

Putin Offers to Assist in Boston Bombing Probe

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Bill Iffrig, 78, lying on the ground as police officers react to a second explosion at the finish line of the Boston Marathon in Boston on Monday. **John Tlumacki**

President Vladimir Putin has expressed his sympathy and offered to assist in a U.S. investigation into twin bomb blasts that killed three people and injured more than 140 others during a marathon in Boston.

A senior Russian lawmaker said the tragedy should remind countries to work together rather than create divisive blacklists, while another said the U.S. and its democracy were to blame for the violence.

The Kremlin said Putin sent a telegram expressing his condolences to U.S. President Barack Obama over the powerful explosions that went off near the finish line of the annual Boston Marathon on Monday afternoon.

"Vladimir Putin strongly condemned this barbaric crime and expressed his belief that the fight against terrorism requires the coordinated efforts of the world community," the Kremlin said in a [statement](#).

"The Russian president stressed that Russia is ready, if necessary, to assist with the investigation by U.S. authorities," it said.

As people laid flowers outside the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, a number of Russian politicians also voiced condolences, including Alexei Pushkov, head of the State Duma's International Relations Committee, and his counterpart in the Federation Council, Mikhail Margelov.

Saying Russia and the U.S. face "a common and ubiquitous enemy," Margelov said the two sides should strive to work together rather than spend their time quarreling, according to Interfax.

"It's better to unite rather than make lists that divide us," he said, referring to the U.S. publication on Friday of the Magnitsky list of Russian officials banned over alleged human rights violations.

Moscow responded to the list on Saturday by blacklisting a group of U.S. officials that it accuses of human rights violations.

Although U.S. investigators have not identified who might be responsible for the Boston tragedy, Margelov said he believed it was organized by "an international network of killers."

Duma Deputy Speaker Vladimir Zhirinovsky was more specific, saying that the explosions were the work of Islamic extremists and that the U.S. was to blame for their actions.

"There is a clash of civilizations. The United States bombs the Islamic world, and what can they do in return? As long as Islamic countries are being bombed, attacks will occur in London and New York," Zhirinovsky, the flamboyant leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, told reporters.

Zhirinovsky also predicted that the U.S. faced a grim future of repeated attacks, because "the country is huge, democracy provokes attacks and you cannot close all the cities."

Two Russian diplomats, meanwhile, traveled to Boston for information on whether any Russians were among those injured.

Twenty-four Russian athletes signed up to join the 22,000 runners in the marathon, but only 19 participated Monday, national media reported. All 19 had crossed the finish line before the explosions occurred and were presumably safe.

The Russian Consulate in New York said it had sent two diplomats to Boston to learn more about the injured.

"While there is no evidence that some of them are Russian, it was decided to send the diplomats to Boston," Consul General Igor Golubovsky said, according to Itar-Tass. "If someone needs help, we will be able to immediately provide it."

The explosions occurred about two hours after the marathon winners, Lelisa Desisa and Rita Jeptoo, crossed the finish line. Among the victors in other divisions was Russian orphan Tatyana McFadden, who won the women's wheelchair race. A student at the University of Illinois, McFadden has competed in the past three Summer Paralympics for the U.S. team. She will turn 24 next Sunday.

In Moscow, U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul thanked the Russian people for the outpouring of support. "Thank you for all the words of solidarity here," he [wrote on Twitter](#). "As Obama said: "Boston is a tough and resilient town. So are its people."

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