

Moscow Seeks Clarification After Egypt Cuts Syria Ties

By [The Moscow Times](#)

June 17, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

Russia has asked for clarification from Egypt over its decision to sever relations with Syria, which came as a complete surprise to Moscow, Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said Monday.

"This decision will be unlikely to show Egypt's positive role in the regional effort to resolve the Syrian crisis. It demands additional explanation, which I hope we will get from our Egyptian colleagues," Lukashevich said.

Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi announced on Saturday that Cairo was breaking off diplomatic relations with Syria and will recall Egypt's charge d'affaires from Damascus. Syria condemned the move.

Morsi also called on the international community to enforce a "no-fly zone" over Syria. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Saturday the establishment of such a zone

over Syria would break international law. A similar zone was used as the pretext for the involvement of Western nations' armed forces in the civil war in Libya which toppled Moammar Gadhafi, to which Moscow was strongly opposed.

Morsi also supported the uprising against President Bashar Assad and called on the Lebanese Hezbollah militant group, which has been fighting alongside Assad regime forces against the Syrian rebels, to leave Syria.

Egypt, which has hitherto taken a more conciliatory posture toward the Assad regime, joined in appeals last week from Sunni Islamic religious organizations for a jihad against Assad and his Shiite allies.

Some 93,000 people are believed to have died since fighting broke out between Syrian government forces and rebels in March 2011, according to the latest UN figures.

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