

RUSSIA CHINA DOUBLE VETO: Veto of UN draft aims at political solution to Syrian crisis

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Global Research, February 05, 2012

[Xinhua News Agency](#) 5 February 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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BEIJING: Russia and China's double veto of an Arab-European draft resolution on Syria Saturday was aimed at further seeking a peaceful settlement of the chronic Syrian crisis and preventing possible drastic and risky solutions to it.

It was the second time since last October that Russia and China used a double veto to block a UN Security Council draft on Syria, which they deemed was not the best choice to promote peace in the Middle East country.

The unadopted draft meant to say the UN Security Council "fully supports" the Jan. 22 Arab League plan to ask Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to step down, one of the major stumbling blocks in pre-vote consultations.

With the veto, Russia and China believed more time and patience should be given for a political solution to the Syrian crisis, which would prevent the Syrian people from more turbulence and fatalities.

Hours before the Security Council's vote on the draft, Russia circulated an amended resolution, which it said "aims to fix two basic problems." The first was the imposition of conditions on dialogue, and the second was that measures must be taken to influence not only the government but also anti-government armed groups.

"The draft resolution that was put to a vote did not adequately reflect the real state of affairs in Syria and has sent an unbalanced signal to the Syrian parties," Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said after the vote.

For his part, Li Baodong, the Chinese permanent representative to the United Nations, regretted the Russian amendments were ignored.

"China supports the revision proposals raised by Russia," Li told the council, adding the request for continued consultation on the draft by some council members is reasonable."

"To push through a vote when parties are still seriously divided over the issue will not help maintain the unity and authority of the Security Council, or help resolve the issue," he said.

The United Nations put the total death toll in Syria during the months-long unrest at more than 5,400, while the Syrian government said more than 2,000 army and security personnel have been killed.

In order to deter fresh bloodshed and violence, an inclusive political process should be started immediately in Syria, and it is the Syrian people instead of outside forces that should decide its fate.

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