

Lavrov: Russia has info about Ukraine's Right Sector involved in Kiev sniper shooting

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Russia will respond if the European Union issues Schengen visas to Crimean residents only on Ukrainian passports

Russia has some information about Ukrainian far-right movement Right Sector involved in the shooting of snipers in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview with Sunday Time programme anchored by Irada Zeinalova on Channel One on Sunday. Pettiness of foreign sponsors of new authorities in Kiev is astonishing, he added.

"We have some information about it. We shared our concerns and suspicions. I cannot affirm with absolute determination, but there is a good deal of facts that point to this. Certainly, it is needed to recheck them. I hope that an investigation which current Ukrainian leaders announced will be finalised and will not be swept under carpet," Lavrov noted.

Russia will respond if the European Union issues Schengen visas to Crimean residents only on Ukrainian passports, Lavrov said.

"People who live in Crimea and who chose Russian citizenship are not related to geopolitics. They want to live in a country which meets their cultural and language request, their so-called "gene pool"," Lavrov noted.

"If the European Union takes such steps, I am convinced that we will reply to this so that the EU will understand that blatant violation of human rights is unacceptable," the Russian foreign minister added.

Russian language in Ukraine

Kiev authorities find Ukraine's federalisation and the Russian language status as the second state language unacceptable, Lavrov said.

"Andrey Deshchitsa [interim Ukrainian foreign minister] stated that our proposal was unacceptable, because federalisation contradicts fundamental principles of state system in Ukraine," Lavrov said. "This is unclear why it is so. I am not aware of such principles," he added.

"Secondly, the idea to make Russian language the second state language is also unacceptable for him," the Russian top diplomat went on to say in comments on results of talks with Deshchitsa in the Hague. "This was stated amid well-known statements by Ukrainian Foreign Ministry and other officials of current Ukrainian authorities that Russians

and Russian language are not system-forming factors of Ukrainian state in terms of ethnogenesis,” Lavrov added.

Russian troops in the Crimea

No one cancelled the right for moving armed forces in the homeland, Russian Foreign Minister said,

“Russian military forces are based on the territory of our country. From time to time they hold scheduled, unscheduled and surprise military exercises, as any countries respecting themselves do, because the latter are concerned so that their armed forces will be in combat order,” Lavrov noted.

The recent war games “were transparent and met fully criteria in effect in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).” “All required information about it was sent. In reply to requests made to us we have permitted foreign inspectors including the Americans and Ukrainians to monitor it,” the minister noted.

“Within the Treaty of Open Skies under which flights are made over the territories of signatory nations for air surveillance, such flights were made just a couple of weeks ago at Ukraine’s request,” Lavrov added. “In reports of foreign observers delivered upon results of these inspections we did not find any affirmations that Russia was involved in any dangerous activity during these military manoeuvres,” the Russian top diplomat said.

“We do not have any evil intent and are still open for honest talks. However, no one cancelled the right to move armed forces on your own territory,” the Russian foreign minister added.

Russia, US, EU dialogue

Russia, the United States and the European Union should urge Kiev authorities to launch a dialogue in all Ukraine, Sergey Lavrov said.

“We meet regularly with John Kerry [U.S. Secretary of State]. It is surprising for me that the Europeans gave a free hand to Washington to deal with Ukrainian issues regarding relations with Russia,” Lavrov noted. “Ideas of forming a contact group [on Ukrainian crisis] are being worked out, we have already said about this many times. A contact group is contemplated as a structure in which Europe and the U.S. will “supervise” how we and Ukrainians start to come to terms on something,” the Russian top diplomat said.

“This is unacceptable, because the problem is not in our relations with Ukraine, but in the fact that Ukrainian society is in a deep crisis of statehood,” he added.

Therefore, Russia proposed another approach. “If our Western partners are prepared Russia, the U.S. and the EU will be able to set up a group of support to Ukraine and to formulate general appeals to those who rule in Ukraine now so that they will put forward an initiative of a dialogue in the whole country and will invite all political forces without exception [naturally not armed radicals] and regions to enter in equitable talks,” the minister noted. “Their outcome will become a new Ukrainian constitution that will ensure a federal system of government that confirms and stipulates an off-bloc position of the country and will guarantee the rights of those who live in Ukraine, primarily, Russian-speaking population is surely important for us, but also the rights of Czechs, Hungarians, Germans and other

nationalities living there,” the foreign minister added.

“If our partners are prepared for this, we are open for broadest co-operation,” Lavrov said. “But current Ukrainian authorities should make a first step to extend a friendly hand to all Ukrainian citizens, all regions, offer them enter in equitable, open dialogue on the future of their homeland. We will be completely prepared to co-operate closely on this path,” the Russian foreign minister added.

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