

Russian President Says No Outsider Can Decide Who Should Rule Syria



Moscow, December 17 (RHC)-- Russia will never agree to the dictates of an outside force on who should rule Syria, Russian President Vladimir Putin says, stressing that only the Syrian people are to make such a decision.

Speaking at his annual end-of-the-year press briefing in Moscow, President Putin said the position of his country on the Syrian conflict is unchanged. "We believe that only the Syrian people can decide who should govern them," Putin said, adding that only a political solution could end the conflict in Syria.

The Russian president said a draft resolution on the Syrian conflict prepared by the United States at the United Nations Security Council was in general acceptable to Russia. The Security Council is due to vote on the draft resolution at a meeting on Friday. The document builds on the principles of the peace process agreed at the end of international talks on Syria in the Austrian capital of Vienna in November.

During his news conference in Moscow on Thursday, Putin also referred to recent tensions with Turkey after the country shot down a Russian fighter jet on the Syrian-Turkish border.

"It is hard for us to reach agreement with the current Turkish leadership, if at all possible," Putin said, adding that the downing of the Russian warplane was "an act of enmity" and that he did not understand why Turkey did it.

"What have they achieved? Maybe they thought that we would run away from there (Syria)? But Russia is not such a country."

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