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Medvedev Hopes for Democracy in Post-Gadhafi Libya

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A fighter pointing at the drain where Moammar Gadhafi was hiding before he was killed in Sirte on Thursday. **Thaier al-Sudani**

President Dmitry Medvedev expressed hopes for peace and a democratic government in Libya as the African country's new leaders declared Moammar Gadhafi dead Thursday.

"We hope that there will be peace in Libya and that all those who are governing the state, different representatives of Libyan tribes, will reach a final agreement on the configuration of power, and Libya will be a modern democratic state," Medvedev said at news conference with visiting Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte.

He spoke after Gadhafi's capture was reported but before his death was announced.

But Russia's presidential envoy to Libya warned that Gadhafi's death may not end the fighting in Libya.

"Today's problem of Libya is not the problem of Gadhafi's life or death," Mikhail Margelov

said, Itar-Tass reported. "This is a problem of consolidating fragmented Libyan society and of strengthening the armed forces."

Russia, which had billions of dollars of oil, arms and construction contracts with Gadhafi's Libya, recognized the National Transitional Council as Libya's legitimate government on Sept. 1.

Moscow allowed Western military intervention in Libya to go ahead by abstaining from a vote on a United Nations Security Council resolution in March. It then repeatedly accused NATO forces that have been carrying out air strikes of overstepping their mandate to protect civilians and of siding with anti-Gadhafi forces in the civil war.

Medvedev had said previously Gadhafi would not be welcome if he sought refuge in Russia.

At a news conference in the capital Tripoli on Thursday, Libyan Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril confirmed that Gadhafi had been killed. "We have been waiting for this moment for a long time. Moammar Gadhafi has been killed," he said.

Gadhafi, who ruled Libya with a dictatorial grip for 42 years until he was ousted by rebels in a bloody civil war, was killed when revolutionary forces overwhelmed his hometown, Sirte.

Accounts were hazy of his final hours. But top officials of the National Transitional Council, including Abdel Majid Mlegta, said he had died of wounds sustained in clashes.

One possible description, pieced together from various sources, suggests that Gadhafi may have tried to break out of his final redoubt at dawn in a convoy of vehicles after weeks of dogged resistance. But he was stopped by a NATO airstrike and captured, possibly three or four hours later, after gunbattles with NTC fighters who found him hiding in a drainage culvert.

Accounts from his enemies suggested his capture, and death soon after from wounds, may have taken place around noon.

There was no shortage of NTC fighters in Sirte claiming to have seen him die, though many accounts were conflicting.

(Reuters, AP)

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