

Australia's UN Envoy Criticizes Russian Plans to Boost Syria Aid

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Australia, along with Luxemburg and Jordan, has drafted a humanitarian resolution to boost aid to war-torn Syria.

UNITED NATIONS — A Russian proposal to open four border crossings into Syria for aid deliveries from Turkey, Iraq and Jordan "is not good enough" and needs more work to be included in a draft UN Security Council resolution, Australia's UN envoy has said.

Veto-wielding council members — the U.S., Britain, France, China and Russia — have been negotiating a humanitarian resolution drafted by Australia, Luxembourg and Jordan to boost aid assistance in war-torn Syria to millions of people in need.

Russia said Tuesday it has gained Syrian approval to open the border crossings named in the draft text by Australia, Luxembourg and Jordan under a "far-reaching formula." UN diplomats said this involved using monitors to inspect convoys.

But western UN diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, have expressed concern about proposed Syrian government conditions placed on the plan and how that could affect its potential operation on the ground.

"What we've been given by the Russians, which is a big improvement over what they gave us a week ago, is not good enough," Australian UN Ambassador Gary Quinlan told reporters. "It's not ready."

"We're still looking at it to see how it would work," he said. "We're going to make sure it works on the ground and guarantees greater access — the way it's constructed, we're not convinced that's the case."

Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said Tuesday he hoped the draft resolution could be adopted within days.

However, Quinlan said negotiations among the eight council members were continuing and action by the full 15-member council was not imminent. The draft resolution also still needs to be circulated to the remaining seven council members before a vote.

Syrian UN Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari said Wednesday that Syria was working with the Security Council members on the possibility of opening the four border crossings.

"We are currently speaking about the most appropriate mechanism of monitoring the humanitarian operations through these crossings," he told reporters.

The Security Council achieved rare unity in unanimously approving a resolution in February that demanded rapid, safe and unhindered aid access in Syria, where a three-year civil war has killed more than 150,000 people.

But that resolution has failed to make a difference, UN officials said. The UN says some 9.3 million people in Syria — half the country's population — need help, of which some 4.7 million people are in hard-to-reach areas. Another 2.8 million people have fled the conflict.

"The situation continues to deteriorate at a dramatic and alarming rate, which we have been saying for far too long," senior UN humanitarian official John Ging said Thursday.

Unlike the February resolution, Western council members want any follow-up resolution to be enforceable. Russia, supported by China, has previously vetoed four resolutions threatening any action against its ally, Syrian President Bashar Assad.

See also:

[Russia Says Humanitarian Aid in Ukraine Is Example for UN in Syria](#)

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