

PRESS RELEASE

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MADANIYA'S INAUGURAL CONFERENCE 2023 LAUNCHES IN PARIS, RECLAIMING POLITICAL AGENCY: SYRIAN CIVIC ACTORS AS COUNTERPARTS

On Tuesday 6 June 2023, over 150 representatives of Syrian civil society organisations will gather at the [Institut Du Monde Arabe](#), Paris, to launch Madaniya, through an inaugural conference.

[Madaniya](#) is a Syrian-led and funded initiative, independent of foreign and political influence with a mission to protect the Syrian civic space and support the pioneering role of civil society in building Syria's future. Madaniya, publicly launched in 2023 after two years of meticulous planning by its founding Board of Directors, has welcomed over 150 Syrian Civil society organisations to its civic space spanning Syria's diverse regions, neighbouring countries, and the diaspora.

By mobilising Syrian civic actors around a comprehensive set of rights-based values to organise within a unifying civic space, Madaniya aims to reverse the dynamics on the trajectory of Syria. Madaniya seeks to present Syrian civic actors as counterparts in decision-making related to their country in pursuance of a free, democratic, and sovereign state that upholds human rights and contributes positively to the international community. This is particularly important at this critical time given the surging normalisation trends with the Assad Regime that have followed the devastating earthquake which hit Syria and Türkiye.

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 the principle that Syrian civic actors should actively participate in shaping all aspects that contribute to a political solution, as protected by the same UNSC Resolution.

In addition to Madaniya's member organisations, the conference will be attended by international delegates and key Syrian and International leaders and decision makers. Ahead of the public conference, Syrian civil society organisations members of Madaniya will convene for a closed 1-day event (Monday 5 June 2023) to set priorities and define mechanisms for their collective work. Madaniya welcomes all Syrian civic actors who align with its values, encompassing diverse sectors and geographies, including civil society organisations, grassroots entities, victims' associations, unions, syndicates, think tanks, media outlets, and, in due course, individuals.

Chief Executive Officer of Madaniya, Sawsan Abou Zainedin, explains, "More than 150 Syrian civil society organisations from diverse sectors and regions within and outside Syria will convene in the spirit of reclaiming agency to collaboratively shape the democratic and peaceful future of our country. We will welcome international decision-makers on Syria, extending an opportunity to comprehend our perspectives and engage in constructive discussions to foster genuine partnerships across diverse tracks, leading to a principled political resolution."

"Madaniya's importance stems from our need, as Syrians who believe in its values, for an independent, inclusive entity that raises our genuine voices unaffected by ideologies or external

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influences. Within Madaniya, we are keen to build bridges of communication and create a platform that brings together differing orientations, moving past the status quo of polarisation. Madaniya was born of numerous attempts by Syrians to create an independent platform that raises the Syrian people's voices over agendas of conflicting parties, in the hope of forging a space that resembles who we are and defends the values of our civil movement in pursuance of the unified Syria that we desire." Ilham Ashour of Souryana Al-amal, a member organisation of Madaniya.

Ayman Asfari, Chairman of Madanyia emphasises, "Over the last decade, Syrian civil society organisations have played an important role in maintaining the values of the Syrian uprising and delivering essential services. They have the legitimacy to have a voice on the pressing needs of the Syrian people and their future including supporting any political process. Madaniya aims to bring these organisations together, united by common values and shared objectives."

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