

Russia's Lavrov Urges De-Escalation in Call With Iranian FM

By [AFP](#)

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Smoke rises after an airstrike in central Tehran, March 3. **EPA / TASS**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov urged de-escalation in the Middle East war in a call with Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on Tuesday, Moscow's Foreign Ministry [said](#).

The call came after President Vladimir Putin [agreed](#) to relay to Tehran the security concerns of several Gulf states, which have come under Iranian retaliatory fire in recent days.

Facing isolation from the West after sending troops into Ukraine, Putin has looked to strengthen partnerships in the Middle East, keeping close relations both with Iran and the Gulf monarchies.

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During the phone call with Araghchi, Lavrov stressed the need to "ensure the safety of the

civilian population and civil infrastructure in all countries of the region," according to the Russian readout.

The minister also "confirmed a fundamental position in favor of de-escalating the situation and rejecting the use of force."

The U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran which began on Saturday, followed by Iranian counterattacks on Gulf states and Israel, have prompted several countries to shut their airspace.

The shutdowns have caused thousands of flight cancellations across Gulf nations — popular holiday destinations for Russian tourists — in what has become the biggest disruption to global travel since the Covid pandemic.

Russia's Association of Tour Operators estimates that around 50,000 Russian tourists may now be stranded in the United Arab Emirates.

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