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Syria solidarity

Solidarity with the people of Syria

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This joint statement was adopted by Socialist Resistance (British section of the Fourth International) and the International Socialist Network on 29 August 2013.

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The defeat of the government pro-war resolution in Parliament is important. Even though Labour voted against the Tory motion, it too had submitted a pro-war resolution, albeit calling for a pause until after the report from the UN weapons inspectors. That resolution was also defeated. These votes reflect the anti-war mood in Britain. But as far as the USA is concerned, the threat of war is still on the agenda possibly using bases in Britain.

The regime of Bashar al-Assad is every day carrying out more massacres of increasing cruelty against the people of Syria, whether it be the bombing of civilian areas or the use of chemical weapons. Two years into the uprising against the dictatorship, over 100,000 have died, two million are refugees and many more are “displaced” out of a population of just 20 million. This tragedy fills us with horror and rage.

We continue to extend our solidarity to the movement for democracy in Syria. We pay tribute to all those who have lost their lives in the fight against the brutal dictatorship and to all those who are continuing to resist.

But the hypocrisy of imperialist countries also makes us angry. They bear the primary responsibility in the tragedy and in allowing the murderous Assad dictatorship to remain in power by allowing the rebellion to be starved of arms whilst Assad is supplied by Russia and Iran. They wring their hands at the plight on the Syrian people but deny them the means to defend themselves.

For over two years, Britain, the USA and France have stood by, refusing to deliver defensive anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons to the progressive and democratic components of the opposition, for fear that the toppling of the Assad regime may extend and deepen the revolution which started in Egypt and Tunisia in 2011. At the same time, they allowed Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states to support Islamist reactionary forces, in their attempt at transforming the Syrian revolution into a sectarian war. They know that the victory of the revolution in Syria could spread to the region constituting a major threat to their regimes.

Now, Britain, the USA and France are discussing yet another “humanitarian intervention”, with targeted military strikes to warn Assad that they have the monopoly on the use of chemical weapons.

We continue to oppose with the utmost determination any foreign direct military intervention in Syria, be it that of the USA, Britain, France and their allies or that of Iran and its allies. Those within the rebellion who support this are making a big mistake. We believe that the people of Syria should be enabled to free themselves from the Assad dictatorship. For their struggle to be successful, they should receive all the necessary material aid, including arms and humanitarian assistance, without conditions imposed by the West.

There has been a deafening silence from Western states in the face of the huge refugee crisis gripping Syria. This reflects the long-term racism and islamophobia against refugees and economic migrants.

The Assad dictatorship has burnt all the bridges to a possible peaceful and negotiated transition to democracy. Both the USA and Britain on one side, and Russia and Iran on the other want a solution imposed from above: maintain the regime but remove Bashar al-Assad.

Solidarity with the people of Syria

We reject the notion that this rebellion has been co-opted by imperialism. This remains a popular revolution by a people struggling to free itself from oppression. It is a key component of the Arab spring which has inspired the masses of the region and beyond.

We oppose both the “humanitarian intervention” of Britain, France and the USA, and the pro-Assad intervention by Iran and Russia. Instead, we choose to be on the side of the revolutionary masses struggling for their emancipation, and extend our solidarity in particular to the democratic and progressive components of the revolution.

Alongside the Stop the War Coalition, we will continue to campaign against intervention in Syria by Britain, France and the USA, and to send practical relief and humanitarian aid to the Syrian revolution. We also extend our hand of solidarity to Syrian socialists such as those in the Revolutionary Left Current, who have stated that their 'revolution has no sincere ally, except the popular revolutions of the region and of the world and of all the militants struggling against regimes of ignorance and servitude and exploitation'.

No to imperialist intervention.

Solidarity with the revolution against the Assad dictatorship.

Let the people of Syria determine their own future, free from foreign intervention.