

Lavrov Seeks Piracy Tribunal

November 16, 2010

The  **Moscow Times**

NAIROBI, Kenya — Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov took a Kremlin-backed proposal to create an international tribunal on piracy to Kenya on Tuesday, saying Russia was ready to help to ease the pressure on countries including Kenya to prosecute suspects.

“We have to be more decisive in fighting piracy, and Russian and other militaries are working to intensify the fight,” Lavrov told reporters in Nairobi.

Kenya started last year to prosecute suspected pirates captured by foreign navies patrolling the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, after signing accords with the European Union, the United States, Britain, Canada, China and Denmark. Government officials from the East African nation have threatened to terminate the agreements unless Kenya receives more financial help.

“We are receiving a lot of these pirates, but these have had the effect of putting a lot of burden on our own courts and also the prisons,” George Saitoti, Kenya’s acting foreign minister, told a news conference with Lavrov.

International support “has not been forthcoming,” he said.

Russia circulated a text adopted by the United Nations Security Council in April, asking UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to report on options for “a regional tribunal or an international tribunal and corresponding imprisonment arrangements.”

The number of merchant ships hijacked by pirates increased 15 percent in the first nine months of the year to 39 as Somali assailants had more success in snatching vessels, the International Maritime Bureau said Oct. 18.

The international community should fight “not only the symptoms of piracy but also the roots,” which are social and economic in nature, Lavrov said.

President Dmitry Medvedev called for an international tribunal on piracy last year after Somali hijackers seized ships with Russian sailors.

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