

Statement of the Federal Foreign Office on the agreement on de-escalation zones in Syria

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06.05.2017 - Press release 

A Federal Foreign Office Spokesperson issued the following statement today (6 May) on the agreement on de-escalation zones in Syria that came into effect in the early hours of Saturday:

At midnight, the agreement came into force that was reached between Russia, Iran and Turkey and that aims to set up de-escalation zones in Syria.

Many of the details have not yet been worked out. We also have heard worrisome reports of violations that at this time are difficult to verify. If, in the coming days and weeks, the attempt to halt fighting in four particularly hard-fought regions of Syria should indeed succeed, then this would send an important signal. However, it can only be a first step towards a successful ceasefire in all of Syria.

Any initiative that reduces violence and ensures that humanitarian aid and personnel can now finally gain unhindered access to the suffering population is in principle to be welcomed. However, the Astana agreement is also clearly an obligation. All participants now have a responsibility to do what they can to ensure that the agreement holds and is respected. Russia and Iran in particular, whose support the Syrian regime is counting on, should contribute to this.

Moreover, the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva should now be swiftly resumed, so that what was achieved in Astana can become part of the Geneva process, under UN (United Nations) leadership. The closer these two efforts can be linked, the greater a chance there will be that the commitments Russia, Iran and Turkey have entered into will be maintained in the long term, and that this will create true hope for the people in Syria.

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