

Lavrov Faces Impromptu Exchange with Ukrainian Journalist in Turkey

By [AFP](#)

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Ankara, Turkey, 08 June 2022. **EPA / STR / TACC**

A Ukrainian journalist on Wednesday took advantage of a visit to Ankara by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to confront him with an unwanted question about grain exports from Ukraine, amid fears of world hunger if the issue is not resolved.

Lavrov was in Turkey to discuss the establishment of secure corridors for Ukrainian grain exports.

But the news conference by Lavrov and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu was coming to an end without Muslim Umerov having been able to ask his question, despite repeated attempts.

So the journalist stood up and addressed Mr. Lavrov directly.

"I am from Ukrainian public television, I absolutely want to ask a question," he said.

Lavrov was visibly embarrassed by the unscripted question, after the news conference's carefully worded exchanges.

"Apart from cereals, what other goods did you steal from Ukraine and who did you sell them to?" the journalist asked.

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Lavrov, smiling, shot back: "You Ukrainians are always worried about what you can steal and you think everyone thinks that way!"

"Our goals there are clear, we want to save people from the pressure of the neo-Nazi regime."

"We are not obstructing the grain. In order for it to leave the ports, Mr [Ukrainian President Volodymyr] Zelenskiy must give the order, that's all," he added.

Contacted later by AFP, Umerov, based in Istanbul for Ukrainian public television, explained that he had raised his hand during the whole question-and-answer session but realized that the organizers "would not let me speak" so decided to interject loudly.

"I took the risk of disrupting the news conference because all of Ukraine is waiting for the answer to this question," he said.

Ukraine's ambassador to Ankara on Friday accused Russia of stealing and exporting Ukrainian grain, particularly to Turkey.

Since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, Lavrov, the target of Western sanctions, has made rare visits abroad which have taken him notably to China, India, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and twice to Turkey.

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