

Pope's Remarks on Russian Ethnic Minorities 'Un-Christian' – Lavrov

By [AFP](#)

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Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. **Russian Foreign Ministry Press Office**

Moscow on Thursday described as "un-Christian" recent comments by Pope Francis that Russian ethnic minorities were among the "cruellest" actors in Moscow's military ranks in Ukraine.

"Pope Francis calls for talks but also recently made an incomprehensible statement, completely un-Christian, singling out two Russian nationalities into some category from which atrocities can be expected during hostilities," said Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

"Of course this doesn't help the cause and the authority of the Holy See," Lavrov said in televised remarks.

Pope Francis in an interview published Monday said that some of the "cruellest" actors among

Russia's ranks in Ukraine "are not of the Russian tradition," but minorities like "the Chechens, the Buryats and so on."

Related article: [Russian Officials Slam Pope for Singling Out 'Cruellest' Minorities on Ukraine Frontlines](#)

Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported Tuesday that Moscow's ambassador to the Vatican had lodged a formal complaint in response.

Moscow was accused of drawing disproportionately from ethnic minorities in Siberia and in its Caucasus region when the Kremlin announced a draft of hundreds of thousands of men to the military in September.

Kremlin critics say minorities from impoverished and isolated regions are dying in larger numbers in Ukraine compared to ethnic Russians.

But critics have also accused them of playing outsized roles in places like Ukraine's Bucha, where the Russian military allegedly killed civilians.

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