

Margelov Prepares to Visit Libya

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Russia wants to mediate between the two sides in Libya's civil war as it tries to negotiate the exit from power of Colonel Moammar Gadhafi, said Mikhail Margelov, the country's envoy in the Libyan crisis.

Margelov said he would travel to the rebel stronghold of Benghazi "in the nearest time" to meet with the rebel leadership.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov is in contact with Tripoli, held by Gadhafi's forces, Margelov said by telephone.

President Dmitry Medvedev said May 27 that Gadhafi had forfeited his right to govern and Russia was using its contacts with the regime's leadership to persuade him to step down.

"My trip is an attempt to help the Libyan elite find a national consensus," Margelov said. Russia "has a unique opportunity to become a bridge between those parts of the Libyan political elite which see the future of their country as one united state."

Any solution must "be acceptable to all Libyans," Lavrov said in an interview Wednesday,

echoing comments South African President Jacob Zuma made after returning from Tripoli in a trip backed by the African Union.

Russia itself isn't involved in negotiating "any deals of immunity or guarantees" for Gadhafi, though the leaders of other countries involved are considering a range of options, Lavrov said.

Gadhafi's future is "the most delicate topic," said Margelov, who also heads the International Affairs Committee in the Federation Council.

"The question of guarantees or immunity, even if it's being discussed at the highest levels, isn't public information and doesn't need to be advertised," Margelov said.

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