

# *Damascus Slams U.S. Military Presence in Syria as Aggression*

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Damascus, November 15 (RHC)-- Syria has strongly condemned the U.S. military presence in the country, describing such a deployment as an act of aggression since it does not have any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate. "The presence of U.S. troops or any foreign military contingent in Syria, without the consent of the Syrian government, constitutes an act of aggression, an attack on the country's sovereignty and a flagrant violation of United Nations principles," Syria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates said in a statement released on Tuesday.

The statement came a day after U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis said: "We are not going to just walk away right now" before the UN-sponsored peace talks yield results. The Syrian foreign ministry "categorically rejected" the comments. It said Mattis's comments expose the subversive agenda of the US administration, and its "clear" collusion with Daesh and other terrorist groups in addition to its constant quest to thwart all efforts aimed at finding a solution to the current Syrian crisis.

The United States seeks to inflame tensions in the Middle East region in favor of the Israeli regime and impose its hegemony on regional countries and resources, the Syrian foreign ministry stated. "Linking the U.S.'s presence in Syria to a settlement process is just a pretext and an attempt to justify this presence," the statement pointed out. And it added: "The United States and others will not be able to impose any solution with military pressure – on the contrary, this presence will only prolong and complicate the crisis."

The statement then demanded the “immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces” from Syrian territory. Seven previous rounds of UN-backed peace negotiations between representatives of the Syrian government and delegates from foreign-sponsored armed opposition have failed to produce concrete results.

A new round of talks is scheduled to take place beginning November 28th, with UN special envoy on Syria Staffan de Mistura heading them.

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