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UN Vote on Syria Resolution Delayed

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Umayyad Square in Syria's capital of Damascus

A vote scheduled for Wednesday on a proposed United Nations resolution to impose sanctions on Syria aimed at ending the 17-month civil war was postponed to Thursday at the request of UN special envoy Kofi Annan.

Annan asked for the delay in a last-minute effort to get Western nations and Russia, a longtime Syria ally, to reach agreement on the resolution's wording.

The key stumbling block to an agreement in the UN Security Council is the Western demand for a resolution that threatens nonmilitary sanctions and is tied to Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter, which could eventually allow the use of force to end the conflict. Russia is adamantly opposed to that.

Russia on Wednesday accused the West of inciting the Syrian opposition after Syria's defense minister and President Bashar Assad's brother-in-law were killed in a bomb attack, arguing that a proposed UN resolution amounted to support for the rebels and would lead to more bloodshed.

"Instead of calming the opposition down, some of our partners are inciting it to go on," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday, RIA-Novosti reported.

Supporting the Syrian opposition "is a dead-end policy, because Assad is not leaving voluntarily," he said.

(AP, Reuters)

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