

## Libya Conflict: Weekly Recap

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### Pressure Increases for Qaddafi's Exit

South African President Jacob Zuma visited Tripoli on Monday where he met with Qaddafi to discuss a ceasefire deal brokered by the African Union. Zuma said that Qaddafi was willing to accept a deal that would halt all the fighting, including NATO airstrikes, and open a dialogue towards a negotiated settlement with the rebels.

According to Zuma, Qaddafi stressed, "that he was not prepared to leave his country, despite the difficulties."

NATO and the rebels have made Qaddafi's departure a precondition for a ceasefire, and they quickly rejected the proposal as inadequate. The latest proposal marks the second trip by the South African leader to Tripoli in recent weeks to negotiate a ceasefire. Zuma and the African Union, seen as sympathetic to Qaddafi who lavished financial aid on African countries, have previously accused NATO of overstepping its U.N. mandate and undermining its peacemaking efforts. ([NYT](#), [LAT](#), [WAPO](#), [AJ](#))

In a diplomatic twist, Russia announced on Friday that it would act as a mediator between NATO and Qaddafi and pressure the Libyan leader into leaving power. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Qaddafi's regime had lost legitimacy and he must leave power, aligning Russia's position on Qaddafi's future with NATO and the rebels. Medvedev indicated that Russia would leverage its relationship with Qaddafi to convince him to leave power and go into exile. While Russia has said it will not offer Qaddafi asylum, it would assist in finding a country to take him in. If Qaddafi refuses to leave, Russia has hinted it would not block further action against Libya by the United States, Britain and France in the Security Council. The significant pivot in Russia's position, which had been increasingly critical of NATO's air campaign, came after a meeting between Obama and Medvedev at the G8 summit in France. ([NYT](#), [WSJ](#), [Reuters](#), [AP](#))

### NATO Extends Mission and Resumes Airstrikes

NATO extended its mission in Libya for at least 90 days on Wednesday and the alliance resumed airstrikes in Tripoli after a three day bombing lull in the capital for South African President Jacob Zuma's meeting with Qaddafi. ([NYT](#), [Reuters](#)) Video has emerged of Western special operations forces and intelligence officers, possibly members of the British SAS and MI6, operating on the ground alongside rebels in Dafniya, just east of

Misrata. ([Telegraph](#), [BBC](#)) Allied officials and commanders said that British and French attack helicopters would be put into action in Libya as soon as they were ready despite the risk they face from ground fire. ([Reuters](#)) Britain announced that it was preparing to drop 2,000-pound bunker-buster bombs on Qaddafi's fortified compound in Tripoli. ([LAT](#))

British Defense Secretary Liam Fox sent warning to members of Qaddafi's inner-circle, saying that the Libyan leader will be forced from power sooner or later and, "the calculation for those around him is how long they continue to invest in someone who will ultimately be a loser." ([LAT](#)) NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen declared allied operations were succeeding and that Qaddafi's "reign of terror" was nearing an end. U.S. Admiral Samuel Locklear, commander of NATO's Joint Operations Command, said Tuesday that the alliance may need to deploy a small number of ground forces to help stabilize Libya after Qaddafi's regime folds in order to avoid a power vacuum. ([Reuters](#))

### Rebel Council Reforms its Fledgling Military

Rebel fighters held up in the Western Mountains south of Tripoli are reportedly smuggling weapons from Qatar and Benghazi into western Libya from Tunisia to resupply their fighters. ([Reuters](#)) The National Transitional Council (NTC) announced that it was officially naming its armed forces the 'National Liberation Army' (NLA). The rebel administration hopes that the new name, "will better define the increasingly professional and disciplined military efforts to overcome the Qaddafi regime." ([AFP](#)) Finally, in the wake of reports that rebel fighters have engaged in extra-judicial executions of loyalist prisoners and former security officials in eastern Libya, the NTC has begun handing out guidelines regarding the treatment of prisoners of war and detainees to its fighters. ([WAPO](#))

Rebel leader Mustafa Abdel Jalil said on Saturday that the members of the NTC would not seek office in elections after Qaddafi was removed from power. Jalil said he expected elections to take place within a year, after a constitution was drafted. ([Reuters](#)) The rebel oil minister Ali Tarhouni recently said that it could be weeks before oil fields in rebel-held eastern Libya begin production again due to the lingering security threat posed by loyalist forces. The rebels control the small aging refinery at Tobruk, near the Egyptian border, which shutdown last week after its stores of crude oil ran dry. ([FT](#), [Reuters](#)) Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini opened the Italian consulate in Benghazi on Monday and announced that Italy would provide the NTC with hundreds of millions of Euros in financial and fuel assistance. The Italian aid would be guaranteed by the billions of dollars in Libyan assets that Italy has frozen under U.N. sanctions. ([WSJ](#), [Reuters](#))

### Qaddafi Troubled By Defections and Capital Protests

Eight former Libyan military officers announced in Rome on Monday that they were among a group of 120

military officials that had recently defected from Qaddafi's regime. The eight officers at the press conference, which was organized by the Italian Foreign Ministry, said they and others had escaped Libya through Tunisia. ([LAT](#), [Reuters](#))

In a sign of increasing defiance to the regime in Tripoli, small protests occurred in the capital over the weekend after several months of silence following the bloody crackdown by Qaddafi's security forces in late February. Protesters were dispersed by security forces that fired over the crowd. ([WAPO](#), [Reuters](#))