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Kremlin Slams UN Over Ivory Coast

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SANYA, China — President Dmitry Medvedev said Thursday that UN peacekeepers had taken sides in the conflict in Ivory Coast and called this a "very dangerous tendency."

The conflict ended this week after President Alassane Ouattara's troops captured his rival Laurent Gbagbo with the help of French forces that have been in the West African nation since 2002 to back up UN peacekeepers.

A UN resolution on Ivory Coast "speaks of the use of UN forces, but not in order to support one of the sides in the conflict," Medvedev told reporters in China after a summit of emerging market nations.

"The United Nations cannot take sides, but that is de facto what happened," he said.

"We have serious questions for the UN leadership. I think this is a very dangerous tendency," said Medvedev, whose nation has veto power as a permanent UN Security Council member.

Russia is sensitive about foreign involvement in election disputes and other conflicts because of criticism of its own democracy record.

Medvedev reiterated Moscow's accusation that Western forces conducting air strikes in Libya have gone beyond the mandate of the UN Security Council resolution, approved in a March 17 vote from which Russia abstained.

"The resolutions should be executed in accordance with their letter and spirit and not in accordance with the random interpretations that were given by some states," Medvedev said.

"When I hear that the resolution is bad ... this is not true. The resolution is totally fine, but countries should execute resolutions without trying to exceed their mandate."

As the standoff in Ivory Coast developed following a disputed November election, Russia used the threat of a veto to quash a plan for potential military intervention by the West African regional group ECOWAS, according to diplomats.

But Russia voted with the other 14 Security Council members on March 30 for a resolution that imposed sanctions on Gbagbo's government and echoed earlier UN calls for him to step down.

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