

Lavrov Criticizes Mideast Quartet as 'Passive'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has criticized the Middle East Quartet mediating the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"We have been long attracting the attention of our partners to the fact that the Mideast Quartet is inadmissibly passive," Lavrov told Lebanese TV channel Al Mayadeen in a recent interview.

"It actually does not work, its activity has been paralyzed," he said.

Lavrov said some top members of the Quartet, which consists of the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and Russia, could have met on several occasions at the ministerial level but failed to because U.S. colleagues were not ready.

"We are concerned about that [the absence of ministerial meetings] as criticism of the Quartet

is just, but we do not want to be criticized undeservingly as Russia is seeking the resumption of the negotiating process," the Russian foreign minister said.

The Russian leadership pledged in March to provide continued support to Palestinians in their bid to establish an independent state and to resolve a decades-long conflict with Israel.

The Palestinian Authority was recognized by the United Nations as a non-member observer state in November 2012, in a vote that amounted to an implicit recognition of Palestinian statehood. In early January, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas signed a decree renaming the Palestinian National Authority "the State of Palestine."

The Palestinians are seeking to create an independent state on the territories of the West Bank and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and want Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territories it occupied after the 1967 war.

Israel has, however, refused to return to the 1967 borders and is unwilling to consider giving up a part of Jerusalem, which it says is the indivisible capital of the Jewish state.

Russia and the Palestinians enjoyed close relations during the Soviet era and the Soviet Union recognized an independent Palestinian state in 1988. Post-Soviet Russia continues to advocate a strong Palestinian state and peace in the Middle East.

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