

# *U.S. Calls on Syria Opposition to Attend Geneva II*

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Washington, January 17 (RHC)-- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has called on Syria's divided foreign-backed opposition to join the upcoming peace conference in Geneva. Kerry said in remarks published on Thursday that the purpose of the Geneva II conference is to find a way to install a transitional government.

The U.S. secretary of state said the opposition can veto any names, including President Bashar al-Assad, for an interim leadership. Kerry also said that the talks in Geneva are the only way to end the deadly crisis in Syria.

The Geneva II conference will open in the Swiss city of Montreux on Wednesday, January 22nd. The conference is seen as a chance to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

According to reports, the Western powers and their regional allies -- namely Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey -- are supporting the militants operating inside Syria. A recent British defense study published by IHS Jane's showed that about 100,000 mercenaries, fragmented into 1,000 groups, are fighting in Syria against the government and people.

On January 7th, the UN said its human rights office had stopped counting the victims of the Syrian conflict, confirming that it could no longer verify the sources of information that led to its last count.

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