

MADANIYA.

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www.madaniya-csn.org

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

RECLAIMING POLITICAL AGENCY: SYRIAN CIVIC ACTORS AS COUNTERPARTS

Madaniya's Inaugural Conference

5 & 6 June 2023

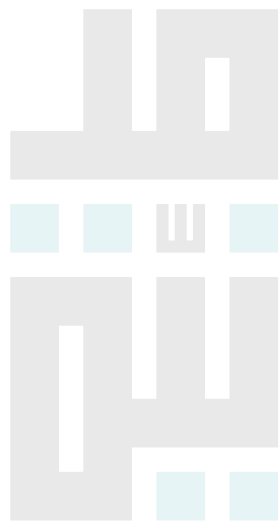
The Institut du Monde Arabe

1 Rue des Fossés Saint-Bernard, 75005 Paris, France



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ABOUT MADANIYA

Today, after more than a decade since the 2011 uprising in Syria, we, as Syrians, witness our country being torn into geopolitical divisions, ruled by de-facto authorities hijacked by regional and international powers. As the political process remains deadlocked, normalisation efforts with the Syrian regime on the rise, and a lack of genuine action from the international community to address this reality, we firmly believe that Syrian civic actors around the world have the power to make a difference. By reclaiming our political agency, we can assert our rightful role in shaping the future of our country, influencing accountability, development, and political trajectories.

It is this belief that gave rise to Madaniya, an initiative led and funded by Syrians, independent from political and foreign influences. Madaniya aims to strengthen the political agency of the Syrian civic space. We mobilise Syrian civic actors inside Syria, as well as in neighbouring countries and the diaspora, around a shared set of rights-based values to organise within a unifying civic space that transcends divisions and fosters a sense of ownership and belonging.

Drawing upon collective resources, knowledge, and influence, Madaniya introduces Syrian civic actors as counterparts, ensuring a leading role for Syrians in future decision-making processes. Madaniya welcomes all Syrian civic actors who align with its values, encompassing diverse sectors and geographic locations, including civil society organisations, grassroots entities, victims' associations, unions, syndicates, think tanks, media outlets, and, in due course, individuals.

What do we mean by Reclaiming Political Agency?

Reclaiming political agency within the Syrian civic space, under the umbrella of Madaniya, does not imply an intention to replace the existing Syrian bodies engaged in the political processes outlined by UN Security Council Resolution 2254. Rather, it seeks to complement their efforts. The aim of reclaiming political agency is rooted in our belief that we, Syrian civic actors, have to actively participate in shaping all tracks that can lead to a political solution, as protected by the same UNSC Resolution. We are a value-based constituency working towards a state that upholds human rights, freedoms, and the rule of law. Our organisations are guided by this vision, and we strive to actively participate in decision-making platforms to ensure the actions of various political and international actors align with this vision.



CONFERENCE AGENDA

5 JUNE 2023 (CET)

08:30 – 09:00 **Arrival and Welcome**

09:00– 09:15 **Opening Remarks**

09:15 – 09:45 **Madaniya's Vision**

09:45 – 10:00 **Conference Values**

Session One: Local and sectoral civil action priorities

Discussion groups work in parallel, some to discuss priorities for civil action locally, and others to discuss priorities for civil action sectorally in the short, medium and long term, according to the following questions:

10:00 – 11:30

- What are the priorities to work on?
- What confiscate our capacity to act on these priorities?
- How do we resist this confiscation?

11:30 – 12:00 **Coffee Break**

Session One Outcomes

The results of the discussion groups are presented in the first session with the aim of active participation, not consensus, and the room is opened for collective commentary on the discussions.

12:00 – 13:00

13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch Break**

Session Two: Working Mechanisms within Madaniya

Discussion groups working in parallel, whose members discuss possible mechanisms of action for civil members to restore the political agency in addressing priorities according to the following questions:

14:00 – 15:30

- What are the tools that Madaniya can activate to restore the political agency in the civic space?
- How can Madaniya members work together on these tools to address priorities?

15:30 – 16:00 **Coffee Break**



CONFERENCE AGENDA

5 JUNE 2023 (CET)

Session Two Outcomes

16:00 – 17:00

The results of the discussion groups are presented in the first session with the aim of active participation, not consensus, and the room is opened for collective commentary on the discussions.

