

Lavrov Urges Egypt to Hold Fair Elections After Revolt

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Egypt should strive for a peaceful transition of power in fair elections, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Tuesday, underlining Moscow's concerns about the risk of more unrest after the ousting of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi.

Last week's military overthrow of Morsi has already triggered fighting between his supporters and opponents across Egypt, and raised fears that members of his Muslim Brotherhood group could be driven into more radical organizations.

Russia, which sells grain to Egypt and is trying to build up its influence in the Middle East, is wary of political Islam as it struggles to quell an Islamist insurgency on its own soil.

"We support any efforts aimed at ending any manifestations of violence and confrontation, that are aimed at stabilizing the situation," Lavrov said when asked about Egypt at a news conference.

President Vladimir Putin said over the weekend that he feared Egypt could drift into civil war.

Russia has regularly expressed concern about the consequences of the Arab Spring revolts and has given crucial backing to Syrian President Bashar Assad in the uprising against his rule.

Russia's Supreme Court in 2003 banned Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization, and Moscow has in the past accused the group of supporting rebels who want to create an Islamist state in Russia's largely Muslim North Caucasus.

Egypt's interim rulers issued a faster than expected timetable for elections overnight to try to drag the country out of crisis, after 51 people were killed when troops fired on a crowd supporting Morsi on Monday.

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