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Russian Minister Gifted 300-Year-Old Ukrainian Icon in Bosnia — Reports

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (L) and Serb chair of the Bosnian Presidency Milorad Dodik (R) in Sarajevo. **Foreign Ministry / TASS**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov received a 300-year-old gilded icon from eastern Ukraine on his trip to Bosnia-Herzegovina, European media reported Wednesday.

Bosnia's Serb President Milorad Dodik gifted the Ukrainian Orthodox icon thought to be from the war-torn pro-Russian region of Luhansk, according to Ukraine's Euromaidan Press news website.

The Ukrainian Embassy in Sarajevo requested detailed information on the origin of the icon, the Bosnian news website klix.ba reported.

Failure to provide information about the Ukrainian cultural artifact would signify Bosnia's "support of Russia's aggressive policy and military actions against Ukraine," the embassy was cited as saying.

A number of Bosnian Serbs have fought alongside pro-Russian separatists in the eastern Ukraine conflict that erupted in 2014, Balkan expert Aleksandar Brezar said on Twitter.

Dodik was the only member of the joint Bosnian presidency to meet Lavrov during his two-day visit on the 25th anniversary of signing of the peace deal that ended the country's 1992-95 war. The conflict between Bosnia's Croats, Muslims and Serbs claimed some 100,000 lives.

Bosnia's Croat and Muslim members of the joint presidency refused to meet with Lavrov on Tuesday after accusing him of "disrespecting" the country during a meeting with their Serb counterpart.

They were insulted notably by the lack of a Bosnian flag during the meeting with Dodik, which had only the flag of the Republika Srpska, the Serb-run zone.

The Balkan state is split into two political halves, a Serb region that is pro-Russian and a Muslim-Croat federation that is pushing for NATO membership.

AFP contributed reporting.

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