

Syria Constitution Body Could Be Agreed on Soon — Russian Official

By [Reuters](#)

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Russian Foreign Ministry

The Syrian government and armed opposition groups, together with both sides' backers, could agree on the makeup of a constitutional committee in coming months, Russian negotiator Alexander Lavrentyev said on Friday.

Forming a constitutional committee is key to political reforms and new elections meant to unify Syria and end an eight-year war which has killed hundreds of thousands and displaced about half of Syria's pre-war population of 22 million.

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The sides have so far failed to agree the constitutional committee's makeup, and a fresh round of talks in the Kazakh capital, Nur-Sultan, produced no apparent breakthrough on Friday. But

Lavrentyev said it was close.

Diplomats from Russia, Iran and Turkey will meet with United Nations negotiators in Geneva to discuss the issue again, he said, adding that the issue was "at the finish line."

"The timing has not been agreed yet, taking into account the upcoming month of Ramadan, it is most likely to happen after that," Lavrentyev told reporters. "But I think by that time (UN mediator) Mr Pedersen will be able to announce" the establishment of the committee.

Russia and Iran are supporters of the Syrian government, while Turkey was long a backer of rebels seeking to topple President Bashar al-Assad. The three countries have cooperated in trying to broker a peace agreement.

Ramadan starts on May 5 this year and ends on June 4.

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