

Russia's Putin warns against outside interference
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MOSCOW, Feb 8 — Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said today the world faced a growing "cult of violence" and Moscow must not let events like those in Libya and Syria be repeated in Russia, issuing a warning to the West against interference.

"We of course condemn all violence regardless of its source, but one cannot act like an elephant in a china shop," Putin told Russian religious leaders at a meeting as talk turned to Libya and Syria.

"Help them, advise them, limit, for instance, their ability to use weapons but not interfere under any circumstances," said Putin, whose country vetoed a UN Security Council resolution last week backing an Arab League call for Syria's president to cede power.

"A cult of violence has been coming to the fore in international affairs in the past decade," he said. "This cannot fail to cause concern ... and we must not allow anything like this in our country."

Putin, who is running in a presidential election next month, has often criticised the United States and its NATO allies over its use of military force abroad, from the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 to a NATO air campaign that helped Libyan rebels drive Muammar Gaddafi from power last year.

He has also accused his political foes, who have since December staged the biggest opposition protests of his 12-year rule, of receiving financial and other support from the United States and Europe. — Reuters

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