

[Democracy has not arrived in Libya; goodwill toward NATO fleeting | The Chronicle Herald](http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/72599-democracy-has-not-arrived-libya-goodwill-toward-nato-fleeting)
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• Democracy has not arrived in Libya; goodwill toward NATO fleeting

March 12, 2012 - 4:27am [SCOTT TAYLOR ON TARGET](#)

- While all eyes are on the intensifying civil war in Syria and the deterioration of relations between Israel and Iran, scant attention is being paid to recent alarming events in Libya. This of course suits those western leaders who helped overthrow former Libyan president Moammar Gadhafi just fine.

Canada led the NATO air campaign and we also outdid our allies in our celebratory victory parades. In the wake of all these marching bands and military flypasts on Parliament Hill, the Harper government hoped all Canadians would take pride in our Forces for having ousted a dictator in the name of democracy and human rights.

Like a Hollywood script, the good guys win, the credits roll and everyone heads home feeling self-satisfied.

The "success" in Libya is now being touted as a possible template for international intervention in Syria. There's no need for western soldiers to get bogged down fighting costly counter-insurgencies like Afghanistan or Iraq when our air forces can simply bomb with impunity for months on end, until the pro-democracy forces finally oust President Bashar al-Assad of Syria.

Unfortunately, those pesky Libyan pro-democracy forces insist on displaying very undemocratic behaviour. Following the capture and brutal public murder of Gadhafi, those Libyans who fought against his tyranny were quick to establish their own.

The various militias and factions that were supported by NATO had little in common other than their opposition to Gadhafi. Whether it was tribal affiliation or religious ideology, the former rebels were as disparate a collection of cutthroats and brigands as was ever assembled.

- In the wake of NATO's victory these ill-disciplined, poorly trained fighters refused to disarm and were soon clashing among themselves. To this day, the rebel faction that captured Gadhafi's son, Seif al-Islam, has refused to turn him over to the impotent National Transitional Council in Tripoli. They are keeping him in custody as a human bargaining chip.

The residents of Bani Walid, a former Gadhafi stronghold, drove former rebels from their town and have proclaimed their own autonomy. Last week the tribal leaders in the eastern, oil-rich region of Cyrenaica also declared their independence from Tripoli.

In response, the unelected, pro-democracy Libyan leader Mustapha Abdel Jalil vowed to use force to defend national unity.

It was in Benghazi, the capital of Cyrenaica, that the tribal leaders first rose up against Gadhafi's central authority in Tripoli.

When Gadhafi threatened to use force to subdue the rebellion, the United Nations Security Council authorized NATO to impose a no-fly zone in order to protect Libyan civilians.

- Now the very same leader that NATO bombed into power in the name of democracy is vowing to employ the same measures Gadhafi would have used to prevent the dissolution of Libya.

Of course, the difference in this case is that Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird met with Abdel Jalil for 30 minutes on June 27 as part of a half-day whirlwind visit to the rebel stronghold of Benghazi at the height of the rebellion.

Immediately following that encounter Baird told any reporter who would listen that he was now "a believer" in the National Transitional Council. "They have a roadmap that includes a democratic Libya that respects human rights (and) that respects the rule of law," claimed Baird.

To add emphasis to his statement, Baird, who had already been whisked to the Canadian airbase in Sicily, proceeded to hand-write a message on a bomb: "Free Libya — Democracy."

Two weeks ago, in reaction to news that U.S forces had burned copies of the Qur'an in Afghanistan, Libyan Islamic fundamentalists shocked the West when they desecrated a Second World War Allied cemetery. Among the headstones damaged was that of Flying Officer Martin Northmore, a Canadian pilot killed in 1943 in the skies over Libya.

Such a violent backlash serves to indicate just how little lasting goodwill was gained through NATO's military assistance in Gadhafi's overthrow.

[Nato won't return to Libya despite clashes | News24](http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Nato-wont-return-to-Libya-despite-clashes-20120126)

<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Nato-wont-return-to-Libya-despite-clashes-20120126>

• Nato won't return to Libya despite clashes

2012-01-27 07:47

- Brussels - Nato has no intention of launching new air operations in Libya despite deadly clashes taking place in a former bastion of late dictator Muammar Gaddafi, the alliance chief said on Thursday.

Fighting erupted in the oasis town of Bani Walid earlier this week, three months after Nato ended its air war in Libya and declared it had accomplished its mission to protect the civilian population.

