

UN Security Council Approves Aleppo Evacuation Plan



United Nations, December 19 (RHC)-- The U.N. Security Council Monday unanimously passed a resolution requiring U.N. monitors during evacuations from the besieged Syrian city of Aleppo.

The resolution called on U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon "to take urgent steps to make arrangements, including security arrangements in consultation with interested parties, to allow the observation by the United Nations and other relevant institutions of the well-being of civilians... inside the eastern districts of the city of Aleppo."

It also asked for "adequate, neutral monitoring and direct observation" of the evacuations to take place, as well as for all parties to provide monitors with "safe, immediate, and unimpeded access."

The evacuations are part of a deal between the Syrian government and opposition, brokered by Turkey and Russia, which allows for the evacuations of militants and their families from eastern Aleppo, in exchange for the departure of civilians from the northern rebel-held villages of al-Foua

and Kefraya, Idlib province.

The deal came as thousands more were evacuated from the last rebel-held enclave in east Aleppo.

Convoys of buses reached areas of countryside to the west of the city in cold winter weather, according to a U.N. Official. Other reports say that some 20,000 civilians had been evacuated from Aleppo so far.

The evacuation of civilians, including wounded people, from the two villages had been demanded by the Syrian army and its allies before they would allow fighters and civilians trapped in Aleppo to depart. The stand-off halted the Aleppo evacuation over the weekend, especially after some of the buses sent to al-Foua and Kefraya to carry evacuees out were attacked and torched by armed men who are suspected of being opposition fighters.

The foreign and defense ministers of Russia, Iran and Turkey will hold talks in Moscow on Tuesday aimed at giving fresh impetus for a solution in Aleppo.

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