

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 18, 2011 9:17 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Syria wants amendments to Arab monitoring plan (Reuters)

From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Friday, November 18, 2011 09:13 AM
To: NEWS-NEA; Syria Unrest; NEWS-Mahogany
Subject: Syria wants amendments to Arab monitoring plan (Reuters)

CAIRO, Nov 18 (Reuters) - Syria has asked for amendments to a plan to send Arab League observers to Syria to assess the situation there where troops are cracking down on anti-government protests, the League chief said on Friday.

The Syrian request is being studied, the League said.

The pan-Arab body based in Cairo has demanded an end to bloodshed and called for monitors to be sent to Syria as part of an Arab initiative aimed at ending the violence and starting talks between the government and the Syrian opposition.

The League suspended Syria this week. It has also drawn up a plan with civil society groups for a 500-strong fact-finding team that will include military personnel. Damascus had said it welcomed a League-backed mission whatever the make-up.

League chief Nabil Elaraby said in a statement he had received a letter from Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moualem "including amendments to the draft protocol regarding the legal status and duties of the monitoring mission of the Arab League to Syria" agreed by a League ministerial council on Wednesday.

"These amendments are now under study," the statement quoted Elaraby as saying.

He said the Syrian request was made in a letter received on Thursday evening.

The League has threatened sanctions if Syria does not heed by the end of the week the Arab peace plan that entails a military pullout from around restive Syrian cities and towns.

France and Turkey called on Friday for more international pressure on Syria to end the violent crackdown on opponents of President Bashar al-Assad, while activists said security forces shot dead five people protesting after weekly prayers.

NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.