

Russia Says No Shift on Syria After Putin Win

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Russia warned the West on Tuesday not to expect a shift in its stance on Syria following Vladimir Putin's victory in a presidential election, saying its position had nothing to do with domestic politics.

"Russia's position on a Syrian settlement was never subject to political considerations and is not formed under the influence of electoral cycles, unlike those of some of our Western colleagues," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"Our approaches to the resolution of internal conflicts are based on international law and the United Nations Charter," it said. "We are talking primarily about strict adherence to the principle of inadmissibility of interference from outside."

A month before Sunday's election, Russia vetoed a Western-backed UN Security Council resolution that would have condemned Syrian President Bashar Assad over a crackdown on protesters and supported an Arab League call for his exit.

Putin made accusations of global meddling by the United States and its allies a theme of his election campaign, prompting suggestions that his tough talk was aimed at a domestic audience and that Moscow might be more flexible after the vote.

The ministry said the conflict in Syria could be resolved "only on the basis of a broad national dialogue in which Syrians themselves — and nobody else — will take decisions about the future development of their state."

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