

Syrian Government and Opposition to Resume Talks in February



Geneva, January 31 (RHC)-- The United Nations says the Syrian opposition and government officials are to resume crisis talks in February.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in Berlin on Thursday that the Syrian delegations would leave Geneva on Friday to brief their leaders and return to the negotiating table in February. No date has yet been set.

The opposition delegation is to stop at the Munich Security Conference on Friday to meet with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and the UN chief, according to an opposition source.

There was no progress reported by either side on Thursday, before the last day of the first round of discussions on the three-year crisis in the Arab country. The official Syrian delegation proposed a draft communiqué on combating terrorism, which was rejected by the opposition. Government delegate Luma al-Chebel said: "Whoever refuses to sign the document on fighting terrorism is the one who supports terrorism."

Earlier, Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN-Arab League envoy for Syria, said that the Syrian government and opposition are unlikely to make "substantive" progress during the current round. Speaking after the fifth day of the talks, he said: "The ice is breaking slowly."

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