Russian Diplomat Hopes to Meet Hamas for Talks to Free Hostages – Agencies

By [AFP](AFP)

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Smoke rises following an Israeli airstrike in the Gaza Strip, as seen from southern Israel, Oct. 14. **AP / TASS**

Moscow's Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov hopes to meet representatives of the Palestinian militant group Hamas in Qatar next week for talks to free Israeli hostages, Russia's RIA Novosti news agency reported Saturday.

Moscow has so far carefully denounced violence from both sides in the conflict between Israel and Hamas, while renewing an offer to be a potential mediator.

Bogdanov told RIA Novosti he "did not exclude" meeting Hamas representatives on the trip, adding: "If they are willing, we always are in favor of contact. Especially in this situation (the meeting) would be useful for solving practical issues, including the freeing of hostages."

On Oct. 7, hundreds of Hamas gunmen broke through the militarized border around the Gaza

Strip into Israel, killing more than 1,200 people and taking around 150 Israeli, foreign and dual-national hostages.

Related article: [Kremlin's Passive Stance On Israel-Hamas War Risks Damaging Its Relationship With Israel](#)

Moscow manages to retain close relations with both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities.

The announcement of Bogdanov's efforts came a day after President Vladimir Putin said Russia could help find a way to end the crisis.

"Russia can (help), by virtue of the fact that we have had good relations with Israel over the last 15 years," Putin said on a visit to Kyrgyzstan Friday.

He also said Israel risked waging an "unacceptable" siege in Gaza.

The Russian leader has said that the creation of a Palestinian state is the only viable way to solve the conflict.

Moscow — whose troops have fought in Ukraine for almost 20 months — has blamed the West for the conflict in Israel.

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