Closed-Door Meeting

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Closed-Door Meeting

Members of the United Nations Security Council have convened for a closed-door meeting to discuss the situation in Syria following a massacre of more than 100 civilians in the western township of Houla.

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Tchourkine

German UN Ambassador Peter Wittig told reporters ahead of the talks that the Security Council was planning to consider a possibility of sending more UN monitors to Syria to reinforce the current 300-strong mission, as well as opportunities to influence the Syrian regime with the aim of ending violence in the country torn by a severe political crisis.

He also said it was a lack of UN action on Syria that has led to the aggravation of the 15-month old crisis.

The Security Council has condemned “in the strongest terms” the Houla massacre, in which over 100 people, including some 50 children and 30 women, were killed in cold blood late last week.

UN peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous said on Tuesday there was “strong suspicion” that militia loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad carried out the massacre.

He also said the Syrian government was responsible for part of the deaths in Houla, as monitors confirmed that artillery and tank shells - which only government forces have – had been fired at Houla’s residential areas.

On Wednesday, UN monitors said they had discovered 13 bound corpses in eastern Syria, many

of them apparently shot in the head from a short distance.

The Syrian government has denied its involvement in the killings, blaming them on “armed terrorists.”