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Russia Holds First Official Talks With Taliban After Terrorist List Removal

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Russia's senior envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov. **Patrick Tsui/FCO**

Russia held its first official meeting with Afghanistan on Tuesday after recognizing the Taliban government earlier this year, with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov using the occasion to denounce Western sanctions and urge international support for the country's postwar recovery.

Speaking at the opening of the "Moscow Format" consultations on Afghanistan, Lavrov praised the Taliban for fighting the regional chapter of the Islamic State and combating drug trafficking while blaming the West for its "confrontational policy," including the continued freezing of Afghan state assets and restrictions on its banking system.

"We call on Western countries to correct their course, return the assets they have seized and take responsibility for Afghanistan's reconstruction," Lavrov said.

Lavrov also cautioned against the establishment of foreign military bases in Afghanistan and neighboring countries.

“History has shown us the catastrophic consequences of foreign military interference. We cannot afford to repeat these mistakes,” he said during his opening remarks at the Afghanistan consultations.

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In addition to Russia and Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, the meeting brought together officials from India, Iran and Pakistan, as well as five ex-Soviet Central Asian republics.

At the talks, Russia’s senior envoy to Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, told journalists that Moscow had no plans to establish military bases in Afghanistan.

The Taliban swept back to power in 2021 after overthrowing the U.S.-backed government and imposing an austere version of Islamic law.

Russia became the first country to recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in July 2025 after removing the Taliban from its list of terrorist organizations and accepting its ambassador to Moscow.

Last year, President Vladimir Putin called the Taliban “allies in the fight against terrorism.”

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