

Foreign Minister Steinmeier on the situation in Aleppo

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29.07.2016 - Press release 

Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier issued the following statement today (29 July) on the situation in Aleppo:

There is a real risk that a new and terrible chapter of the Syrian tragedy is about to commence. The siege around Aleppo has the potential to become a dire humanitarian catastrophe. Hundreds of thousands of people in Aleppo are totally cut off and the humanitarian situation is disastrous.

Those who, like the Syrian regime, have triggered the crisis with carpet-bombing campaigns all the while offering unsafe escape routes, are playing a cynical game, forcing the people to make a cruel choice and, ultimately, ruling out any prospect of resuming the Geneva talks.

Russia shoulders particularly great responsibility in this difficult situation on account of its support for the Syrian army and air force. We therefore urgently call on Moscow to prevail upon the Assad regime to implement a ceasefire in Aleppo, to work with the United Nations at last and to facilitate humanitarian access to the people in Aleppo together with international aid organisations.

Exercising military restraint and allowing humanitarian aid to reach people trapped in besieged areas are what is needed right now. We need there to be an end to the violence and a return to the negotiating table.

Military escalation would be a serious error that would make achieving a political settlement a far-distant prospect.

The situation in Aleppo and surrounds makes Russo-American understanding all the more urgent. I trust that the ongoing talks between Washington and Moscow will yield results that will help to de-escalate the situation in the city.

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