"We are not present in Libya and we have no intention to return," Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told a news conference.

Rasmussen noted that the UN mandate that authorised the operation was no longer active. The seven-month Nato bombing mission crushed Gaddafi's army, giving rebels an edge in the conflict.

"On October 31 we terminated the operation because we clearly assessed that we had done our job and done it successfully," he said. "This is also the reason why we have no intention to return. Our mission has been completed."

Libyan Defence Minister Osama Juili declared on Wednesday that Bani Walid was back under government control after Monday's violence left at least five people dead.

[- AFP](#)

[BBC News - Libya revolution one year on: Better after Gaddafi?](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-17068264)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-17068264>

- 16 February 2012
- [Mark Urban](#) Diplomatic and defence editor, Newsnight
- Libya revolution one year on: Better after Gaddafi?
- TRIPOLI: On the outskirts of Misrata, there is a poster by the roadside. It is a slickly produced ad, funded by local businesses, carrying the slogan "Tomorrow Will Be Better."

Does it represent the kind of inherent optimism you find in many Islamic countries? Or is it an admission that, one year after the revolution to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi began, there are many respects in which there is disappointment and apprehension?

- There is, without doubt, enormous pride at having toppled the old order. Point a camera at people on the streets celebrating and they will tell you how happy they are, and exult that "Libya is Free!"

Gada Mahfud, a writer in The Tripoli Post, referred this week, however, to "clouds of pessimism in the hearts and minds of Libyans", and this fits with the mood of a good number of people I have spoken to.

Many insist that they cannot say these things publicly, which itself prompts questions about freedom of speech. One of them, commenting on recent power cuts, told me: "This did not happen before the revolution, believe me. Everything in Libya was fine except for Gaddafi and his chums".

- International disquiet

If there is a hope that "tomorrow will be better" on the part of many Libyans, there is also a disquiet on the part of some of the revolution's foreign backers.

- The Europeans are increasingly uncomfortable with [reports emanating from Amnesty International](#), Medecins Sans Frontiers, and Human Rights Watch, detailing widespread arbitrary detention and torture. Frankly, these issues do not top the concerns of the average Libyan, so let's return to them later.

- The type of problems they care most about are those of economic stagnation; an apparent paralysis on the part of central government; and the fact that "law and order" remain largely in the hands of militia groups from the revolutionary strongholds.

Foreign governments have recently unfrozen more than \$60bn (£38bn) in Libyan government cash, and as oil production climbs back towards 2m barrels a day, revenues are pouring in.

Inevitably, people are asking why unemployment (estimated variously at 10-20%) is, if anything, increasing and hundreds of government construction contracts remain suspended when the country has so much money.

Flying here from Istanbul, I chatted on the plane to a Turkish businessman on his eighth visit since the revolution, trying once again to get a building project re-started.

- Lack of public debate

People who want answers to these questions find it very hard to get them. The country is ruled by an interim government, responsible to the National Transitional Council (NTC), the self-appointed body that co-ordinated the revolution.

Both are meant to step aside after elections in June, and there is a feeling that nobody wants to take big decisions before then, for example to start building highways or other major infrastructure projects.

The new ministers and NTC are remote figures who most Libyans cannot name, some of whom were not publicly identified for months.

Dominic Asquith, the British ambassador here, told us: "The whole process of communication between government and people is still a work in progress."

The country has lurched from a dictatorship, complete with a cult of the personality, to a collective leadership with a cult of obscurity.

As for public debate or opposition, it has been limited by the murder of some prominent figures and the apparent impunity of the militia bands.

Those who have died range from Abdel Fattah Younes, who defected from the Gaddafi regime at the start of the revolution and commanded the rebel forces for a couple of months, to a former regime diplomat found dead a couple of weeks ago with signs of torture.

- Refugees attacked

Powerful groups such as the Misrata militia brigades have taken revenge on their enemies, in their case the Tawergha tribe, which they accuse of perpetrating war crimes in their city on behalf of Gaddafi.

Some 30,000 Tawergha have fled from their home town near Misrata. On 6 February, some of these refugees were attacked at a refugee centre near Tripoli, and eight killed by men who the Tawerghans say were from the same armed groups.

There is little evidence of any government attempt to protect the refugees or punish those responsible.

