The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Syria Peace Conference to Open Jan. 22 in Montreux

By The Moscow Times

December 17, 2013

GENEVA — The United Nations plans to precede its internationally brokered peace talks between Syria's warring sides next month with a one-day meeting of foreign ministers in the Swiss city of Montreux, officials said Tuesday.

A daylong gathering for speeches by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and more than two dozen other foreign ministers is planned for Jan. 22 at a Montreux hotel.

The session is taking place at the opposite end of Lake Geneva to the UN European headquarters because a luxury watch fair has taken up all the hotel rooms in Geneva, Khawla Mattar, a spokeswoman for the UN's special envoy to Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, told reporters Tuesday.

Montreux, home of the famous jazz festival, was chosen because it has the facilities for such

a high-profile gathering. Mattar said the foreign ministers would demonstrate "that there is global interest in solving" the Syria crisis.

The conference will break up for a day, she said, and reconvene on Jan. 24 in Geneva for the start of actual negotiations between Syrian President Bashar Assad's government and armed Syrian opposition groups.

Mattar said the negotiators would set the timeframe for the negotiations at the start and continue working through the weekend — and around the clock — until they are finished.

Brahimi is to meet Friday with U.S. and Russian envoys to make final preparations for the conference, including the selection of which nations will be invited.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/12/17/syria-peace-conference-to-open-jan-22-in-montreux-a30580