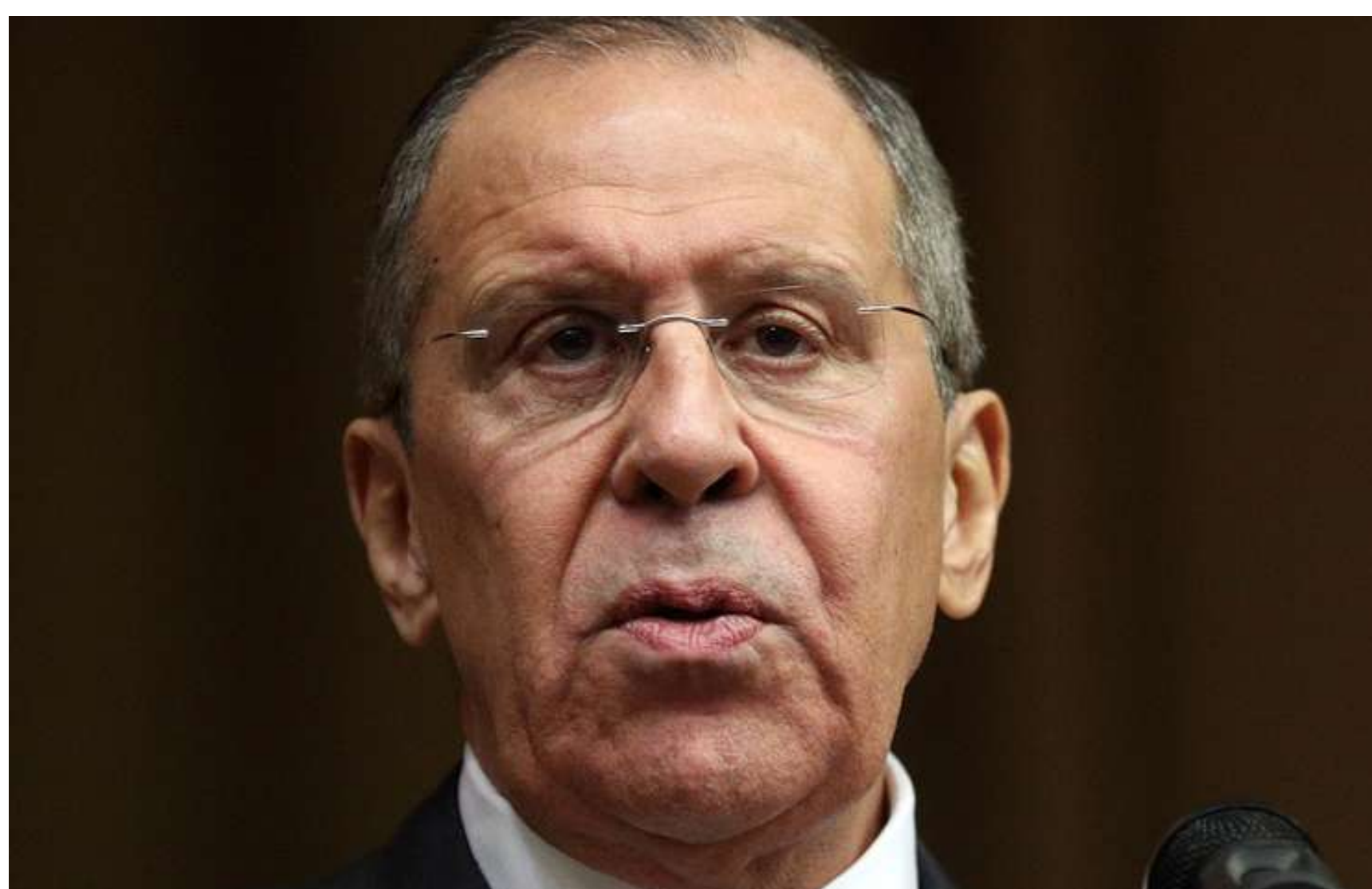


## West covering up their crimes committed during bombing of Yugoslavia, says Lavrov

Russia's top diplomat recalled that in 2010, Swiss lawmaker Dick Marty published a report with "horrifying information about the crimes of Kosovo Liberation Army militants"



MOSCOW, March 22. /TASS/. Western countries are covering up the crimes their agents committed during NATO's military operation in Yugoslavia in 1999, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview for NTV's "U-Turn Above the Atlantic" documentary.

"I think the West has been and will continue doing everything possible to prevent it from happening," Lavrov said when speaking about the possibility of an international investigation into NATO representatives being responsible for civilian deaths, strikes on civilian facilities and the use of depleted uranium munitions during bombing raids on Yugoslavia.

"As for the banned munitions, the Serbs are conducting an investigation. Once it is over, we will see what can be done to make sure that this crime doesn't go unpunished," the Russian top diplomat noted. "I would like to reiterate, I don't see any chance that international agencies that involve the West and where Western votes count will go for it. They will make every possible effort to prevent it," Lavrov said.

He pointed out that in 2010, Swiss lawmaker Dick Marty had published a report, "which contained horrifying information about the crimes of the Kosovo Liberation Army militants, who abducted people for human trafficking purposes." The West had to make the Kosovo authorities give their consent to establish a special court to investigate the crimes mentioned in the report. An American national was appointed as the court's prosecutor. However, the court stopped operating several years ago, the Russian foreign minister pointed out.

"Since then, new prosecutors have been appointed twice, the incumbent one is American, but not a single charge has been brought. I doubt there is any clear investigation underway. So Western countries will continue to sweep those facts under the rug that prove they and their underlings are involved in crimes against humanity," Lavrov emphasized.

### War against media

According to the Russian foreign minister, NATO's bombing campaign was a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. "One time NATO airstrikes hit a passenger train crossing a bridge. And its attack on a television center is entirely unacceptable," he said.

Lavrov stressed that the consequences of the West's war against Yugoslav media were still there. "They try to use the experience they gained then designating some media outlets as propaganda tools. This is what RT and Sputnik are called in France, they are banned from attending events for which other media outlets are accredited," he explained. "This is when certain news outlets began to accuse journalists of being propaganda tools, this is how they justified attacks on Belgrade's television center," Lavrov noted.

### Artificial excuse

When speaking about the 1999 massacre in Kosovo's Racak village, which prompted NATO to start talking about the need to use force in Yugoslavia, the Russian top diplomat said it had been a deliberate provocation.

"It was not a reason but an artificial excuse. It has long been known that it was a provocation," he said. "The killed civilians turned out to be militants from the Albanian liberation army, the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army, who had been told to wear civilian clothes," Lavrov pointed out. "Unfortunately, then OSCE mission chief William Walker was the one who organized that provocation. When he arrived at the scene and saw dead bodies in civilian clothes, he said right away that an act of genocide had taken place there," he added.

"He [Walker] did the same that the so-called White Helmets are doing in Syria, staging incidents to provide the West with excuses to attack a sovereign state," Lavrov emphasized.

The Russian Foreign Minister also said that the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia had failed to release the full report of a Finnish forensic team that had tried to determine the circumstances of the Racak deaths. "I demanded - with the support of my colleagues - at a UN Security Council meeting that the report be published, but it never happened. Then International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte provided the UN Security Council with a brief, which had been watered down to the maximum extent and sounded neutral," Lavrov said.