

Foreign Minister Lavrov Says 2,000 Russians Have Joined Islamic State

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Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

Some 2,000 Russians are fighting alongside the Islamic State, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told journalists during a news conference in the Russian city of Ufa on Thursday.

Of these, hundreds are believed to have been Russians who first emigrated to Europe before taking up arms for the feared terrorist organization, Lavrov said, according to a transcript released by the Foreign Ministry.

"Our representatives, including Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev and one of my deputies Oleg Syromolotov have mentioned in recent interviews that around 2,000 [Russian people are fighting with the Islamic State], but according to our estimates, this includes several hundred former and current Russian citizens, who have taken up permanent residence in Europe," said Lavrov.

Amid reports that several Russian students have adopted radical views and sought to join the terrorist group, the Russian government voiced concerns about Islamist fighters

eventually returning home.

In June, Russian officials called on the Education Ministry to help students protect themselves from being brainwashed by Islamic extremists.

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