



KOSOVO

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Lavrov: No imposition, no prejudging, no deadlines

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in Ljubljana on Wednesday that the Kosovo problem should be solved through agreement, that the result of the ongoing negotiations should not be prejudged and that the exact date when the negotiations would end should not be fixed.

"We believe that the Russia-EU-U.S. troika has laid a good foundation for finding a solution (to the Kosovo problem) within the talks, without prejudging their result or fixing a final date for the end of the talks," Lavrov said.

Russia's foreign minister insisted there were alternatives to Kosovo becoming independent. "It is unproductive to claim that in searching for the final status of Kosovo there is no alternative to its independence," Lavrov stressed.

The Russian minister reiterated that those were the very foundations on which the negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina had resumed, adding that he hoped "the final solution will be the topic of those talks, which will require both sides to make an effort."

He recalled that Belgrade and Pristina "must agree on the status of Kosovo," as foreseen by the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244. The Russian foreign minister also highlighted concern over the possible consequences of a potential, unilateral declaration of independence, "which could occur not only in Kosovo, but in certain regions of Serbia and the Balkans as a whole."

"We should not burden one or another side by claiming that there is no alternative" to Kosovo's independence, Lavrov said.