This type of incident brings us to the concerns of foreign governments. Some diplomats here are beginning to wonder aloud whether the revolution's conduct towards its former opponents might sow the seeds of a new insurgency.

They speak about former regime supporters as "the 20%". One comments: "What we cannot afford is for it to become 70/30 or even 60/40."

- In their meetings with Libyan government officials, French, British, or Italian officials urge them to speed up the processing of detainees, which by some estimates number more than 8,000.

Many of these people have been refused contacts with lawyers and given no idea when they might be tried, say human rights workers.

Former Gaddafi strongholds like Sirte, Bani Walid, and Tajoura contain many embittered people who can expect little assistance from their new masters.

With its great national wealth, small population, absence of sectarian tensions, and the absence of a large occupying army (as in Iraq), the odds ought to be weighted in favour of Libya's new rulers.

Many people are waiting for June's elections for them to raise their game and demonstrate effective control of the country.

In that sense, the message that "tomorrow will be better" seems as much of a plea or a pledge of faith than any sort of statement of certainty.

[Libya's "Rambo-style" militias not a warning for Syria - Africa | IOL News | IOL.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/libya-s-rambo-style-militias-not-a-warning-for-syria-1.1233196)

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/libya-s-rambo-style-militias-not-a-warning-for-syria-1.1233196>

"There are old sore points between Bani Walid and Misrata, and our brigades therefore stayed out of the battles in Bani Walid," he said.

"We left the matter to fighters from Sintan and Tripoli, back then in October, because we want to live in peace with our neighbours," he added.

NOW INSERT "TAWERGHA" WHERE YOU READ BANI WALID, AND YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHY THIS IS PURE BULLSHIT. Misrata fighters are weak and cannot take on Bani Walid, period.

- Libya's "Rambo-style" militias not a warning for Syria
- February 13 2012 at 02:46pm
By SAPA

- Misrata - Libyan militiamen carry automatic weapons, patrol roads and dress like heroes in action moves.

But they are less violent than they look, and hardly serve as an warning for Syria.

When diplomats talk about military involvement to halt the bloodshed in Syria, they often make comparisons with Libya, whether they back military intervention or are against it.

Opponents point to militias armed to the teeth, who apparently still control Libyan cities, more than three months after dictator Moamer Gaddafi was deposed.

Another point often made is that there remains a danger of a tribally based civil war breaking out in Libya. Many fear a conflict of this kind could also erupt in Syria, with its complex demographics.

Following the fall of President Bashir al-Assad under this scenario, Sunnis, Alawis, Kurds and Christians would battle it out to the death in the absence of a strong central government.

- Whether Libya is in fact an example for such horror scenarios is moot. No one really knows how many former revolutionaries are still armed and active in Libya, although the figure is certainly above 50 000 men.

Many of them have made use of their weapons to settle personal scores or to take revenge on former Gaddafi supporters.

Yet given the number of weapons still circulating in Libya, the country is actually relatively peaceful. The reasons lie partly in the stable structure of Libyan society, where age and status are more highly regarded than political office.

Recently, for instance, a fight broke out in the former Gaddafi stronghold of Bani Walid, after one brigade refused to hand over suspected prisoners of war.

The 170 members of the revolutionary brigades in nearby Misrata set off with their machine guns mounted on off-road

vehicles.

- The military council of Misrata - where almost 2 000 people died during the conflict - stopped them, insisting that negotiation be tried first. The young men - dressed in fantasy uniforms and draped in ammunition belts like out of some action movie - obeyed.
- Mohammed Ibrahim, a 47-year-old factory owner who was spokesman for the Misrata rebels during the war, is against any escalation to violence.

"There are old sore points between Bani Walid and Misrata, and our brigades therefore stayed out of the battles in Bani Walid," he said.

"We left the matter to fighters from Sintan and Tripoli, back then in October, because we want to live in peace with our neighbours," he added.

Ibrahim's brother was taken prisoner during the conflict and hauled off to Tripoli, where Gaddafi loyalists killed him shortly before the rebels took the city. His 19-year-old son lost a leg in the fighting.

- Nevertheless, Ibrahim is against taking revenge on those who were loyal to the late dictator. "As long as someone did not shoot prisoners or rape women, there is no reason to punish the ones who fought on the other side," he said.
- Ibrahim believes war criminals should be mercilessly pursued by the new justice system that is currently being created.

