

Russia Opposes a Humanitarian Resolution on Syria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

February 06, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

The Syrian government reached an agreement with the United Nations on Thursday to secure the evacuation of hundreds of trapped civilians from besieged parts of the central city of Homs, according to Syria's state-run television.

It did not give further details but quoted Homs Governor Talal Barrazi as saying the evacuation would take place "very soon."

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said at a briefing Thursday that Moscow was encouraging the Syrian government to "cooperate constructively" with international humanitarian agencies to help improve conditions for civilians and to reach agreements on local truces and prisoners releases.

"The issue of delivering humanitarian aid to the old districts of Homs is now being solved," Lukashevich said. "According to the latest information, the government and the opposition

have reached such agreement. It is quite a positive signal," he said.

On Wednesday, Russia had said it opposed a new UN Security Council resolution on the humanitarian plight in Syria, an announcement which many saw as something likely to torpedo a Western and Arab-backed draft that would pressure the government and opposition to allow desperately needed aid into the country.

Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin told a press briefing that "hard, pragmatic and purposeful work is necessary" to resolve specific humanitarian issues — not a council resolution which will almost certainly aim "to politicize the problem."

Council diplomats said Wednesday that they expect to circulate a draft humanitarian resolution this week, following the failure of peace talks between the Syrian government and opposition to achieve any concrete results, especially on possible humanitarian aid convoys to besieged parts of the city of Homs.

Russia and China, which support the Syrian government, have vetoed three previous Western-backed resolutions that would have pressured President Bashar Assad to end the violence. The deeply divided council did come together in October to approve a weaker presidential statement appealing for immediate access to all areas of the country to deliver aid to millions of civilians.

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