

# *No Russian troops, spies in E Ukraine: Lavrov*

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Moscow, Apr 11, (RHC), – Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, has denied that Moscow had deployed any soldiers or security agents to Ukraine's eastern regions, where pro-Russian protests have been held for independence.

Lavrov's comments were made on Friday, amid accusations that Moscow is stirring up unrest in the eastern parts of the country.

"We are accused of having security agents there. They are not there," said Lavrov, adding "We don't have our soldiers there."

Lavrov also denied that Moscow wants to take over more Ukrainian territory but repeated a call for Ukrainian regions to have greater powers.

The statement came after the Western-backed government in Kiev has accused Russia of being behind pro-Russia protests in several major cities in the eastern part of the country.

The eastern Ukrainian cities of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv have lately been the scene of protests. The demonstrators have seized government buildings, demanding a referendum on integration into the Russian

Federation.

The pro-Russian demonstrations gained momentum in the Eastern European country after Crimea declared independence from Ukraine and formally applied to become part of the Russian Federation following a referendum on March 16.

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