

Moscow Says Still Ready for Ukraine Talks With Blinken

By [AFP](#)

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Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. **U.S. Department of State**

Moscow said Tuesday Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was still ready for talks with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, after President Vladimir Putin ordered troops into Ukraine's two separatist regions.

"Even during the most difficult moments... we say: we are ready for negotiations," foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in remarks aired on YouTube.

"We are always in favor of diplomacy," she told the Soloviev Live YouTube show.

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She spoke after Putin recognised the independence of the former Soviet state's separatist-

held Donetsk and Luhansk regions paving the way for the deployment of a potential invasion force.

Lavrov had said on Monday that he was set to meet with Blinken on Thursday in Geneva to address soaring tensions over Ukraine.

Moscow's move triggered international condemnation and a promise of targeted sanctions from the United States and the European Union.

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