

The Background of Russia Became Mediator on Cease-fire Agreement and Peace Talks between The Syrian Government and Opposition Group in Astana Kazakhstan

Syria is one of the countries experiencing prolonged conflict involving the government with opposition group. This conflict is the impact of the *Arab Spring* phenomenon that hit almost the entire region of North Africa and the Middle East in late 2010 to early 2012. *Arab Spring* is a form of mass protest that aims to coup the leaders of the state because it is dictatorial, authoritarian and corrupt in the lead. The demands of some Syrians who want President Bashar al-Assad to resign from his post as president of Syria, led to violence after Assad involved military forces to suppress opposition group. Various efforts to resolve the conflict have been made after the widespread armed violence to the entire territory of Syria and the increasing casualties. But that way has not been realized until the intervention of a number of influential countries. The presence of countries such as Russia, the United States, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the rise of extremist groups; ISIS, cause the Syrian conflict into a complex because there are interests each one of them. Russia and Syria are old allies and Russia is a major supporter of the Syrian government. Russia has provided its military and political support in overcoming the various pressures existing in Syria both internal and external in solving the Syrian conflict. The strategic position of Syria and its long-standing partner in a number of political, economic and military cooperation is the main reason Russia continues to support the government of Syria, the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Russia is also a country that encourages the realization of peace over Syria. Russia's seriousness of realizing peace over Syria is seen in its role of being the initiator and mediator of a ceasefire agreement by the end of December 2016, followed by peace talks between the Syrian government and opposition group in Astana Kazakhstan throughout 2017.

This paper will analyze the background of Russia became mediator on cease-fire agreement and peace talks between the Syrian government and the opposition group in Astana Kazakhstan. Based on the concept of national interest, the authors found several factors that pushed Russia became a mediator in the cease-fire agreement and Syrian peace negotiations are due to economic interests, military interests, and self-preservation interests or the survival of the nation and its own country.

Keywords: Syria, Russia, cease-fire and Syria peace talks, Russian interests.