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Russia Seeks Role in Nord Stream Leaks Investigation

By AFP

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Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin. **Russian Foreign Ministry**

Moscow said Wednesday it should be part of the probe into leaks on the Nord Stream gas pipelines, after Sweden blocked off the area around the pipelines pending an investigation.

"There should really be an investigation. Naturally, with the participation of Russia," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin said, as quoted by Russian news agencies.

Four leaks were discovered last week on the Nord Stream pipelines connecting Russia to Germany, raising political tensions already sky high since the Kremlin sent troop to Ukraine in February.

On Friday, the UN Security Council held a meeting on the issue.

Vershinin told the assembly that "the general opinion was that this was sabotage and that it

should be investigated" but that "no decision had been made" on an international probe.

Last Wednesday, Russia launched an "international terrorism" investigation.

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Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said such a probe "required the cooperation of several countries."

He denounced an "acute shortage of communications and unwillingness of many countries to contact" Russia.

On Monday, Sweden blocked off the area around the pipeline leaks in the Baltic Sea while the suspected sabotage was being investigated.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused the West of being behind the blasts.

Russia's Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev said Wednesday that "it is clear that the United States is the beneficiary, primarily economic" of the leaks.

Both Moscow and Washington have denied involvement.

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