

Russian foreign minister says Moscow has sent 100,000 tons of wheat to Syria

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Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. (Photo: Reuters)

Moscow, December 17 (RHC)-- Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says Russia has sent 100,000 tonnes of wheat in humanitarian aid to Syria since the beginning of this year and plans to ship more wheat to the war-stricken country. Lavrov said during a briefing on Thursday that Moscow plans to ship more in coming weeks and months.

Russia, one of the world's largest exporters of wheat, has been supporting Syria in its efforts to ease the food shortage in the Arab country. In October, Syria's economy minister said his country needed to import between 180,000 tons and 200,000 tonnes of wheat a month. He blamed the shortfall on Western-backed militant groups preventing farmers from selling their wheat to the state.

Lavrov also said concrete actions were being currently discussed to rebuild the Syrian economy. "In terms of goals of rebuilding the Syrian economy, we have already had very significant decisions taken in recent weeks that will significantly enhance Syria's ability to organize (this) work in a systematic manner," Interfax quoted the top Russian diplomat as saying.

Since 1979, the war-torn Arab country has been under rounds of unilateral and crippling economic sanctions by the United States. Syria has also been battling a foreign-backed militancy over the past years.

In April, Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations Bashar al-Ja'afari sent a letter to the world body, reiterating a call by Damascus for the immediate and unconditional lifting of all US economic sanctions.

Russian Ambassador to Damascus Aleksandr Yefimov, for his part, also called for the lifting of sanctions against Syria, stressing that the restrictive measures obstruct the Arab country's battle against the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The coercive measures have blocked imports of essential goods, impacting the Syrian people's access to medical equipment, food, heating, gas, and electricity. The U.S. and its allies invaded Syria in 2014 under the pretext of dislodging Daesh. The coalition sustains its presence, although Damascus and its allies defeated the Takfiri terrorist outfit in late 2017.

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