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Russia Decries UN Draft on Syria Aid

By The Moscow Times

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Civilians carrying their belongings to an evacuation point in Homs. **Thaer Al Khalidiya**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday a draft United Nations resolution on aid access in Syria was "detached from reality" and urged the West to refrain from what it called one-sided accusations against Damascus.

Australia, Luxembourg and Jordan last week presented their draft resolution meant to increase aid to Syria to the five Security Council permanent members, including Russia. Moscow swiftly rebuked the proposal as a non-starter.

"Our Western partners in the Security Council ... proposed that we cooperate in working out a resolution. The ideas they shared with us were absolutely one-sided and detached from reality," said Lavrov after talks with Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra, Interfax reported.

Rupert Colville, spokesman for the UN human rights office in Geneva, said Syria's government had broken its obligations under international law, which requires states

to ensure minimum food supplies, essential medicine and safe water.

"Almost none of these obligations have been met in Old Homs, and various other besieged areas in recent months," Colville said.

Asked if UN human rights chief Navi Pillay thought it was time for a UN Security Council resolution to force the Syrian government to meet its obligations, he said: "We certainly would not object to actions by the Security Council."

Lavrov said Russia, which has used its veto power in the Security Council to block three Western-backed resolutions aimed at increasing pressure on Syria's government during the three-year-old conflict, would be ready to consider a draft only if it was "not about one-sided accusations aimed at the regime."

He also called upon the Security Council to approve a resolution condemning "terrorist activity" in Syria.

President Bashar Assad's government describes all of those fighting to oust him as terrorists and has pushed for efforts to combat "terrorism" to be the main focus of peace talks in Geneva.

Russia, a long-standing arms supplier to Damascus, has been Assad's main international protector throughout the civil war. Moscow rejects Western accusations that it is shielding the Syrian president and says the Syrian people, not foreign powers, should decide the future of Assad.

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