The Afghan government and Taliban insurgents began a three-day truce on Monday, in an attempt to set the stage for peace talks and reduce civilians’ suffering, officials said.

The truce was a major milestone on the long road to a negotiated settlement in a war that has lasted for two decades, said the Taliban’s political office in Doha, Qatar, which oversees negotiations in Moscow.

The Taliban’s announcement came amid mounting efforts to end the war, which has left more than 100,000 people dead and displaced millions. The United States and other countries have been pushing for a negotiations-based peace process, but talks have been stalled.

The truce was set to begin at midnight on Monday and last until Wednesday. It comes just weeks before the opening of the 2021 peace talks in Doha.

The Taliban have repeatedly called for a ceasefire, and the Afghan government has also expressed interest in a truce to reduce violence and allow for talks.

The announcement was welcomed by officials on both sides, but it remains to be seen whether the truce will hold.

The Taliban have said they are willing to discuss a political settlement, but they have also called for the withdrawal of foreign troops and the release of their prisoners.

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