
Ceasefire in Syria to commence at midnight on Feb. 27 – Russia & US

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According to the statement, the truce will *“be applied to [all] those parties to the Syrian conflict that have indicated their commitment”* to accept its terms. It will exclude Islamic State, Al Nusra Front and *“other terrorist organizations designated by the UN Security Council.”*

The ceasefire plan also stipulates that other parties should indicate *“their commitment to and acceptance of the terms for the cessation of hostilities”* by no later than 12:00 (Damascus time) on February 26.

Russia and the United States have also pledged to *“exchange pertinent information,”* including data that helps delineate territories held by Islamic State and other terrorist groups from those *“where groups that have indicated their commitment to and acceptance of the cessation of hostilities are active.”*

The document also announces the establishment of an International Syria Support Group (ISSG) Ceasefire Task Force under the auspices of the UN. It will be tasked with identifying territories held by terrorists, ensuring communications between all parties in order to *“rapidly de-escalate tensions,”* and reporting any *“persistent non-compliant behavior by any of the parties.”*

Riad Hijab, a coordinator for the Supreme Negotiations Committee – a group of Syrian opposition forces backed by Turkey and Saudi Arabia – also confirmed that a provisional agreement has been reached. He added that the deal would be *“according to international guarantees.”*

The announcement comes just a day after multiple blasts rocked the Syrian cities of Damascus and Homs, claiming the lives of more than 114 people and wounding hundreds.

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83 people were killed and almost 200 injured when two suicide bombers reportedly blew themselves up in the crowd gathered in the area of the first blast.

Earlier on the same day, at least 34 people died in a double bombing attack in Homs. According to some reports the death toll in the incident reached 46 with more than 110 injured.

On Sunday, Syrian President Bashar Assad said Damascus is ready for a ceasefire, but will not tolerate terrorists exploiting it to restore their positions, adding that the Syrian Army will still continue fight Al-Nusra and Islamic State, as well as radical Islamist Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Islam.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his US counterpart, John Kerry, recently discussed the Syrian crisis and efforts aimed at starting the peace process in the country.

On Saturday, the two ministers discussed *"practical cooperation"* on Syria between the US and Russia during a telephone call. They also exchanged their views on the progress of the inter-Syrian talks in Geneva, paying attention to the issue of developing *"modalities"* towards reaching a ceasefire.

At the same time, US and Russian representatives in Geneva agreed on a document outlining the cessation of violence in Syria. It stipulates the measures that each party in the conflict should take to reach a truce.

On Sunday, Lavrov had two more telephone conversations with Kerry and the two ministers discussed different aspects of the future armistice. After speaking to Lavrov by phone, Kerry said the they had reached a provisional agreement on the major terms of the truce.
