Kazakhstan welcomes results of Syria meeting in Astana, as Russia, Iran and Turkey issue joint statement

By Malika Orazgaliyeva in International on 17 March 2017

ASTANA – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan issued a statement March 16 welcoming the outcomes of another international meeting on Syria held March 14-15 as part of the Astana Process.

“Kazakhstan welcomes the results of the third international meeting on Syria held on March 14-15, 2017 in Astana, where the guarantor states discussed the implementation of the agreements reached in the previous rounds of negotiations in Astana, as well as the ways to resolve military issues, improving the humanitarian situation, and studied new opportunities for expanding trilateral cooperation on Syria,” the statement said.

According to the ministry, following the results of the two-day talks, the guarantor states — Russia, Iran and Turkey — adopted a joint statement where they highlighted several important issues.

Thus, the delegations of the three countries took stock of their cooperation aimed at ending the Syrian conflict and the implementation of the ceasefire regime since the previous high-level meeting in Astana on Feb. 16. They welcomed Iran’s statement to officially become the third guarantor state of the ceasefire regime, as well as reaffirmed their commitment to the consolidation and strengthening of the ceasefire regime.

The delegations exchanged information on reports of ceasefire violations and stressed the need to reduce violations through increasing efficiency of the trilateral monitoring mechanism.

They emphasised the urgent need to improve the conditions on the ground through stronger enforcement of the ceasefire regime, as well as continued their deliberations towards the eventual adoption of additional documents.

In this context, discussions were initiated on international assistance for demining the UNESCO
cultural heritage sites in Syria, on confidence-building measures and other topics, which are interrelated with the comprehensive political solution in Syria.

The parties underlined the essential role for the Astana meetings in terms of complementing and facilitating the Geneva process. In addition, they welcomed the resumption of the Geneva talks, which were facilitated by the progress in the cessation of hostilities in Syria thanks to the ceasefire regime in force since Dec.30, 2016, and the results of the previous Astana meetings, in particular the creation of a trilateral ceasefire mechanism. Based on the interlinkage between the Geneva and Astana processes they expressed their support for the continuation of the talks in Geneva on March 23.

The guarantor states further emphasised that their trilateral meetings will continue at technical and high levels noting that the Syrian government and Syrian opposition representatives, as well as other parties could be invited to these meetings as observers.

According to the joint statement, the parties decided to hold the next high-level meeting on May 3-4 in Astana and agreed to hold preliminary expert consultations on April 18-19 in Tehran.

The three countries also expressed gratitude to the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and the Kazakh authorities for hosting their meetings.

In its own statement, the Kazakh foreign ministry reiterated that the Astana meetings are an integral part of the Geneva process under the UN aegis and that it considers the results of the third international meeting on Syria as a meaningful contribution to the process of political settlement of the Syrian crisis on the Geneva platform.

“Kazakhstan, as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-2018, will continue to put its every effort to address the issues related to regional and global security, as well as the fighting against terrorism,” it said.