The Misrata brigades who were encircled by Gaddafi forces for months were formed from clans and residents in different districts in the coastal city.

Some are as small as a couple of dozen members, while the largest, the Mohammed al-Halbus Brigade, had 1 800 men at one stage.

Most of these armed revolutionaries are now concerned about their own future as students, office workers or business people.

Only 15 men from Misrata's Convoy Brigade, which numbers 70 members, have applied to join the police or armed forces.

The brigade's two commanding officers were shot and killed in Sirte on the day Gaddafi himself was killed. Neither had undergone formal military training.

Nor had most of the men they commanded.

Ahmed al-Saddik al-Huta, 32, joined the brigade in the early days of the conflict. He has now returned to his job as a truck driver, but once a week, he turns up with his weapon to guard the building housing Misrata's local radio broadcaster.

"Things are improving from day to day. But as long as we do not have a proper government and there are no police, we will hang on to our weapons," he says. - Sapa-dpa

[TODAYonline | Commentary | Libya faces Catch-22 situation](http://www.todayonline.com/Commentary/EDC120131-0000031/Libya-faces-Catch-22-situation)

<http://www.todayonline.com/Commentary/EDC120131-0000031/Libya-faces-Catch-22-situation>

- Libya faces Catch-22 situation

by Christian Lowe

04:45 AM Jan 31, 2012

- Behind Libya's flare-up of violence and protests in the past five days lies a quandary. How do you share out power in the new Libya when the jumble of tribes, militias and interest groups do not trust each other and, even worse, when the people supposed to be acting as neutral referees are widely mistrusted?

It would be a tough problem to solve for any country. For Libya, with a lack of institutions that its people view as legitimate, it seems - for now at least - to be insurmountable.

And so people are tempted to resort to violence in defence of their interests, especially when militia men with anti-aircraft guns and beyond the control of government are already roaming the streets.

The risk is that Libya could slip from being the triumph against dictatorship that was trumpeted just a few months ago by Western powers to a maelstrom not unlike Iraq after the United States-led invasion in 2003.

- On the evidence of the past week, things could get worse. Libya's interim ruling body, the National Transitional Council (NTC), was pitched last week into its biggest crisis since Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown nearly six months ago.

In the eastern city of Benghazi, cradle of the anti-Gaddafi rebellion, crowds disappointed with the performance of the NTC stormed an office building when the council's leader, Mr Mustafa Abdel Jalil, was inside. His deputy later resigned.

Two days later, the town of Bani Walid, home of the country's most powerful tribe, the Warfallah, took up arms and forced the militia stationed there by the NTC to flee.

That came against a background of regular gunfights between rival militias in Tripoli and turf wars between neighbouring tribes.

Each of these flare-ups were triggered by their own set of circumstances but they have a common theme: A lack of faith that Libya's transition will deliver an equitable distribution of power and a fair share of its oil wealth.

Libya is caught in a Catch-22: The country needs an election to create legitimate institutions, but without a legitimate institution to oversee the election, the process will not work.

- NEW ORDER

Mr Mustafa Fetouri, a Libyan writer and academic originally from Bani Walid, said underlying the revolt in the town was a fear that the Warfallah tribe is going to be deprived of its rightful place under the new order.

"In numbers the Warfallah dominates Libya and if there is going to be one man, one vote and if this tribe along with a couple of others get organised then they will dominate political life for decades to come," he told Reuters.

But there are signs the tribe is being squeezed. In Tripoli, the influential players are from cities like Benghazi, Misrata and Zintan, which led the fight against Gaddafi's forces during the nine-month civil war.

In Bani Walid, which held out for months against the anti-Gaddafi forces before suing for peace, the atmosphere is one of neglect. In the main square, buildings smashed in battles last year are unrepaired. "The NTC has played a negative role ... The goal is to teach Warfallah a lesson," Mr Fetouri said.

In Benghazi, the protesters who smashed their way into the NTC leader's office are at the other end of Libya's political spectrum. This was the city which started the rebellion in February last year.

Yet in Benghazi, too, people have taken to the streets because they feel unable to trust the opaque political process.

- The NTC, a collection of lawyers, defectors from the Gaddafi administration, civil rights activists and tribal elders, is recognised by the West but it has never been elected. It was hastily cobbled together in Benghazi at a time when Gaddafi's forces were shooting at protesters in the streets, and since then it has expanded to include representatives from other parts of the country.

