Resolution 2254, unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council on 18 December 2015, represents the latest attempt by the international community to provide a comprehensive framework for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned political transition to end the conflict in Syria. Resolution 2254 states that “The Syrian people will decide the future of Syria”, expressing support for a Syrian-led political process facilitated by the United Nations, which would establish “credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance” within six months and set a schedule and process for the drafting of a new constitution.

The situation on the ground remains very fragile, and fighting has increased in many areas recently, however it is still crucial to harness the energy of Syrians and the international community who are working to support a political solution to the Syrian conflict. There is an impetus for civil society cooperation and active engagement in the constitution building process to ensure that the voice of the Syrian people is heard. It is critical that Syrian civil society use this new momentum around the future Constitution to raise awareness and develop a deep understanding of the process for as many Syrians as possible, as well as ensuring that any decisions are made based on proper consultations.

In this light, a Steering Committee has been formed consisting of 10 Syrian groups who focus on awareness raising, work on the transition process, are committed to human rights and the rights of women and have an ability to reach people inside Syria. These are; Kesh Malak, Dawlaty, Local Coordination Committee (LCC), The Day After (TDA), Moatana, Baytuna, Civil Society Initiative and Badeal, as well as the Supreme Council for Provincial Councils and the Transitional Justice Coordination Group (TJCG). No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) and TDA are facilitating the work of the Steering Committee and acting as advisors to the group. These groups plan to organise a nationwide awareness campaign about the constitutional process for Syria, aimed at raising awareness on and steering a discussion around the constitution building process and the role that civil society can play at this time. The campaign will have a rights-based approach with a focus on legitimate mechanisms of constitution making such as inclusion, equality, accountability and transparency.

The Workshop on constitution building processes to be held in Gaziantep on 9-11 June is designed to build the understanding of Steering Committee members on constitutionalism and how to achieve a comprehensive and inclusive constitutional building process, looking at practical examples from countries that have recently witnessed political transition and constitutional reforms. The Workshop will also review the work that has already been done on this area in the Syrian context in order to facilitate the elaboration of a campaign strategy and lay out a work plan to take the campaign forward.
After five years of war, its root causes and the call for freedom of the Syrian population still remain to be addressed. Any realistic prospect for a political solution to work needs to promote a political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and enables them independently and democratically to determine their future. This Workshop and the campaign being designed by the Steering Committee with support from NPWJ and TDA aims to support this transition and the process through which it is implemented.