

# *Vatican Calls for Iranian Participation in Syria Conference*

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Vatican City, January 15 (RHC)-- The Vatican says Iran should be invited to the upcoming international conference on Syria crisis later this month. A statement issued by Vatican City said: "To build the basis for regional peace, Geneva II needs to ensure inclusive participation of all parties... within the region and beyond."

The Vatican also called for an "immediate" ceasefire to clashes in Syria "without political preconditions," and the start of dialogue among belligerent sides.

Speaking during a joint press conference with Lebanese Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour in Beirut, Iran Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Tehran is ready to attend the upcoming international talks on Syria unrest, if it is invited without any preconditions. Foreign powers should not set preconditions for anyone to take part in the meeting, said the top Iranian diplomat, adding that foreigners had better let the Syrian people be in charge of their country's affairs.

The Syria conference is scheduled to be held in Switzerland in two parts. On January 22nd, the opening session of the event will be held in the Swiss city of Montreux and then it will be moved to the UN Office in Geneva on January 24th.

Syria has been gripped by a deadly crisis since 2011. According to reports, the Western powers and their regional allies -- especially Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey -- are supporting the mercenaries operating

inside the country.

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