

Kerry Calls On Russia to Push Assad in Peace Talks

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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JAKARTA — U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on Monday accused Syrian President Bashar Assad of stonewalling in peace talks and called on Russia to push its ally to negotiate with opposition leaders.

"Right now, Bashar Assad has not engaged in the discussions along the promised and required standard that both Russia spoke up for and the regime spoke up for," Kerry said during a press conference in Jakarta with Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa.

He said Assad's team "refused to open up one moment of discussion" of a transitional government to replace Assad's regime.

"It is very clear that Bashar Assad is trying to win this on the battlefield instead of coming to the negotiating table in good faith," Kerry said

Peace talks last week in Geneva ended with no progress toward breaking the impasse in the nearly three-year-old conflict in Syria.

Kerry, who called Syria "a tragedy to the world," also had harsh words for Assad's allies in Moscow.

"Russia needs to be a part of the solution and not be contributing so many more weapons and so much more aid that they are in fact enabling Assad to double down, which is creating an enormous problem," he said.

Russia has told the U.S. it was committed to helping create a transitional government, Kerry said, but has not delivered "the kind of effort to create the kind of dynamic by which that could be achieved."

On Sunday, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem blamed the U.S. for the breakdown in negotiations, saying the U.S. tried to "create a very negative climate for dialogue in Geneva."

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