Syrian Rebels Suspend Talks over Alleged Truce Violations

BERLIN - Syrian government and rebel groups who have been fighting each other with their weapons in Damascus attacked the countryside of Latakia, northwest of Damascus on Monday, the day that the UN Security Council made its final report on the situation in the war-torn country. The two groups said they were suspending talks about a proposed ceasefire because of what they described as regime violations and attempts to create a diversion.

The cross-fire, brokered by Russia and Turkey, is meant to be followed by talks in the Russian capital of Moscow in early March. The talks aim to set up a framework for a new round of direct talks between the Syrian government and the opposition.

The moves came as the United States, France and Britain welcomed the Russian peace envoy's announcement that a six-week ceasefire would begin on Tuesday. The talks in Moscow are expected to involve the main players in the Syrian conflict, including President Bashar al-Assad's government, its allies in Iran and Russia, and the main rebel groups.

US Ambassador to the UN Nicholas de Meara, who is leading the US delegation in the talks, said on Monday that the US welcomes the Russian peace envoy's announcement that a six-week ceasefire would begin on Tuesday. The talks in Moscow are expected to involve the main players in the Syrian conflict, including President Bashar al-Assad's government, its allies in Iran and Russia, and the main rebel groups.

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