

Council Negotiations on Syria Resolution

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What's In Blue

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This afternoon Council members will start negotiations at permanent representative level on a revised European draft on Syria. The draft was circulated to Council members yesterday evening. It seems that Russia has also circulated a draft text on Syria but has not called for a meeting. It is possible that the draft resolution may be tabled for a vote by the end of the week.

The previous draft which was put in blue on 26 August included the freezing of assets of President Bashar al-Assad and 22 key Syrian figures plus four entities as well as a travel ban on 22 individuals. It also included an arms embargo, set up a new sanctions committee and requested the Secretary-General to create a panel of experts to support the work of the new sanctions committee. A previous Russian draft was also put in blue on 26 August which called on the Syrian government to implement announced reforms but did not include sanctions.

Apparently the new European draft does not include the sanctions elements. However, it conveys the intention to adopt such measures if Syria does not comply with the resolution within a specified time frame. It appears the sanctions issue continues to be the main point of tension among Council members and will likely be the focus of today's negotiations.

It seems that the two resolutions present variations on the nature of the Syrian crisis. The Russian draft appears to outline concerns regarding sovereignty and non-intervention. It apparently also includes language more in line with the Syrian state position on the nature of the crisis. The European draft also stresses the need for an inclusive Syrian-led process but one which should take place in an environment free from political repression and violence. The European draft resolution also apparently calls for the Secretary-General to provide regular follow-up while the Russian draft includes language on considering the situation one month after adoption.

It appears that all Council members are concerned about the level of violence and most feel that Syrian promises of reform have yet to yield results. It seems because the new European draft only includes trigger language on sanctions, combined with the increased regional censure of the Syrian regime, there may be a shift by members who had been resistant in the past.

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