

Russia Says Deal Reached With Ukraine on Aid Convoy

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Foreign ministers Laurent Fabius of France, Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany, Pavlo Klimkin of Ukraine and Sergei Lavrov of Russia (L-R) walk in a park ahead of their talks in Berlin, Germany.

Russia on Monday said all objections to it sending a humanitarian convoy to Ukraine had been resolved but said no progress had been made in Berlin talks toward a ceasefire between government and rebel forces in the east of the country.

Following the talks between Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine on Sunday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said "finally, all questions have been resolved ... related to the Russian initiative to send 300 trucks with humanitarian aid."

"Everything has been agreed with Ukraine and the International Committee of the Red Cross," he said at a news conference in Berlin.

Russia and Ukraine have been at loggerheads over a convoy of 280 Russian trucks carrying water, food and medicine.

It has been parked for days in Russia near the border amid objections from Kiev, which believes the convoy could be a Trojan Horse for Russia to get weapons to the rebels — a notion that Moscow has dismissed as absurd.

Lavrov described the situation in east Ukraine as a "humanitarian catastrophe" and said a ceasefire was needed as civilians had been under bombardment from the Ukrainian advance.

"We are not able to report on positive results on reaching a ceasefire and on (a start to) the political process (to resolve the conflict)," he told journalists.

The four-month-old conflict in Ukraine's Russian-speaking east has reached a critical phase, with Kiev and Western governments watching nervously to see if Russia will use troops massed along its border to intervene in support of the increasingly besieged pro-Russian rebels.

Russian has repeatedly said it has no plans to invade and Lavrov again denied Moscow is helping the rebels. He defended the military buildup on Russia's border, saying: "We must be alert ... when several kilometers from our border a real war is underway."

See also:

[Germany Says Leaders to Discuss How to Proceed With Ukraine Crisis Talks](#)

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