Local councils in each area - themselves unelected - nominate people to sit on the NTC, but some areas are entitled to more nominees than others.

The council has 57 sitting members and its sessions are held behind closed doors. Key decisions are delegated to committees but little is known about how they were created.

When he was hijacked by the protesters, the NTC chief was preparing to unveil a law setting out the rules for an election, to be held within about six months, for a new interim assembly.

But the announcement was postponed after a draft of the law was released and caused an outcry. Critics said the law would give some groups an unfair advantage in the election, and they also said it had been drafted without proper consultation.

- LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

An election should relieve the pressure by giving Libya a governing body with legitimacy and a popular mandate. But the process of holding an election is itself a minefield.

Whichever voting system is chosen stands a good chance of angering one or several of Libya's competing interest groups.

A one-man, one-vote system would favour the Warfallah tribe and squeeze out the groups which made the biggest contribution to the revolution, especially the cities of Benghazi, Misrata and Zintan.

Handing equal representation to each of Libya's administrative areas would give influence to sparsely populated patches of desert and leave urban centres under-represented.

A system that gives the biggest representation in the new assembly to the biggest population centres would favour Benghazi, Misrata and Tripoli. It would, however, work against the Warfallah, who are spread around the country, and Zintan, which is smaller but has some of the most powerful militias.

- Libya does not have any precedent to fall back on because Gaddafi, in power for 42 years, banned elections.

Some observers have suggested the NTC could bring in a neutral consensus figure to help persuade people there will be a level playing field for elections.

One such person could be Abdel Salam Jalloud, who helped Gaddafi to power in a military coup in 1969 but then fell out with him and was sidelined for decades. He defected to the rebel side in the civil war.

From the younger generation, Fethi Tarbel is widely acknowledged as a hero of the revolution. A human rights lawyer,

his arrest in Benghazi sparked the uprising. He is now Minister for Youth and Sport.

There might conceivably be a role for descendants of King Idris, whom Gaddafi overthrew in his 1969 coup. His family has since lived in exile.

But in a country so deeply divided, any figure will struggle to restore faith in the transition to democracy. REUTERS

[Post-Gadhafi Libya rumbles with aftershocks of war | The Chronicle Herald](http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/57071-post-gadhafi-libya-rumbles-aftershocks-war)
<http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/57071-post-gadhafi-libya-rumbles-aftershocks-war>

• **Post-Gadhafi Libya rumbles with aftershocks of war**

January 30, 2012 - 4:34am [By SCOTT TAYLOR | ON TARGET](#)

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9

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In this June 2011 file photo taken on a government-organized tour, Libyan women chant pro-Moammar Gadhafi's slogans as they attend a weapons training session in the town of Bani Walid, some 200 km south east of Tripoli, Libya. More than two months after the fall of Tripoli, Libya's new leaders are still struggling to secure massive weapons depots, stop the smuggling of munitions out of the country and disarm thousands of fighters who brought down Moammar Gadhafi's regime. (IVAN SEKRETAREV / AP)

- Now that Canada has staged a full-scale "Victory in Libya" celebration ceremony and bedecked Lt-Gen. Charles Bouchard with a chest full of medals for leading NATO forces to triumph, there is virtually no mainstream media coverage of events in post-Gadhafi Libya.

This is not because there is a shortage of news to report. Rather, it is because the ongoing violence and chaos would certainly put a massive damper on the victory celebrations.

- During the 10-month bitter civil war to oust Moammar Gadhafi, it became readily apparent to objective observers that the NATO-backed rebel forces were just as fractious as they were ill-disciplined. With a widely divergent set of ideological beliefs and deeply entrenched tribal divisions, the only thing unifying the rebels was a hatred of Gadhafi.

Those rifts became even more apparent following the capture of Tripoli on Aug. 20. Even as Gadhafi loyalists continued battling from a handful of enclaves until the former president was captured and killed while fleeing from Sirte on Oct.20, the rival rebel militias divided the Libyan capital city into separate armed sectors.

- In the three months since the death of Gadhafi, a number of clashes have erupted between the militia groups as they seek to extend their own individual control over parts of Tripoli.

Despite the plodding process of establishing a new national security force, those armed civilians who fought to oust Gadhafi still refuse to voluntarily disarm.

