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Press release on Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's meeting with representatives of the Syrian opposition

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On January 27, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov received a delegation of the Syrian political opposition in Moscow, including representative of the Moscow Group Qadri Jamil, a leader of the Popular Front for Change and Liberation; Randa Kassis, representative of the Astana Group and Chair of the Movement for a Pluralistic Society; Cairo Group representatives Jihad Makdissi and Jamal Suleiman; Hasan Ismael Abdulazeem, General Coordinator of the National Coordination Body for Forces of Democratic Change and a member of the Higher Negotiations Committee; Hmeymim Group Chairman Ilian Masaad; representatives of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party and Kurdish Self-Government for Northern Syria Khaled Issa and Ali Abdessalyam; leader of the Building the Syrian State Party Louay Hussein; and leader of the People's Will Party Alya Arafat.

That same day, Special Presidential Representative for the Middle East and Africa and Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov held in-depth consultations with the Syrian opposition delegation.

Syrian opposition activists representing various political associations and factions were briefed on Russia's assessment of the January 23-24 international meeting on Syria in Astana. At the same time, Mr Lavrov urged the partners to take an active part in launching a sustained negotiating process for a Syrian political settlement in Geneva, in cooperation with UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura.

A new draft Syrian constitution, prepared jointly by Russian and Arab experts and distributed by the Russian delegation in Astana, was presented to the meeting participants.

Representatives of the Syrian domestic and external opposition praised Russia's efforts toward resolving the Syrian crisis as quickly as possible through an inclusive intra-Syrian dialogue under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, decisions of the International Syria Support Group and the Geneva communique of June 30, 2012.

The Syrian negotiators voiced their intention to establish working groups for constitutional issues and for establishing a consolidated opposition delegation at the upcoming round of intra-Syrian talks in Geneva under UN auspices.