17:00 – 19:00

Break

19:00 – 22:00

Formal Dinner



CONFERENCE AGENDA

6 JUNE 2023 (CET)

09:00 – 09:30 **Arrival and Welcome**

09:30 – 09:45 **Opening Remarks from Ayman Asfari and Sawsan Abou Zainedin**

09:45 – 10:45 **Session 1: Justice and Accountability as a Pillar for the Peace Process**
Panel discussion on the role of Syrian civic actors in the accountability track and its impact on the political solution

10:45 – 11:15 **Coffee Break**

11:15 – 12:15 **Session 2: Integrated Development as an Antidote to Conflict Economy and Social Polarisation**
Panel discussion on the role of Syrian civic actors in the development track and its impact on the political solution

12:15 – 13:45 **Lunch Break**

13:45 – 14:45 **Session 3: Syrian Civil Society as the Voice of Syrians in the Political Track**
Panel discussion on the role of Syrian civic actors in the political track

14:45 – 15:15 **Coffee Break**

15:15 – 16:45 **Session 4: How can the Syrian Civic Space Reclaim its Political Agency?**

- Keynotes from Special Envoys to Syria highlighting the crucial role of the Syrian Civic Space in supporting their efforts towards a political solution in Syria
- Moderated discussion with Syrian civil society actors on the role of different stakeholders to ensure principled international engagement in Syria

16:45 – 17:00 **Closing Statement**



SESSION I

Speakers

- Bassam Alahmad – Syrians for Truth and Justice
- Kholoud Helmi – Families for Freedom
- Mariana Karkoutly – Huquqyat
- Michel Chamas – The Center for Legal Studies and Research
- Farouq Habib – The Syrian Civil Defense (White Helmets)

Facilitator

- Ibrahim Olabi – Madaniya's BoD, Guernica 37

SESSION 2

Speakers

- Ola Aljounde - Gharsah Association
- Aula Abbara - Syria Public Health Network
- Raed Alsaleh - The Syrian Civil Defense (White Helmets), Madaniya BoD
- Shivan Haj Ali – Bahar Organisation
- Jihad Yazigi – The Syria Report

Facilitator

- Houda Attasi – Madaniya's BoD, IHR

SESSION 3

Speakers

- Oula Ramadan – Badael
- Farouk Haji Mustafa – Bercav
- Hind Kabawat – Tastakel
- Karam Nachar – Aljomhouria
- Mohammad Alaa Ghanem – Syrian American Council

Facilitator

- Qutaiba Idlbi – Madaniya's BoD, Atlantic Council

SESSION 4

Speakers

- Assad Alachi – Baytna
- Rouba Mhaissen – SAWA for Development & Aid, Madaniya's BoD
- Reem Alhaswani – Women Now for Development

Facilitator

- Fadi Dayoub – Madaniya's BoD, Local Development and Small-Projects Support (LDSPS)



CONFERENCE VALUES

Trust as an act of resistance

We are all aware that one of the repressive tools of control in Syria over the decades has been a generalized state of suspicion, where nobody trusts anybody, and even neighbors fear one another. We acknowledge the challenges inherent in collective work, but we invite you to this conference with the intention of fostering trust among participants. It is crucial to trust in each other's patriotism, love for Syria, and dedication to serving the collective interests of Syrians.

Accept complexity and uncertainty

The Syrian political situation is highly complex, both internationally and internally. We also acknowledge that there is no singular, simple solution to address the economic, political, military, and international challenges currently faced by Syria. Our recognition stems from a sense of humility, understanding the significance of engaging in dialogue amidst uncertainty and actively listening and participating. If there were a simple solution, the courageous and patriotic Syrians would have discovered it by now, given their love for the country.

Our dialogue at this conference is an exercise in democratic assimilation

We are not a homogeneous, ideologically identical bloc in this space, nor do we have any ambition to merge into uniform ideological visions. However, we intend to utilize this space to acknowledge and embrace these differences as valuable tools for discussion and the exchange of viewpoints. We aim to treat all participants with respect and professionalism. While we may come from different camps and hold diverse perspectives, we are united by our shared desire to witness a civil, democratic Syria. We envision a Syria where political opponents come together at the table of politics, engaging in dialogue and seeking democratic solutions, instead of enduring imprisonment, absence, and repression.