- The National Transitional Council was established during the early stages of the rebellion, but its members have been singularly unable to exert any real central authority. One clear example of this is the fact that the militiamen from the western city of Zintan refuse to hand over Seif al-Islam, Gadhafi's son and heir apparent, to council authorities in Tripoli. Since Seif al-Islam's capture in southern Libya on Nov. 19, he has been held in Zintan as a human bargaining chip for his captors, to ensure they get a favourable chunk of the expected spoils.

Last week, there was another, more serious setback for the council when the residents of the city of Bani Walid openly revolted against the former rebel garrison. Those who followed the Libyan conflict closely will recall that Bani Walid was a pro-Gadhafi stronghold.

- Despite massive NATO air strikes in support, the rebel forces never managed to battle their way into the city. It was only after Gadhafi's murder and the fall of Sirte that the city elders negotiated the surrender of Bani Walid.

The citizens of this city are predominantly those of the Warfalla tribe, the largest in Libya. During Gadhafi's 42-year rule, they benefited from the support they loyally pledged to him.

Last week, after ousting the council garrison following a gun battle that left four dead and 25 former rebels wounded, it was reported that Gadhafi-era green Libyan flags were flying from government buildings in Bani Walid.

- Whether or not the ex-Gadhafi loyalists are the vanguard of a larger resistance movement, the defiant Warfalla have

made it clear they will not tolerate the presence of outside armed authority.

Without the military means to reassert control on their own, and without NATO's air support, the council have had no alternative but to accept the establishment of an independent Bani Walid ruling authority.

While one would expect such aftershocks in the wake of a vicious and bloody civil war, even in Benghazi — the birthplace of the rebellion — there has been a number of violent protests challenging the council.

- Those who took up weapons to overthrow Gadhafi are now using the threat of violence to demand concessions from the fledgling interim Libyan government. One of their strongest demands is the immediate ouster of all the senior officials who had been loyal to Gadhafi and their replacement with those who fought in the war.

Of course, after more than four decades of rule, it will be difficult to find anyone in a top government position who wasn't in some way beholden to Gadhafi. That said, there is little chance competent bureaucrats able to manage complex government departments can be plucked from the ranks of a ragtag militia force.

The Canada-led NATO mission in Libya was sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council to enforce a no-fly zone in order to protect Libyan civilians. Now that Gadhafi is dead, one can celebrate the removal of a tyrant, but if in his wake Libya plunges into a state of tribal anarchy, how can we honestly claim a victory?

- by [becky](#) | January 30, 2012 - 12:35pm

[We did such a great job in](#)

We did such a great job in Libya--just ask us!!! Harper stated only 30 people were killed(a giant lie and 1 innocent person killed is one too many to any thinking, honest person) and we 'won'. Of course the msm wouldn't do any reporting that would prove that we murderers did not 'win'! Of course the fact that we got the Libyan Bank, oil and gold is a win for our 'leaders'?

We are supposed to believe that everything is fine in Libya because we have bigger problems now--Iran 'worries' Harper!

I am proud of the Libyan people--they are fighting for their country and their life. That is another thing our governments don't want us to know--they are not the saviors of the world and people will fight back. When will we say enough?

- by [tthompson](#) | January 30, 2012 - 1:42pm

[Nothing new](#)

Same old, same old. Should have left them to fight their own battle, same with Iraq, Afghanistan and soon to be Iran.

- by [daveburris](#) | January 30, 2012 - 1:55pm

[An Arab Spring? When?](#)

The thing that interests me about the Libyan adventure is the rose-colored glasses of our Minister of Defense. Peter McKay is a decent enough guy, but woefully naive, i.e. "The work that remains to be done in Libya will be about "democratizing and legitimizing further what this was all about, this intervention," And yet, at the same time, all of the thugs are busy beating up on one another as noted by this column, not to mention - CH, Jan. 27, 2011, "The Canadian leader of Amnesty International called on the Harper government to use its influence with Libya's new transitional government to put an end to the abuse of prisoners... And Doctors Without Borders said it was suspending its work in Libyan prisons because of rampant torture of detainees."

All of that, and demands for Sharia Law - Yahoo, Jan. 22, 2012, TRIPOLI (Reuters) - "Hundreds of Libyan Islamists rallied on Friday to demand that Muslim sharia law inspire legislation...after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's dictatorship.."

My guess is that what will emerge eventually will be much worse than Gadhafi's regime. The Arab Spring turns to Arab winter.

