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Arabs Ask Russia's Help on Syria

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CAIRO, Egypt — Arab League countries pressed Russia on Saturday to back their efforts to end violence in Syria at a meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo attended by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Lavrov said Moscow was ready to work with anyone seeking reform in Syria, but that the international community should not blame only one side for the violence and that Russia stuck by its principle of not interfering in any country's internal affairs.

"Russia is not protecting any regime. The most urgent task is to end all violence," he said.

Russia, which as a long-standing ally of Damascus is its main arms supplier, has vetoed two UN Security Council resolutions that blamed President Bashar Assad's government for the violence.

Qatar and Saudi Arabia have since proposed arming Syrian rebels.

League sources said Lavrov held talks late on Friday in Cairo with League Secretary-General Nabil Elaraby and the special envoy for Syria, Kofi Annan, appointed by the United Nations

and the League, who travelled to Damascus on Saturday.

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