Believing in our collective ability and our right to restore civility to Syrian affairs

Let's make an effort to practice group review without excessive self-flagellation. We come to this dialogue with a belief in the political effectiveness of Syrian women and men, recognizing their right to manage their affairs and coordinate amongst themselves. Furthermore, we aim to foster a culture of mutual respect, trust, and understanding among all conference participants.

To avoid generalizations and stereotypes

Let us refrain from using biased or discriminatory terms towards any Syrian ethnic, sectarian, religious, or gender group. Our aim is to foster communication based on a comprehensive Syrian identity that acknowledges differences without confining them to specific identities. We firmly reject hate speech, incitement to violence, and any other form of harmful speech that undermines the dignity and rights of individuals and societies.

Let us activate our political imagination for a better future

Let us strike a balance between describing the problems of the current situation and actively engaging our political imagination to envision potential solutions and pathways out of this impasse.

We celebrate our courage, our hard work, and our unwavering commitment to our nation

Let us appreciate the wealth of knowledge stemming from our diverse experiences and years of dedicated work. We complement one another's ideas and build upon them, recognizing and celebrating each other's skills and expertise.



CONFERENCE VALUES

We strive for the integration of visions regarding priorities rather than their competition.

We approach the Syrian issue from various perspectives, including human, developmental, human rights, cognitive, and cultural angles. We operate on different temporal rhythms, addressing emergency, urgent, and long-term strategic aspects. Moreover, we work from varying degrees of safety and needs, both within and outside Syria, across different regions. As we listen to one another, let us always bear in mind the complementary nature of our visions. Our work angles greatly influence what we prioritize in the next stage. It is essential to recognize and respect the value and legitimacy of diverse viewpoints and experiences.

Listening is also part of sharing

We encourage your active participation, sharing your thoughts and opinions in all sessions of this conference. Additionally, we urge you to embrace active, humble, open-minded, and supportive listening as crucial aspects of your participation, both during these sessions and in the conference's long-lasting impact. If you tend to dominate conversations, we kindly request that you slow down before sharing, allowing others an opportunity to contribute. On the other hand, if you typically refrain from speaking up, we strongly encourage you to share your opinions whenever possible, as it will greatly enrich the discussion.

Let us be collaborative with facilitators

Facilitators diligently work to organize our sessions, aiming to achieve optimal results when discussing conference topics within the limited and specified time frame. It is important to avoid digressing into side topics that may cause distractions. Therefore, we kindly request that you present your points in a concise and clear manner, staying focused on the main topic without going off on tangents.

We invest our time together

We understand that you have urgent and significant responsibilities. However, we kindly request that you minimize the use of electronic devices and refrain from engaging in distracting activities, such as checking emails or social media, even during breaks, in order to make the most of this conference as an opportunity to foster meaningful relationships, constructive discussions, and mutual trust among us.

We respect the privacy of others

Throughout the conference, we kindly request that you respect the privacy of fellow participants. Please refrain from taking videos or photos of others without their explicit consent and avoid sharing personal information about others without their permission. If you are uncertain about whether it is appropriate to capture an image or share information, please consult with the conference organizers or the individuals involved to obtain their consent.

We follow Chatham House rules on the first day of the conference

The information and discussions that take place during the meeting on the first day will be in accordance with the rules of Chatham House, that is, they are confidential and cannot be circulated by linking them to specific individuals or organizations. We trust everyone to abide by these rules, allowing for an open and frank exchange of ideas without fear. On the second day, we will not follow the rules of Chatham House, but rather it will be a public discussion, recorded and open to the media to cover and build on.