- by [willowway](#) | January 30, 2012 - 3:37pm

["honestly claim victory"](#)

We can "honestly claim a victory" the same way we "honestly claimed" that we had legitimate cause to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. Both claims are a farce!

I hope Mr. Taylor will continue reporting about the aftermath of our ill thought out foray into Libya.

- by [henry gondorf](#) | January 31, 2012 - 10:36am

[farce](#)

...what a farce....after wasting that \$1.1 billion-plus on violently getting rid of Qaddafi, the United States is going to pay millions to buy up weapons from the insurgents. here's the truth from Senator Lindsey Graham the death of Gadhafi. He said, "There's a lot of money to be made in the future in Libya. There's a lot of oil to be produced. Let's get on the ground and help the Libya people establish a democracy and a functioning economy based on free market principles." Amazing

[Libyan commander says will retake Bani Walid | Reuters](#)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/27/us-libya-commander-idUSTRE80Q27L20120127>

- Libyan commander says will retake Bani Walid
- By Oliver Holmes and Taha Zargoun

SADADA, Libya | Fri Jan 27, 2012

- (Reuters) - A militia commander whose troops were driven out of the Libyan tribal stronghold of Bani Walid this week said on Friday that his forces were massing to recapture the town but were holding back at the government's request.
- "It is our right to reenter Bani Walid and nobody can prevent us," Imbarak al-Futmani said in an interview with Reuters at his desert camp near Sadada, 30 miles east of Bani Walid.
- Futmani's troops were pushed out by angry townsmen who he accuses of being the remnants of loyalists of Muammar Gaddafi, the former dictator who was overthrown then captured and killed in October.

Eight hundred of his men were now massed along the eastern flank of the town awaiting his orders to enter by force, said the elderly warrior, who was dressed in an ornate black and gold waistcoat, a skullcap and a white blanket over his shoulder.

Bani Walid, 90 miles south of Tripoli, was one of the last towns to surrender to the anti-Gaddafi rebellion last year.

Hundreds of fighters loyal to the interim government have surrounded the isolated town after hearing word that a pro-Gaddafi uprising had broken out.

Futmani said he faced a couple of hundred "criminals" nostalgic for Gaddafi's time in power, rather than large battalions of organized loyalists.

- "We have all the revolutionary fighters with us and we can take Bani Walid in a matter of hours."

"If they don't hand themselves in, they will face what they cannot imagine," he added, his eyes hidden by thick-rimmed, amber Ray-Ban sunglasses.

- GADDAFI SUPPORT ALLEGATIONS

On Monday, armed residents surrounded Futmani's brigade, who named themselves the "28th of May," after the date last year when Gaddafi loyalists executed a number of pro-democracy protesters in Bani Walid.

After a battle in which Futmani lost six fighters, his men fled the barracks in the dark of the night.

"Once the Gaddafis broke through the gate and entered the barracks, all they cared about was stealing our tanks. We just walked right out," said one of Futmani's men.

- Echoing complaints by residents that the 28th of May Brigade had been harassing people and abusing prisoners, the town elders said they were dismissing the government-backed local council on which Futmani sits and appointing their own local government.

They said they were not Gaddafi supporters but just tired of the militia pushing its weight around their town.

Futmani says the elders profited from Gaddafi and were trying to reclaim their town from its rightful rulers, the western-backed National Transitional Council (NTC) government.

- WAITING ON THE PRIME MINISTER

With hundreds of fighters waiting at the gates of Bani Walid, drinking tea and oiling their weapons in the cold desert, why have they have not pushed forward?

Sitting in his base, a former Gaddafi holiday mansion on the top of a rocky hill, Futmani said the prime minister had asked him to hold off to allow civilians to leave the town and, hopefully, for the assailants to surrender.

"The prime minister called me and asked me not to move and I accepted," he said.

- "(Prime minister Abdel Rahim) El Keib promised that the government would use force to maintain security, if

necessary."

- Troops from the nascent National Army, composed of revolutionary fighters who have signed up to the government force, had joined the militias around Bani Walid.

The NTC has been unable to fully establish control over armed revolutionary groups in Libya and has only incorporated a few brigades into a national security force. All of the militias claim loyalty to the government but most are still unwilling to disarm. Instead, they adopt a wait-and-see approach to who comes to power, and if they like them.

