

UN Sanctions on Libya May Cost Russia \$4Bln

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The  **Moscow Times**

Russia has backed UN Security Council sanctions against leader Moammar Gadhafi even though the measures might cost it \$4 billion in arms deals.

The UN Security Council unanimously imposed travel and asset sanctions on Gadhafi and close aides on Saturday, ratcheting up pressure on him to quit before more blood is shed. It also adopted an arms embargo and called for the deadly crackdown against anti-Gadhafi protesters to be referred to the International Criminal Court for investigation and possible prosecution of anyone responsible for killing civilians.

In a speech to the Security Council, Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin denounced the use of military force against peaceful demonstrators as "totally unacceptable" and called for the situation in Libya to be dealt with through political means alone, the Voice of Russia reported on its web site.

Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said Sunday that Russian arms exports may be harmed by unrest in the Middle East and North Africa, Interfax reported.

Russia may lose as much as \$4 billion of signed and prospective arms contracts after the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on Libya, which used to be a major buyer of Russian arms in the region, Interfax reported separately, citing an unidentified military source. The source said Libya had placed orders worth \$2 billion and negotiations were under way for contracts worth another \$1.8 billion.

Ahead of the UN vote, President Dmitry Medvedev condemned the use of force against civilians in Libya and warned that Libyan authorities would face prosecution under international law if they did not stop the violence.

"We strongly call on the current Libyan authorities ... to show restraint, and not allow a worsening of the situation and the killing of civilians," Medvedev said in a statement on the Kremlin's web site. "If they do not, such actions will qualify as crimes carrying all the consequences of international law."

About 2,000 people have been killed in the brutal crackdown by Gadhafi on the popular uprising, according to a French estimate.

Gadhafi has vowed to crush the revolt or die a "martyr," refusing the fate of the entrenched leaders of Egypt and Tunisia who were recently ousted by popular revolts.

Armed rebels opposed to Gadhafi were in control of Zawiyah, close to the capital, Tripoli, on Sunday, and their red, green and black flag flew above the town. "The people want the fall of the regime," a crowd of several hundred people in Zawiyah chanted, using the same slogan that has echoed across the Arab world in protests against long-standing authoritarian rulers.

U.S. President Barack Obama on Saturday called on Gadhafi to resign.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was to visit Geneva on Monday for a regular session of the UN Human Rights Council attended by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and other foreign ministers to help coordinate the larger international strategy in Libya.

Lavrov urged for an end to the violence in Libya during a phone conversation with his Libyan counterpart, Musa Kusa, on Saturday, RIA-Novosti reported. Lavrov also told Kusa that Gadhafi's government must guarantee the security of Libyan and foreign citizens.

Moscow airlifted about 300 Russians from Libya's capital, Tripoli, last week and was working to evacuate 124 by ferry from the Libyan port of Ras Lanuf on Sunday.

France, meanwhile, closed its embassy in Tripoli on Saturday and said the Russian Embassy would look after any French people still in Libya.

(MT, Reuters, AP, Bloomberg)

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