

Lavrov Defends Russia's Support for Assad's Aleppo Offensive

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has defended Russia's support of a mass offensive by the Syrian government on the city of Aleppo by saying that the town is under the control of Islamic extremists, the RBC news website reported Friday.

“We spoke at length today about Aleppo,” Lavrov said following talks with the International Syria Support Group, RBC reported. “Some of the comments directed at us sounded like accusations, which I will not repeat, as we hear them every day.”

Western governments have repeatedly criticized Russia’s decision to support the advance of the Syrian government's army in the region.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry “is worried the recent aggressive actions of the Syrian government,” according to Lavrov.

“If the town is occupied by illegal militant groups, then this is aggression, so it is necessary to

attack those who conquered your land,” Lavrov said.

The Russian diplomat said that Aleppo is mainly controlled by the al-Nusra terrorist organization and that Syrian government forces with Russian support are working to help free the city.

Western governments have said that the Aleppo offensive is the reason for the postponement of negotiations on Syria in Geneva to the end of February.

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