

Russian Delegation Drafts Constitutional Proposal for Syria

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Russia's delegation to the Syrian peace talks in Astana has submitted a new constitutional project to representatives of the Syrian opposition, the Interfax news agency reported.

The document is intended to expedite the drafting of a new Syrian constitution and "give it additional impetus," Russian Special Presidential Representative on Syria Alexander Lavrentiev said.

Lavrentiev also expressed hope that "the Syrian armed opposition in the future will be more active" in the conduct of a peaceful settlement and the establishment of the constitution. He said that Russia will await the opposition's response to the document.

"The draft constitution is now in the hands of the armed opposition, and we anticipate their response, which for us is very important and interesting from the point of view of further assistance," the Special Presidential Representative said.

On Jan. 23 talks between the representatives of the Damascus government and the opposition

began in Astana, Kazakhstan. The mediators in the negotiations between the delegations were Turkey and Iran, as well as the special representative of the UN Secretary General on Syria, Staffan de Mistura, and U.S. Ambassador George Krol as an observer.

During the first day of negotiations one of the leader of the group Jaish al-Islam (Army of Islam), Mohammed Alloush, said that the opposition arrived in Astana to consolidate the ceasefire, lift the blockade of cities, the release of prisoners and to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid.

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