negative consequences for the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa and the Sahel region. It was noted that the military intervention into this country in 2011 led to the collapse of integrated state institutions, which in turn resulted in the rise of activities of terrorist and extremist groups.

They stressed their commitment to the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Libya. They expressed their support for the steps undertaken by Libyan authorities in combating the terrorist threats. They reaffirmed the need to overcome the dissensions between Libyan political forces

and to achieve consensus in functioning of the Government by all stakeholders in pursuance of the Libya Political Agreement (LPA). In this context, they expressed their support for the efforts by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Libya Martin Kobler, neighboring countries and by the African Union. The global efforts to defeat Islamic State (IS) in Sirte, Libya were welcomed.

They expressed concern over the continuing presence of terrorist formations including ISIS in other regions of the country and they supported the UN-sponsored international efforts aimed at inter-Libyan dialogue destined to achieve creation of unified authorities based on the recognition of interests of Libyan political forces, regions and tribal groups.

BRICS Special Envoys expressed their full respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. They supported the efforts by the Iraqi government to combat terrorism and restore control over the territories taken by the so called Islamic State of Iraq and Levant. They stressed their concern for the humanitarian impact of the ongoing military operation for the liberation of Mosul. The participants of the meeting expressed hope that all ethnic and confessional parties in Iraq enhance national reconciliation as the only way to overcome ongoing turmoil, bring long-awaited peace and economic recovery for the Iraqi people. In this regard they called on all parties to support all-inclusive national reconciliation process in Iraq taking into account the interests of all segments of the Iraqi society. They referred to the importance of an Iraqi-led national dialogue able to strengthen the country's stability, territorial integrity and democratic institutions. They also urged the International community to provide continued assistance and humanitarian support for Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people.

They expressed their concern over the continuing armed conflict in the Yemen Republic which led to the killing of thousands of civilians, including women and children, and to the destruction of a significant part of vital civilian infrastructure, bringing the situation in Yemen to a humanitarian catastrophe. They called for urgent measures by the international community in order to ease social and economic situation in this country, unlimited access to humanitarian aid to all parts of the Yemen Republic.

In this regard the Special Envoys called for immediate ceasefire in Yemen, urging all parties to the conflict to resume the nation-wide dialogue in which representatives of Yemeni political forces and different groups of Yemeni population could participate in discussing the future of their country. The participants supported efforts taken by Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed in this regard.

BRICS members declared their readiness to provide relevant humanitarian aid and diplomatic assistance in resolving the situation in Yemen.

They were unanimous that the period of the fundamental transformations that is taking place in the Middle East (West Asia) and North African states should not be used as pretext to delaying resolution of long-standing conflicts, in particular the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In this regard they confirmed their commitment to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the universally recognized international legal framework including respective UN Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

They called for an early resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations aiming at establishing an independent, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State within the borders based on June 4, 1967 lines and with East Jerusalem as its capital. They supported the Russian role in the Middle East Quartet aimed at achieving these ends as soon as possible. They expressed their readiness to contribute on a bigger scale towards a just and lasting resolution of the Middle East conflict.

The participants of the meeting appealed to the Palestinians and Israelis to undertake positive steps towards each other to restore mutual trust and create favorable conditions for restarting talks, avoiding unilateral steps, that endanger the two-state solution, in particular illegal Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They stood for overcoming the inter-Palestinian split based on the PLO political platform and the Arab Peace Initiative.

They expressed the intention to convene next consultations at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers of BRICS countries in China in 2017.

The participants of the meeting also agreed on the advisability of holding regular consultations on the Middle East (West Asia) and North Africa topics at various venues, including the UN, and confirmed their support for holding informal meetings of their representatives.

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