

UN Envoy Puts Syrian Death Toll at 400,000



Geneva, April 23 (RHC)-- The United Nations special envoy for Syria says some 400,000 people have lost their lives as a result of more than five years of foreign-sponsored conflict gripping the Arab country.

Speaking on the sidelines of Syria peace talks in the Swiss city of Geneva on Friday, Staffan de Mistura said the figure was based on his "own analysis" and thus "not verified." He initially released the death toll in an interview with Swiss TV. De Mistura's figures come while the UN has stopped officially counting the toll, citing lack of access to accurate data.

The UN envoy's figure was close to a February calculation by the Syrian Center for Policy Research, which said the crisis in the Middle Eastern state has claimed the lives of over 470,000 people.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. Damascus says Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar are the main supporters of the militants fighting the government forces.

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