

# *United Nations Security Council Unanimously Approves Syria Peace Process Resolution*

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United Nations, December 19 (RHC)-- The United Nations Security Council has unanimously adopted a resolution to endorse an international bid to end the nearly five-year-long crisis in Syria. The resolution, adopted on Friday, calls for Syrian peace talks on a transitional government to begin in early January. It also calls for a nationwide ceasefire in the war-torn country.

According to the resolution, a "credible, inclusive and non-sectarian" government should be established in Syria within six months and UN-supervised "free and fair elections" should be held within 18 months.

The transition process should be Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, the text says, stressing that the "Syrian people will decide the future of Syria." The resolution also emphasizes that the truce "will not apply to offensive or defensive actions" against terrorist groups operating in the Arab country.

Speaking during the Security Council meeting, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said the resolution puts the future of Syria in the hands of its people.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the resolution “is a clear response to attempts to impose a solution from the outside on Syrians on any issues, including those regarding its President” Bashar al-Assad. The resolution does not address the question of Assad's future.

Lavrov also praised the text’s potential for creating a united front against terrorism. The Russian foreign minister said: "Today's unanimous vote in the Council should pave the way for the formation of a broad front against terrorism on the basis of the UN Charter."

Also on Friday, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called for an end to the miserable situation of Syrians, who “have suffered enough.” Ban told the meeting: “Tens of thousands of people in besieged areas have been forced to live on grass and weeds. This is outrageous.”

During the UN Security Council meeting, Syrian Ambassador to the UN Bashar al-Jaafari said Damascus is prepared to participate in peace talks on Syria in good faith. He also criticized the "glaring contradictions" between the talk about letting the Syrians decide their future and meddling in his country's sovereignty by insisting on replacing President Assad.

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