

# *Moscow and Beijing Stay Away from UN Security Council Meeting on Syria*

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United Nations, February 11 (RHC)-- Russia and China have skipped a UN Security Council meeting called to discuss a draft resolution that would impose more sanctions on Syria unless the government gives unrestricted access to deliver aid.

The Russian and Chinese ambassadors to the UN did not attend the meeting on Monday to discuss the resolution drafted by Australia, Jordan, and Luxembourg. Russian Ambassador to the UN Vitaly Churkin pledged to veto the proposed measure if necessary, saying that the resolution would increase tension in Syria.

Moscow's representative to the United Nations termed the resolution a "political measure" introduced "to whip up political tensions around Syria." The Russian ambassador added that the measure would endanger the Geneva talks being held in Switzerland.

On Monday, representatives of the Syrian government and foreign-backed opposition opened a second round of peace talks known as the Geneva 2 Conference. The latest talks come 10 days after the first round of negotiations ended without any positive results.

The Syrian government blamed the failure on the foreign-backed opposition, which insists on the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad and the formation of a transitional government. Damascus strongly rejects the demand, saying the Syrian people can only decide the issue.

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