

# *Iranian President Criticizes Backtracking on Tehran Over Geneva II*

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Tehran, January 24 (RHC)-- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has criticized the United Nations over its decision to rescind an invitation to Iran to participate in Geneva II talks on the Syria crisis, saying the move is to the detriment of the world body.

In an exclusive interview with Euronews, Rouhani said the UN is the “ultimate loser” of the move by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The Iranian leader said: “Firstly, we consider it as our humanitarian duty to do anything to prevent the bloodshed in Syria, and anything that helps the well-being of the Syrian people. Stability in the region is very important for us. The civil war in Syria is not tolerable.”

The president of the Islamic Republic of Iran noted: “Regarding the invitation, we are ready to take part in any gathering aimed at helping the Syrian people. I am disappointed about what has happened. Not for ourselves or for Iran. I am disappointed for the United Nations and for its secretary-general.”

Earlier this week, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Tehran had been invited to the Geneva II conference but later retracted the invitation under pressure from the United States, Saudi Arabia and the foreign-backed Syrian opposition.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Tuesday that the UN chief’s move was “regrettable,” stressing that Ban rescinded Iran’s invitation “as a result of the pressure exerted on him.”

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