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Syrian Kurds don't need the Geneva talks

By Ayub Nuri

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Kurdish forces in the predominantly Kurdish city of Hasakeh in Northern Syria

Whoever has arranged the Syria peace talks in Geneva is living in dreams. How can you expect an amalgam of armed groups, most of them Islamists with too much blood on their hands and sworn enemies of each other to sit together and talk peace.

The talks have been delayed this far only because the organizers of the summit haven't been able to agree who is a terrorist and who is not. Also the aim of reaching a ceasefire followed by a transitional period and then elections is quite naive.

The Syria war has become too complex to simply declare a ceasefire after a meeting and then hold elections. If this was not possible to do in the beginning of the war it is impossible now with so many armed groups and so much death and destruction.

What is even more absurd is that Syrian Kurds have not been invited to the talks which has upset many Kurds around the world. But in reality no one should be upset. It is better not to attend the gathering than to sit down with a group of Islamist terrorists and try to talk logic to them.

Besides, the Kurds have achieved for themselves what other Syrian groups won't be able to achieve in many years. They have their safe and stable autonomous region that is like a different planet compared to the rest of Syria. The cities are protected by the Kurdish security (Asayish) and the frontlines by the Peoples Protection Units (YPG). Schools and markets run as if there isn't a war just a few miles down the road.

The whole purpose of the Geneva talks is to stop the bloodshed and bring some kind of peace. So the Kurds don't really need to be there if they already have peace and their only war is self-defense.

The Kurdish leaders of Syria should instead continue what they have been doing for five years: stay home and focus on their own territory and make sure the armed groups—some of whom attend Geneva—do not come anywhere near them.

In fact the Kurds of Rojava should see not being invited as a compliment. It is the gathering of groups who are shelling civilian centers in Damascus and elsewhere in the country. The Kurds haven't done any of that and therefore they do not belong to such a meeting.

It was in a similar meeting in Switzerland in 1923 that the Kurds were betrayed and that's why not being invited to Geneva rings an alarm bell. But there is no cause for concern. Today decisions are made on the ground and Syrian Kurds are the most powerful group who decided long ago the borders of their territory and have since defended it by every means.

If the Kurds of Rojava are to talk to anyone it should be with their own brothers and political groups who are willing to participate with them in the self-rule. The best guarantee for the Kurdish areas of Syria does not come from places like Geneva, Riyadh or Moscow. It comes from unity among the Kurdish population and their leadership.

If the organizers of the Geneva talks do not recognize the Kurds as legitimate opposition and do not see their importance on the ground then these talks will fail as many others before them did.