

# *Russia, Turkey and Iran Support Celebration of Syrian People's Congress*

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Sochi, November 23 (RHC)-- Russian President Vladimir Putin has said his Iranian and Turkish counterparts support a proposal to hold a "Syrian people's congress" that will bring together government and opposition representatives.

"The congress will look at the key questions on Syria's national agenda," Putin told reporters, sitting alongside Hassan Rouhani and Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the end of a summit that was held in the Russian Black Sea Resort of Sochi.

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In a joint statement, the three leaders underlined the need for all warring sides to release all prisoners and hostages, hand over bodies and create the conditions for a lasting truce.

The congress is expected to also take place in Sochi ahead of the next round of United Nations-sponsored talks in Geneva on November 28.

They also urged the international community to provide humanitarian aid, clear Syrian territory of mines and restore infrastructure wrecked by the long-running conflict

The Syrian government has praised the meeting's final declaration.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Faisal Mekdad told the state news agency SANA, that the Syrian government praised the statement "in light of the commitment of the Syrian Arab Republic to support any political step that respects the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and that contributes to put an end to the bloodshed."

Russia, Turkey and Iran are mediators of the ceasefire declared in Syria at the end of 2016 and sponsors of the Astana peace process, which aims to consolidate the armistice and pave the way to a lasting peace in the Arab country.

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