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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2012 08:08 PM
To: NEWS-Mahogany
Subject: Army, rebels agree ceasefire in Syrian town - opposition (Reuters)

AMMAN, Jan 17 (Reuters) - Syrian troops fighting rebels in the town of Zabadani near Lebanon agreed on Tuesday to a ceasefire under which the army would withdraw and insurgents would leave the streets, a senior opposition leader in contact with residents said.

"Tank bombardments have stopped. Preachers are broadcasting the agreement from the minarets of Zabadani," Kamal al-Labwani told Reuters.

"I think stiff resistance and defections among the attacking forces have forced the regime to negotiate. We will see if it will stick to the deal. The pullout is due to begin tomorrow," he added.

There was no comment from the Syrian authorities and official media had not mentioned the assault.

Zabadani, a town of 40,000, 30 km (19 miles) northwest of Damascus in the foothills of the mountains which separate Lebanon from Syria, has seen regular big demonstrations demanding the removal of President Bashar al-Assad.

Troops backed by tanks attacked the town on Friday, in the biggest military offensive since Arab monitors went into the country last month.

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