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Political solution in Syria a must, says Russian FM



There must be a political solution to the Syrian conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at a joint press conference with the head of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

There are thousands of foreign men fighting with the rebels against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces, Lavrov added.

"Distorting the facts [of what happened] in Qusayr is unacceptable," he said, referring to "hypocritical" statements by the United States.

Washington condemned the Syrian government's assault on the strategic south-western city, which had been in rebel hands.

The United States accused the Assad regime of depending on Lebanon's militant group Hezbollah, which is back by Iran, to win the fight for Qusayr.

"It's clear that the regime couldn't contest the opposition's control of Qusayr on its own, and is depending on Hezbollah and Iran to do its work for it," said White House spokesperson Jay Carney.

Meanwhile, OIC chief Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu said the Syrian government's membership in the organization had been suspended.

The situation in Syria is "getting more difficult," and "negatively affects its neighboring countries," Ihsanoglu added. "The battles are starting to take on a sectarian nature."

However, he said the OIC fully supports the Geneva 2 conference, a US-Russian peace initiative to resolve the Syrian crisis.

“The conference must help in stopping the violence in the country and guarantee a transition of power,” said Ihsanoglu.

Geneva 2, reportedly scheduled to take place in July, aims to bring rebels and regime representatives to the negotiating table.

Assad’s government said it is willing to take part in the conference, but the opposition said it will only participate if Hezbollah and Iranian forces withdraw from Syria.