ATTENDING SYRIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR)	Future Makers Team (Virtually)
Act for Syria	Gharsah Association
Administrative Development Center	Global Justice
Al-Ameen for Humanitarian Support	Global Organization for Civil Society Advancement
Aljumhuriya	Hamzet Wasel (Virtually)
Alshare Media Foundation	Hamzet Wasel for Social Development
Amal Organization	Hand in Hand for Aid and Development - HIHFAD (Virtually)
American Coalition for Syria ACS	Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies
Analysis and Strategic Study Organization (ASO)	HDF Organization
Association for Peace, Justice and Documentation	Home Revival Initiative
Association of Victims of Chemical Weapons (AVCW)	Hooz Center for Social Development (Virtually)
Assyrian Association for Aid and Development	House of Citizenship
Azaz Media Centre (Virtually)	Humanitarian Care Charity
Badael	Huquqyat
Bahar Organization	Hurras Network
Basmeh and Zeitooneh	International Humanitarian relief
Baytna	Judy Organization for Relief and Development (JORD)



ATTENDING SYRIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Bercav

Jusoor Studies Center

BINA

Justice and sustainable development

Blue Team

Justice for Life

Caesar Families

Karam Foundation

Center for Civil Society and Democracy

Kareemat organization

Change Makers (Virtually)

Kesh Malek

Citizens for Secure and Safe America (Virtually)

Lawyers and Doctors for Human Rights

Colors for Development and Relief

League of People with Disabilities (Virtually)

Creative Memory

Local Administration Councils Unit

Damma - Hug

Local Development and Small-Projects Support (LDSPS)

DAR - Dignity, Actions, Resilience for Peace and Prosperity

MARS (Multiple Action to Rebuild Society)

Dawlaty

Masrrat

Deirna for Development (Virtually)

Mazaya Women

Democratic Republic Studies Center

MedGlobal

Demos

MIDMAR

Eastern Mediterranean Institute

Molham Volunteering Team

Enab Baladi

Multi Aid Programs MAPs (Virtually)



ATTENDING SYRIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Enmaa (Virtually)	Multifaith Alliance
Ettijahat - Independent Culture	Musawat
Federation of Charitable Organizations in France	Nabad Afreen (Virtually)
Free Syrian Students Union (Virtually)	Najoon
Nuon For peacebuilding	Syrian American Medical Society
Observatory of Political and Economic Networks	Syrian Association for Citizen's Dignity
Olive Branch	Syrian British Consortium
Orange organization (Virtually)	Syrian British Medical Society
Oxford Syria Society	Syrian British Society of the Built Environment
PÊL - Civil Waves	Syrian Center of Media and freedom of Expression (SCM)
Physicians Across Continents	Syrian Centre for Policy Research
Pro justice (Virtually)	Syrian Christians - Education Committee
Pulse Organization for Development and Aid	Syrian Community in Romania
Release me	Syrian Expatriates Medical Association
Research for Health System Strengthening in Syria (Virtually)	Syrian Institution Memory (SMI)
Rethink Rebuild Society	Syrian International Business Association (SIBA)
Rising for Freedom Magazine	Syrian Legal Development Programme (SLDP)



ATTENDING SYRIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Rose Association for Women and Children (Virtually)

Syrian Media Union (Virtually)

Rozana

Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR)

SACF Syrian Arts & Culture Festival (Zamakan)

Syrian Welsh Society

Sada Youth Team (Virtually)

Syrian Women Platform

Sadad Humanitarian Organization (Virtually)

Syrians for Truth and Justice

Sakan Housing Communities

Takaful Al Sham (TAS)

SAWA for Development & Aid

Tastakel

SCAN UK

The Center for Legal Studies and Research

SCD (The White Helmets)

The Day After

Sema International

The Stabilization Support Unit

Sewar "Kalkınma Şafak Dernek"

The Syria Report

Shaml

The Union of Revolutionary Bureaus

SOAS Syria Society

Together For Jarniya (Virtually)

Sobh Cultural Team (Virtually)

UOSSM International

Souriyat Across Borders (SAB)

Verify Media Platform

Souryana Al Amal (Virtually)

VIP.fund

Space of Hope

Voices for Displaced Syrians



ATTENDING SYRIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Syria Community Network

Warsheh Team for Advocacy and Documentation

Syria Forum

We Dared to Dream

Syria Notes

Woman Support Association

Syria Public Health Network

Women for Peace (Virtually)

Syria Relief and Development

Women Now for Development

Syria Research Group

Women of Hope

Syria Resource Group

Women Support and Empowerment Center

Syria Solidarity Campaign

Women Support Unit

Syria Spring Team

Zenobia Association for Syrian Women

Syrian American Council

Zoom In

 In addition to a group of organisations whose names are not listed due to sensitivity around the context of their work



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r.ali@madaniya-csn.org

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