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Russia Blocks UN Security Council Meeting on Human Rights in Syria

By Reuters

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Reuters

Russia on Monday blocked a meeting of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the human rights situation in Syria.

"We do not see any justification for this meeting since human rights is not a subject on the agenda of the security council," said Gennady Kuzmin, deputy permanent representative of Russia to the United Nations.

Russia is the largest international backer of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

France and six other members had called for the meeting, which was expected to include a briefing from Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

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"Our council needs to have all necessary information to understand the crisis that it is examining, including those pertaining to human rights. And this is particularly the case in Syria," said French UN ambassador Francois Delattre.

Kuzmin asked for a procedural vote and only eight delegations voted in favor of having the meeting, one short of the number required.

China, Bolivia and Kazakhstan voted with Russia to prevent the meeting, while Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia were abstentions.

Those who voted to hold the meeting alongside France were the United Kingdom, Sweden, Poland, Holland, the United States, Peru and Kuwait. All except Kuwait later hosted an informal meeting in which Zeid was expected to speak.

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