

Level of discussions at Munich conference is disappointing, says Russian diplomat

MOSCOW, February 16. /TASS/. The idea of the Munich Security Conference as an international dialogue meant to prevent new global conflicts is quite noble but the current level of discussions at this forum is disappointing, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Sunday.

"The idea [of the Munich conference] that has been working for decades is quite noble: to begin dialogue or draw a line under the efforts the international community has been taking to prevent new global conflicts," she said in an interview with the Voskresny Vecher (Sunday Evening) with Vladimir Solovyov program on the Rossiya-1 television channel.

"The thing is that experts are becoming petty and discussions are disappointing. The level of such discussions is beyond criticism, mostly because everyone is serving own interests," she said.

According to Zakharova, the Munich conference used to be a platform where experts and politicians could make forecasts and analysis "to offer certain scenarios or solutions to difficult situation in future." "Why could they do that? Because there were some rules of the game, international law, the United Nations Charter, agreements and accords. It set the frame, a pattern for the development of international relations. So, it was quite possible to make forecasts," she explained.

Now, in her words, many great powers and their leaders unilaterally "refuse to recognize international law at all," thus breaking down the entire system of international agreements.

"So, the question is how one can make any forecasts or analysis, what can serve as a basis for that. As things stand now, no one has any constraining elements at all," she noted. "Experts today have no frames, no groundwork for normal analytical work. Hence, the only thing they can do is to analyze what is going on now or what happened yesterday. Maybe, this is what explains the quality of discussions."

The Munich Security Conference was established by German publisher Ewald von Kleist in 1962 as a meeting of NATO defense ministries officials. It has been attended by delegates from Central and Eastern Europe since 1999. Russia has been taking part in the conference since the late 1990s. The Russian delegation to the conference has been led by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov since 2010, with exception of 2016 when it was headed by the then Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.