



A Readout to the Syria's Neighboring Countries Meeting/ Amman, March 2025



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Amman, hosted the inaugural meeting of "Syria and Neighboring Countries Group", with delegations from all of Syria's surrounding countries—Turkey, Iraq, and Lebanon—participating. This meeting took place amidst a series of regional and international discussions concerning Syria's post-Assad future. After 14 years of relative diplomatic isolation, the new Damascus has now engaged in foundational dialogues aimed at establishing comprehensive stability.

What distinguishes Amman's meeting from other similar gatherings is its status as the first joint engagement of Syria's neighboring countries to explore ways to support the country in its ongoing structural transformation of already fragile state institutions. According to the final communiqué, the meeting addressed security dimensions, including counterterrorism, combatting drug trafficking, and border control. Additionally, it discussed creating suitable conditions for the voluntary and safe return of refugees, the importance of lifting sanctions on Syria, and the subsequent stimulation of a comprehensive reconstruction process, alongside enhanced economic cooperation and the activation of international support mechanisms as key pillars of the desired stability.

This meeting can be evaluated as a strategic one due to the presence of chiefs of staff and intelligence directors from the participating countries, which grants it an executive military-security aspect, particularly in border security and countering ISIS. At this transitional regional stage, Syria remains

a cornerstone of security and stability in the region, as its security situation directly impacts the conditions in neighboring countries.

Despite varying perspectives among participating countries regarding the Syrian issue, they demonstrated apparent consensus on the core issues outlined in the final communiqué. The primary challenge now lies in formulating effective mechanisms for the implementation of multi-party policy actions. Nevertheless, it is significant that the meeting included all of Syria's neighboring countries, particularly Iraq, which faces a duality between its official state stance and the positions of factions allied with Iran—a country that has lost much of its influence in Syria.

Timing: Syria and the Dual-Level Anarchy

Realist theorists in international relations describe the international system as a state of anarchy, where the absence of a supreme authority prevents the imposition of order. Whether a state is a great power or a fragile one, this condition shapes its foreign policy framework, leading to uncertainty and a lack of trust.

In Syria's case, it experiences dual-level anarchy: the first being the international and regional systemic anarchy, and the second stemming from the weak control of the central government over various regions. This duality manifests through three crises: coastal unrest, Israel's incursions into southern Syria and its overt attempts to exploit the Druze issue to legitimize its actions, and the Kurdish problem in the southeast.

Amman's meeting did not overlook support for the Syrian government in countering this dual anarchy. The final communiqué explicitly condemned

what it described as Israeli "aggression" on Syrian territory, calling on the UN Security Council to fulfill its role in addressing this blatant violation of international law.

Regarding coastal unrest, the political messages conveyed by neighboring states were not uniform. Turkey and Jordan primarily supported the Syrian government in asserting security control, while Iraq, according to a statement by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasized the "protection of civilians and sparing them the repercussions of conflict," expressing concern over the coastal developments. Lebanon, being the closest to Syria's internal dynamics, adopted a politically cautious approach, as it is in the process of reshaping its political landscape towards national sovereignty and distancing itself from foreign dependencies—steps aimed at mitigating latent tensions among its political and sectarian factions.

Contrasting Syria's dual-level anarchy, and signaling strength at this critical juncture, an agreement was announced on the evening of March 10, 2025, between the Syrian government and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The agreement is based on the "integration of all civil and military institutions in northeastern Syria under the administration of the Syrian state, including border crossings, airports, and oil and gas fields," as well as "supporting the Syrian state in its fight against remnants of the Assad regime and all threats to its security and unity," while "rejecting calls for partition, hate speech, and attempts to sow discord among Syria's social components."

The text of the agreement leaves no room for interpretation, as its political content is explicitly aimed at legal and administrative integration within a

national state that guarantees the rights of all Syrians. This agreement cannot be isolated from Syria's broader political transition, which is progressing according to a roadmap that includes drafting a new constitution and fundamentally rebuilding sovereign political institutions such as the legislature and mechanisms for electing the president.

Such a transformation cannot succeed without a regional security framework primarily provided by neighboring countries, given the geopolitical significance of geographical proximity in the stability of any state.

Conclusion: Jordan's Renewed Pivotal Role

Jordan places great importance on stability in Syria, and the 14 years of the Syrian crisis have demonstrated this commitment. Throughout this period, Jordanian diplomacy has actively sought a resolution that serves the interests of the Syrian people while ending the cycle of violence that has burdened Jordan with waves of refugees, economic strain, and security threats.

Hosting and organizing the " Syria's Neighboring Countries " meeting reinforces Jordan's role in fostering regional stability, a role built on respect and appreciation for Jordanian foreign policy pragmatism. Prior to this meeting, Jordanian diplomacy was heavily involved in the emergency Arab summit and preceding Arab and international discussions on the Palestinian issue, including a royal-level meeting with leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council in early March 2025.

Increasing threats in the region are pushing Jordanian decision-making towards proactive measures to preempt potential crises. The years of the Syrian crisis have underscored the importance of early preparedness for any foreseeable challenges. The " Syria's Neighboring Countries " initiative is part of Jordan's broader security strategy concerning Syria-related threats.

The main challenge for this initiative lies in maintaining and enhancing coordination and ensuring its practical implementation. Thus, institutionalizing this framework to sustain its efforts is crucial. One possible approach is establishing an executive secretariat or administrative committee to manage and facilitate the affairs of these meetings, preventing them from becoming temporary and ineffective, ensuring that they serve as a stable foundation for future action.