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Vatican Peace Envoy Meets Russian Foreign Minister in Moscow

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Cardinal Matteo Zuppi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. **Russian Foreign Ministry Press Service**

Pope Francis' Ukraine peace envoy met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on Monday in what the Vatican said was a follow-up talk about efforts to bring home children forcibly taken to Russia and prisoner exchanges.

Cardinal Matteo Zuppi was expected to "assess further efforts to facilitate the reunification of Ukrainian children with their families and the exchange of prisoners, with a view to achieving the much-hoped-for peace," the Vatican's news website said before the meeting.

Russia's Foreign Ministry released a short statement noting that Lavrov and Zuppi discussed "humanitarian cooperation around the conflict in Ukraine."

Patriarch Kirill, a staunch supporter of President Vladimir Putin and the offensive in Ukraine, is not expected to meet Zuppi, according to the adviser to the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Patriarch Kirill met Zuppi in June 2023 on his first visit to Russia since Moscow invaded Ukraine in early 2022.

Pope Francis appointed Zuppi, the head of Italy's Bishops' Conference, in 2023 to lead a peace mission to bring an end to the war in Ukraine. The cardinal also visited Beijing, Kyiv and Washington as part of a diplomatic tour.

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