

BREAKING: Russia Points to “Armed Groups” in Syria, Vetoes UN Security Council Draft Resolution

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The United Nations Security Council has just voted on a draft resolution concerning the ongoing violence in Syria. Russia and China were the only voting members to oppose the draft. And as permanent members of the UNSC, they had the option to use veto power to block the draft's passage. Beijing and Moscow have both taken issue with the draft's vague wording, which they say leaves the door open for possible international military intervention in Syria and creates a picture of the current situation that favors opposition forces over the Assad government. American Ambassador Susan Rice told the Security Council following the vote that the US was “disgusted” at Russia and China's decision to go against the resolution. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also warned that more blood would be shed in Syria if a resolution was not reached soon.

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin commented maintained that Russia's suggestions were not considered in the draft resolution.

“The Russian delegation was forced to vote against this draft resolution. We seriously regret this outcome of our joint work.” Churkin said that resolution's Western co-sponsors had not included key proposals such as isolating the Syrian opposition from violent extremist groups or a call to arms for other states to use their influence to prevent such alliances

“Unfortunately, some of our colleagues choose to make rather bizarre interpretations of the Russian proposals,” the Russian UN Ambassador said.

Churkin said the Russian delegation has been accused of rewriting the Arab League texts adopted months ago in the Security Council. “Indeed, they were adopted months ago and since that time the situation has evolved,” he said, pointing out that Syrian rebels used previous withdrawals of the Syrian troops to their benefit, occupying cities during cease-fires. “There is no rule that the Security Council should repeat verbatim all resolutions adopted by the original organizations. They are neither Koran nor Bible, and we can express our own views on texts adopted month ago.”

Russia and China reminded others that it was not their place to intervene in another country's domestic affairs. The news follows days of heated political debate in the UNSC, with many members supporting a Western-backed draft calling for foreign nations to put an end to what some called the “Syrian killing machine.”

And in a statement to the UN, US President Barack Obama urged the international community to protect the Syrian people from “abhorrent brutality.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told an audience at the Munich Security Conference that there are too few demands being placed on Syria’s armed opposition, and that the resolution could affect the outcome of political dialogue between the conflicting sides. Lavrov is set to visit the Syrian capital next Tuesday to conduct talks with President Bashar al-Assad. Meanwhile, Syria Tribune editor Ali Mohamad told RT that he doesn’t believe the Western backers of a UN Security Council resolution on Syria “are working for the best interests of the Syrian people.” Mohamad says “there was a very good chance this week to find a draft that could satisfy all sides – but it was not supported by Western countries.” “The Arab league initiative, supported by the Security Council, wants to portray an image where the problem is between Assad and the Syrian people, but this is not the reality.” Instead, Mohamad says, the problem lies between opposing parts of Syrian society – and has nothing to do with Assad’s removal. The vote came after the latest reports of government crackdowns on the western city of Homs on Friday in which an estimated 200 hundred people were killed, with eyewitness testimony of tanks and heavy artillery. The Syrian government denied involvement, dismissing the claims as an attempt to drum up international support for the draft resolution.

Video: Churkin’s statement

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