
TALKS BETWEEN RUSSIA, TURKEY ON SYRIA TO CONTINUE

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Talks between Turkey, Russia and Iran will continue at various levels in order to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis, according to a Kremlin spokesman Thursday.

Speaking to reporters in Moscow, Dmitry Peskov said: Contacts at various levels -- such as between experts and high-ranking officials -- require for upcoming Syrian National Dialogue Congress planned to be held in Sochi and for the launch of a political solution in Syria.

These kinds of close contacts will continue.

His remarks came after Turkey summoned Iranian and Russian ambassadors to express its discomfort over the Bashar al-Assad regimes violations of de-escalation zones.

Since Nov. 14 last year, Eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus, together with northern province of Idlib -- which have been considered de-escalation areas brokered in May 2017 under the Astana process by Russia, Turkey and Iran -- has remained the target of fierce attacks by the Assad regime.

Despite a cease-fire, at least 400 civilians were killed in Syria's besieged Eastern Ghouta district and Idlib province over the past two months, according to the Syrian group, White Helmets.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Wednesday said Iran and Russia "should fulfill their responsibilities" as guarantor states in Syria.

If you are the guarantors -- yes, you are -- you should stop the regime. It's not just a simple airstrike.

The regime is moving in Idlib. The intent here is different, Cavusoglu said.

He also said Syrian regime forces are targeting moderate opposition groups on the pretext of fighting the Al-Nusra terrorist group.

He warned that such a move would undermine the political settlement process in Syria.

The Russian city of Sochi is the designated venue of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress set for Jan. 29-30. The congress is expected to be attended by all sectors of Syrian society except for terror groups.

Syria has been locked in a vicious civil war since early 2011 when the Assad regime cracked down on pro-democracy protests with unexpected ferocity.

Since then, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and more than 10 million others displaced, according to UN officials.

Kaynak/Source: