

Russia backs national dialog in Ukraine: Lavrov



Yerevan, Jun 23, (RHC), – Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has announced that Moscow supports efforts aimed at launching a national dialog in Ukraine.

Lavrov made the remarks at a press conference in Yerevan on Monday following talks with his Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandyan.

Russia endorses efforts made to mediate "between the Kiev authorities and southeastern Ukraine. In the end, I believe there will be the needed exit onto direct negotiations," he said.

In another development, during a phone conversation with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Monday, the top Russian diplomat also emphasized that a "durable" truce is needed as an "irreversible condition" for negotiations between the Ukrainian government forces and pro-Moscow separatists.

In an attempt to deescalate tensions in the troubled areas, Ukraine’s President Petro Poroshenko has ordered the army units in the flashpoint cities in the country’s east and southeast regions to observe a ceasefire until June 27. Poroshenko, however, warned that the Ukrainian troops would be given the right to return fire if the pro-Russia protesters attack their units during the ceasefire.

Ukraine's mainly Russian-speaking parts in the east have been the scene of deadly clashes between pro-Russia protesters and the Ukrainian army since Kiev launched military operations in the southeastern regions in mid-April in a bid to root out the protests there.

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