

'Civil War' Sweeping Syria, Russia Says

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Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Thursday that an attack by Syrian army defectors on an intelligence complex resembled civil war, and reiterated Moscow's call for talks between Syria's government and its opponents.

He said such talks should take place at the Arab League headquarters.

"We see television reports that say some new force, the so-called Free Syrian Army I believe, organized an attack on a government building ... belonging to the Syrian armed forces. This is already completely similar to real civil war," Lavrov told reporters after a meeting with Indian Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna in Moscow.

Russia has called on Syrian President Bashar Assad to implement promised reforms faster but says his opponents share blame for the violence that the United Nations says has killed more than 3,500 people since a government crackdown on protesters began eight months ago.

Russia joined China last month in vetoing a UN Security Council resolution that would have condemned Assad's government.

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