

## **Moscow 'laments' Washington's refusal to have talks over Syria**

15/10/2015 17:16 by admin

**Moscow:** Moscow "laments" Washington's refusal to carry out a high-level discussion with Russia over Syrian issues, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday.

"We have received an answer (from Washington) that there is no possibility to send a delegation to Moscow or to receive a delegation in Washington," Lavrov said in a live webcast of a meeting at the State Duma, the lower house of Russian parliament, Xinhua reported.

President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday at the Russia Calling investment conference that Russia had proposed to organise a high-level meeting in Moscow, or in Washington, to discuss Syrian issues. The Russian delegation could be led by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, which would also include top officials from the military and special services.

Although Washington sent the refusal to Russia's proposal on Wednesday, Moscow is ready to cooperate with the US on Syrian issues in any format and through any channel, Lavrov said.

The minister noted that an agreement, currently under negotiations between Moscow and Washington on preventing aircraft to crash in Syrian airspace, is expected to be finalised later in the day.

Reiterating the urgency of anti-terrorism fight, Lavrov called on all countries to give up all kinds of political and geopolitical theories and establish a "broad front" against terrorists on the basis of international laws.

"In current troubled international situations, world affairs need to be negotiated through the persistent political and diplomatic work on the basis of genuine equality and partnership," Lavrov said.

Putin urged at the Russia Calling investment conference that Russia would like collective anti-terror efforts to be gathered and their effect to be clear for all relevant parties. He also warned that "there is no guarantee that the ammunition will not end in the hands of terrorists".

The US military said on Monday it had airdropped small arms ammunition for Syrian rebel groups currently fighting the militants of the Islamic State, the extremist group, inside Syria.

US-led coalition, which comprises more than 60 countries, has been taking on the IS in Syria for more than a year, while the Obama administration announced last week its plan to shift from building an anti-IS Syrian force to supporting existing rebel groups.

From September 30 Russia has been launching airstrikes against IS positions and facilities in Syria in response to a request from Syria's President Bashar al-Assad.

The latest data released on Wednesday by Russian defence ministry showed 40 targets were destroyed during the 41 sorties of Russian air forces in the last 24 hours.

Diminished IS positions included a command post, two training camps, two workshops producing car bombs and installing mortars, heavy machine guns and anti-aircraft rocket launchers on trucks, as well as various ammunition and fuel depots, the ministry said.

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