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Russia Sees Kabul ‘Stabilizing,’ Taliban ‘Restoring Order'

By AFP

August 16, 2021



On Monday, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held a phone call with his U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken to discuss Afghanistan. **TASS**

The Russian foreign ministry said Monday the situation in Kabul was "stabilizing" after the Afghan capital fell to the Taliban who have started to "restore public order."

Russia's ambassador was due to meet the Taliban on Tuesday and Moscow claimed the militants had vowed to "guarantee the safety of local people," despite thousands of Afghans trying to flee the group's hardline version of Islam.

In the statement, Russia confirmed it had "established working contacts with representatives of the new authorities."

Unlike Western countries – which scrambled to get diplomats out of Afghanistan as the militants completed their takeover of the country this weekend – Russia has said its embassy

in Kabul will stay open.

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Ambassador Dmitry Zhirnov told Russian state media that the Taliban had already started to guard his embassy.

Speaking to Ekho Moskvy radio on Monday evening, Zhirnov said that after the Taliban's first day in control of Kabul the "impressions are good."

"That is the situation in Kabul is better than under Ashraf Ghani," he said referring to Afghanistan's president who fled abroad on Sunday.

Also on Monday, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held a phone call with his U.S. counterpart Antony Blinken to discuss Afghanistan.

The two sides agreed to "continue consultations... to help create pre-conditions for the start of an inclusive inter-Afghan dialogue in the new environment," the Russian ministry said in a statement.

Foreign Ministry official Zamir Kabulov said Monday Russia would decide about recognizing the new Taliban government based "on the conduct of the new authorities."

Russia will take part in an emergency UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan due later Monday.

The Kremlin has in recent years reached out to the Taliban and hosted its representatives in Moscow several times, most recently last month.

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