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# Assad says Syria waiting for US action on negotiations

President says any change in international attitude welcome, after John Kerry appears to signal change in US stance.

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Bashar al-Assad has replied to John Kerry's remarks that Syria should be included in negotiations to reach a political transition, saying his government will decide on the issue after seeing "actions".

The Syrian president was responding to comments by the US secretary of state during an Sunday interview to American television channel CBS.

Kerry did not repeat the standard US line that Assad had lost all legitimacy over the conflict in Syria and so had to go.

"[We have to negotiate in the end](#)," Kerry said when asked whether the US would be willing to negotiate with Assad.

President Assad said in comments broadcast on Syrian state television: "We are still hearing the declarations and we should wait for actions and then decide."

Kerry said the US and other countries, which he did not name, were exploring ways to revive the diplomatic process to end the conflict in Syria, which has left more than 200,000 people dead and displaced about half the population.

"What we're pushing for is to get him [Assad] to come and do that, and it may require that there be increased pressure on him of various kinds in order to do that," he said.

## **Assad's condition**

Assad said that any change in international attitude regarding Syria's situation would be positive.

However, he reiterated that foreign countries should stop supporting "terrorist groups" in Syria, a term his government uses for armed opposition groups who have been battling the army and allied fighters for four years.

"Any talk on the future of the Syrian president is for the Syrian people and all the declarations from outside do not concern us," Assad said.

The US has long insisted that Assad must be replaced through a negotiated political transition, although the rise of a common enemy, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), appears to have

softened the West's stance towards him.

Marie Harf, State Department spokesperson, said later on Sunday that Kerry was not specifically referring to Assad, with whom the US would never negotiate.

France, a major US ally, said its position was unchanged and that Assad could not be part of a negotiated solution in Syria.

When asked about Kerry's remarks on Monday, Mevlut Cavusoglu, Turkish foreign minister, called Assad's government "the reason for all the problems" in Syria.

"[What is there to negotiate with Assad?](#)" he said. "What will you negotiate with a regime which has killed more than 200,000 people and used chemical weapons? What result is achieved through negotiations so far today?"

Two rounds of peace talks last year in the Swiss city of Geneva failed to halt the conflict, which started when security forces cracked down on peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations in 2011.

Source: Al Jazeera and agencies