

Rebels Won't Pose a Risk at Sochi Olympics, Lavrov Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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ST. PETERSBURG — Security agencies will make sure Russians fighting alongside rebels in Syria do not pose a threat to the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

Lavrov said in an interview that the potential threat of them coming home to launch attacks "would be taken into account very seriously."

Lavrov said Moscow and Washington would cooperate on ensuring security for the Sochi Olympics, "making sure that the potentials of respective services and agencies of Russia and the United States are brought together to make the preparations more efficient."

He refused to elaborate on what specific steps will be taken.

Some observers have voiced concern that Islamic militants from Russia who have fought

together with Syrian rebels could return home and try to take revenge against Russia for its support of Syrian President Bashar Assad. The Federal Security Service has said that about 200 Russians had joined the Syrian rebels, and acknowledged that they could be a threat when they return.

Lavrov said nationals of European countries also have joined the rebels in Syria, and may pose a similar challenge to their home countries.

"This is not only relevant in the context of the Olympics, it's also relevant in the context of day-to-day life of entire Europe, the United States and other countries," he said Friday. "When this war is over ... these guys wouldn't be busy, and they might look for some engagement" in the countries where they are citizens.

Lavrov also sought to downplay the threat posed by militants in the Caucasus.

"Terrorist attacks happen, they aren't as numerous as before, and the Russian security services are becoming much more efficient in not only fighting the terrorists but also in preventing terrorist attacks," he said.

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