

Moscow Opposes Sanctions For Libyan Government

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Russians being evacuated on an Emergency Situations Ministry plane from Tripoli to Moscow on Wednesday. **Vladimir Smolyakov**

Despite ongoing violence in Libya, Moscow has rejected calls for sanctions against Colonel Moammar Gadhafi's government.

The Foreign Ministry said Thursday that sanctions would be ineffective.

"While [they] might work in some situations, you can hardly say that they are an effective method of international action," ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich told reporters, Interfax reported.

France and Germany have pushed European Union states to consider sanctions against Libya. French Defense Minister Alain Juppe said Thursday that he would sign up to a halt to purchases of Libyan oil.

But other EU members, including Italy, have warned of economic problems if oil and gas supplies are disrupted.

France, a permanent UN Security Council member, called on the UN Human Rights Council to adopt a draft resolution at an urgent council session Friday that would also seek the expulsion of Libya from the group, Reuters reported.

But a majority of African and Asian nations, including Russia and China, oppose such a resolution, the report said.

Moscow and the EU demonstrated unity by issuing a joint [declaration](#) on Libya on Thursday.

"We condemn and consider unacceptable the use of military force to break up peaceful demonstrations," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and EU Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton said in the statement released during talks in Brussels.

Both also called for dialogue and "peaceful democratization" in the North African country, adding that they were ready to support the region.

"Supporting the peoples of Arab countries in their aspirations for a more just and prosperous life, the European Union and Russia stand ready to provide economic and other assistance to interested countries at their request," the statement said.

Meanwhile, Moscow continued efforts to bring to safety hundreds of Russian Railways workers stranded in Libya.

On Wednesday, Russian Railways chartered a large ferryboat from Montenegro to bring out its staff.

But the Sveti Stefan II ferry was held up in the south Italian port of Bari because of stormy weather, the Emergency Situations Ministry [said](#) on its web site Thursday.

The boat, with room for 1,000 passengers, is supposed to pick up some 950 foreign workers, including 154 Russians, from the eastern ports of Sirte and Benghazi, where they were working on a high-speed rail link, Russian Railways said in a [statement](#). "They have food and housing, but they are in danger," the statement said.

Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu said later Thursday that his ministry had sent two Ilyushin planes to Sirte. "We have 118 people in Sirte, and we are sending them two planes," Shoigu said, Interfax reported.

On Wednesday, the ministry said it airlifted 339 Russians from the Libyan capital, Tripoli, to Moscow.

The Foreign Ministry also summoned Libya's ambassador on Thursday. "The ambassador was urgently asked to provide safety and good conditions for Russian citizens in his country," ministry spokesman Lukashevich said.

Many high-ranking Libyan diplomats, including the ambassadors to the United States and India, have resigned and thrown their support behind the protesters.

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