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Hamas Delegates Arrive in Moscow for Talks – Foreign Ministry

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Moussa Abu Marzouk seen meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in 2017. **Mikhail Japaridze / TASS**

Updated with Peskov's remarks.

Delegates from the Palestinian militant group Hamas met with Russian officials in Moscow on Thursday, state-run media reported, citing Russia's Foreign Ministry.

"I can confirm that representatives of the [Hamas] Palestinian movement are visiting Moscow," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said at a weekly briefing.

Moscow had not previously announced plans for talks with the militant group, which launched an attack inside Israel on Oct. 7, prompting an unrelenting bombing campaign of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli military.

Interfax later reported that Hamas' delegation was led by Moussa Abu Marzouk, a senior member of the militant organization.

“Contacts were held with [Marzouk] in continuation of Russia's position, [which calls] for the immediate release of foreign hostages in the Gaza Strip, and issues related to ensuring the evacuation of Russian and other foreign citizens from the territory of the Palestinian enclave,” Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

More than 200 people are believed to be held captive by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Gaza after the deadly attacks inside Israel earlier this month, with at least six of the hostages confirmed to be Russian citizens.

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Russia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov said earlier Thursday that Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas is was scheduled to travel to Moscow for talks with President Vladimir Putin “soon.”

The state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported that the Hamas delegation in Moscow had met with Bogdanov, and during the meeting, the delegates were said to have “commended Putin’s position and the efforts of Russia’s diplomacy.”

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was visiting Minsk on Thursday.

On Friday, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told journalists that Moscow would “continue dialogue with Israel” after Israeli officials voiced outrage over Russia's invitation to meet with Hamas representatives.

“We consider it necessary to continue maintaining contacts with all parties,” Peskov said.

Hamas' visit to Russia this week is the first since the militant group launched a surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7.

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