

Putin Says Regional Revolts Led to Algeria Attack

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that revolts in Syria and Libya had unleashed instability in the Middle East and Africa that had exacted a “tragic toll” in last week’s militant attack on a gas plant in Algeria.

Putin and other Russian officials have said the United States and its NATO allies have sacrificed stability to their political ambitions in the Middle East and North Africa, often playing into the hands of radical Islamists.

Algerian militant leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar said his forces had seized the In Amenas gas plant in the name of retaliation for France’s offensive against his allies in neighboring Mali. At least 38 workers were killed as Algerian troops stormed the remote gas complex.

While Russia backed a UN Security Council resolution in December authorizing intervention to stop Mali from falling to al-Qaeda, it has blocked three resolutions on Syria and accused the

West of overstepping the mandate of a UN resolution on Libya that its abstention allowed to pass.

“The Syrian conflict has been raging for almost two years now. Upheaval in Libya, accompanied by the uncontrolled spread of weapons, contributed to the deterioration of the situation in Mali,” Putin said.

“The tragic consequences of these events led to a terrorist attack in Algeria that took the lives of civilians, including foreigners,” he told new ambassadors, who handed him their credentials in a Kremlin ceremony.

During his annual news conference Wednesday, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said rebels fighting French and African troops in Mali are the same fighters the West had armed in Libya.

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