

Foreign Ministry Says Russia Opposes External Political 'Recipes' for Syria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Foreign Ministry said Monday that plans for Syria's political future must not be forced on it from outside, underlining its hostility to foreign pressure for Syrian President Bashar Assad's exit and to Western backing for an opposition coalition.

In a statement about talks Sunday between international envoy Lakhdar Brahimi and Russian and U.S. officials, the Foreign Ministry reiterated calls for an end to violence and the start of talks on "the parameters of a transition period."

It said Russia "stressed that fundamental decisions about reforming Syria's political system ... must be made by Syrians themselves without outside interference or attempts to force prepared recipes for sociopolitical development" on them.

The United States and its NATO allies have pressed for Assad's departure as part of efforts to end the bloodshed in Syria, but Russia and China have blocked action against the Syrian

leader at the UN Security Council.

The ministry statement called for an immediate end to violence and "the start of a national dialogue, during which representatives of the Syrian government and opposition should discuss and agree on parameters of a transition period."

The statement appeared to be intended to underline that Russia is committed to helping Brahimi seek a solution to the 21-month conflict that would include talks on a political transition but also to express Russia's continued opposition to the precondition of Assad's exit.

Brahimi is seeking a solution based on a declaration issued June 30 after international talks in Geneva that called for a transitional government.

The proposal foundered at the time over the issue of Assad's fate. Washington said the declaration sent a clear signal that he should quit, but Russia said it did nothing of the kind.

The Russian statement Monday also signaled opposition to Western backing of the opposition Syrian National Coalition, which the United States could soon recognize as the sole representative of the Syrian people.

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