

Lavrov: Russia Supports Lasting Solution to End Western Sahara Dispute



Despite its pledges towards boosting ties with Morocco, Russia remains one of Algeria's strongest allies, being its number one arms supplier.

Rabat - Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Wednesday that his country supports a "lasting solution" based on UN Security Council resolutions to end the dispute over Western Sahara.

Lavrov made his remarks during a joint press conference with Minister of Foreign Affairs Nasser Bourita in Marrakech.

"We support the achievement of a lasting solution based on the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, and we intend to continue our

commitment to this principled approach aimed at making progress and reaching appropriate decisions," regarding the Sahara issue, he said.

Lavrov's remarks come following the work of the 6th session of the Arab Russian Forum, in which the Russian official reiterated his country's commitment to continue boosting ties with Morocco.

"We held useful bilateral talks. We discussed the implementation of the agreements reached at the highest level between King Mohammed VI of Morocco and President of Russia Vladimir Putin, as well as the implementation of the 2002 Declaration on strategic partnership and the 2016 Statement on in-depth strategic partnership," the Russian Foreign Ministry quoted Lavrov as saying.

In the statement, Lavrov also reiterated support for speeding up the UN-led political process to end the dispute over [Western Sahara](#).

He pledged his country's commitment to contributing to working out a solution that "would suit all parties."

"As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a member of the Friends of Western Sahara group, Russia tries to promote this in every possible way, including by supporting the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Staffan de Mistura," he [added](#).

Russia abstained from voting on the new Resolution 2703, which extends the mandate of MINURSO, the peacekeeping mission in Western Sahara for another year.

The resolution also endorsed Morocco's [autonomy plan](#) as a credible and serious solution to the dispute.

The country held a similar stance regarding resolutions adopted by the UNSC in recent years.

To understand the Russian decision, one needs to delve into Russian ties with Algeria, one of the main parties to the dispute and supporter of the Polisario Front – which claims sovereignty in Western Sahara.

Algeria arms, hosts, finances, and supports the Polisario Front, which seeks to undermine Morocco's territorial integrity.

Russia, meanwhile, maintains strong ties with Algeria, being its number one arms supplier.

The Russian government has long adopted an approach to appeasing Algeria in the dispute by either repeatedly voting against or abstaining from voting on UN resolutions on the dispute.

Behind the guise of a professed 'neutral stance,' Russia also failed in attempting to amend the new resolution adopted in October.

Before the vote, the Security Council Report said that Russia expressed frustration over the draft resolution ahead of the vote, claiming that it was "unbalanced."

"Russia broke silence, maintaining that the draft text was unbalanced and did not incorporate the changes it has proposed," the report said. "Nevertheless, yesterday (26 October), the US [the penholder of the text] proceeded to put an unchanged draft text in blue."

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