

Foreign Ministry Expects Moscow Talks Over Syria This Month

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The  **Moscow Times**

Syria's foreign minister is due for talks in Moscow later this month in the search for a breakthrough in the bloody civil war, Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said Wednesday.

"We want to have consultations in Moscow with Syria's foreign minister," Bogdanov said, Interfax reported. Bogdanov added that the visit by Walid al-Moualem was expected in late February.

Russia has dismissed Western criticism that it has been shielding Syrian President Bashar Assad in nearly two years of conflict, and it says Syrians should decide their own fate.

Moscow has also said Assad's departure should not be a precondition for talks between Damascus and the opposition.

(Reuters)

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