

# Syria Peace Talks In Astana. What To Expect?

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*Negotiations between the Syrian government and the so-called “opposition groups” kicked off in the Kazakh capital of Astana on January 23. Jaish al-Islam is the biggest militant group which participates in the talks. Another powerbroker, Ahrar al-Sham, which had been set to participate in the negotiations, rejected the idea last week.*

In total 15 armed groups arrived to participate in the event. While the involved groups don't have a united command, they all have one main foreign backer – Turkey. So, de-facto, the success of the Ankara talks will depend on ability of Ankara, Damascus, Moscow and Tehran to reach some appropriate compromise.

Meanwhile, Ankara has announced that it does not see a reason to push “Assad must go” mantra and prefers to focus on keeping its influence in northern Syria between Jarabulus and Azaz.

The most practical goal of the talks is to agree terms and conditions of the ceasefire in order to improve the humanitarian conditions in the areas where it's implemented. However, even in this case, many will depend on ability of Ankara to control its proxies on the ground.

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