

Sunday, 21 April 2013

Syrian opposition chief re-files resignation, coalition member says



Head of the opposition Syrian National Council (SNC) Moaz al-Khatib has again filed to resign, according to coalition member Marwan Hajjo.

Hajjo said that Khatib had sent an e-mail to members of the coalition saying he will remain the representative of the Damascus province but will give up the presidency.

Khatib on Saturday told countries taking part in the “Friends of Syria” conference in Istanbul that he will be stepping down from his position, Hajjo said.

The SNC chief was adamant about resigning, almost a month after first announcing he was stepping down and two weeks before the SNC leadership elections were scheduled to take place.

When Khatib first resigned, “the coalition’s General Assembly did not meet to discuss his resignation. But now, I can confirm Khatib’s resignation is final,” said Hajjo, according to AFP.

Meanwhile, a source close to the Coalition told AFP on condition of anonymity that NC members have in Istanbul launched discussions on who should become the opposition's new chief.

“Coalition members are holding consultations on who should become the interim president until the scheduled meeting on May 10,” said the source.

“Khatib is resigning to denounce the international community’s lack of real action on behalf of the Syrian people,” Hajjo said.

“The international community, the Friends of Syria group, should be providing heavy weapons to enable the Syrians to defend themselves.”

"But it is clear the international community doesn't mean anything. It only acts according to its own prerogatives," he added.

In Istanbul, the United States said earlier on Sunday that it would double its aid to Syria's opposition, including with new non-lethal military equipment, but paid no heed to calls for arms supplies or a direct intervention.

A moderate Sunni cleric who has widespread grassroots support inside Syria, Khatib has been a vocal critic of the international community's lack of action on the two-year Syrian conflict.

The coalition was founded in Doha last November and has since been recognized by dozens of states and organizations, including the Arab League, as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people.