Futmani's men cruise around the base in dirty pick-up trucks with machineguns mounted on the back.

He is skeptical of any peaceful solution and saw more violence ahead.

"These pro-Gaddafis, they see us as rats, like Gaddafi did," he said. "They are murderers and criminals, they will never integrate into the new Libya because they know they will face justice now."

[The Lesson of Bani Walid - By Christopher Stephen | Foreign Policy](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/27/the_lesson_of_bani_walid?page=full)

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/27/the_lesson_of_bani_walid?page=full

• [The Lesson of Bani Walid](#)

In post-Gaddafi Libya, the dream of a stable central government is fading. Militias are filling the gap.

- BY CHRISTOPHER STEPHEN | JANUARY 28, 2012
- In the hilly desert scrub north of the town of Bani Walid, Libya's revolutionaries have been fighting again. Militia units who thought the war ended last year with the death of Gaddafi are back in uniform. Their battered pickup trucks mounting anti-aircraft guns are parked again astride the highway north of the town, 90 miles south of Tripoli.
- Many of these men participated in the rebel assault on the town, one of Gaddafi's last redoubts, when it fell in October. Now they are back again, this time as pro-government forces. Sort of. "We are not part of the National Army," says Hatir Said Suleiman, a bearded fighter from Tobruk, hunched deep into his green combat jacket against the freezing wind that rolls in off the desert. "We are the National Guard."
- The distinction is important: "National Guard" is a rather grand name for what is actually a hodgepodge of volunteers from militias across the country, sporting as many styles of camouflage jackets as home towns. The National Guard is an alliance with no certain leader, an amalgamation of elements from hundreds of militias, held together because they share a common goal: the eradication of the people who terrorized them for forty-two years, then bombed, rocketed, tortured, and raped for another eight months. Think Paris Commune, or Cromwell's New Model Army.
- By contrast, the government-appointed National Army is small. In the eyes of the militiamen, its reputation is tainted by its officers, many of whom served under Gaddafi. In Bani Walid it has been conspicuous by its absence.
- Contrary to many of the headlines, the battle in Bani Walid, which the pro-revolutionary forces now seem to have decided in their favor, was **not part** of a pro-Gaddafi uprising. Green flags did not, as was first reported, sprout from the rooftops. The issue was the arrest of war crimes suspects. Since the end of last year's fighting, Bani Walid has become a refuge for the waifs and strays of the former Gaddafi administration who are on the war crimes lists of other cities. A pro-government unit in the town had begun to arrest them when on Monday their base was attacked by a local clan. Four soldiers were killed, the rest fled, and the suspects were set free.
- Now the National Guard wants them back. "We want to go home, we all want to go home," says National Guard fighter Osman El Hadi, himself from Beni Walid. "But first we need to finish this."

This minor uprising, in short, is less significant in itself than for what it says about the disarray of the post-revolutionary administration in Tripoli. Right now, power on the national level is exercised by the [National Transitional Council](#) (NTC). But this latest crisis has revealed once again that the NTC is, at best, a bit player.

- The real power in Libya remains dispersed among the country's bewildering array of grassroots military formations. Most are grouped around town or city military councils; Tripoli is divided into 11 district militias. The last time anyone counted, Misrata had 172, ranging from ten-man outfits to the 500-strong Halbus Brigade, with a wartime strength of 17,000. That figure has since plummeted, with thousands returning to their jobs.
- Of these, the strongest groups are from the cities of Zintan and Misrata. Both have dispatched their commanders to Tripoli to take part in the new government. The defense minister, Usama al-Juwali, is a businessman from Zintan. Fawzi Abdul Aal, a bespectacled Misratan lawyer, is interior minister. It was their militias that did the most to win the war against Gaddafi, and the appointments were recognition of the fact. (On Wednesday, al-Juwali showed up in Bani Walid, where he tried to negotiate an end to the fighting.)
- Encouragingly, neither man is a warlord in the traditional sense: Both are answerable to their city councils, and to parallel military councils. It's not quite democracy, to be sure. But they still enjoy a legitimacy beyond that of the ruling National Transitional Council, which is self-appointed.

The NTC has been doing little to help itself. Formed in the eastern city of Benghazi in the heat of battle, it has morphed into an organization both secretive and inefficient. It refuses to make public its membership list, or its meetings, or its voting records. Nor will it open the books on what is being done with the country's swelling oil revenues. On top of everything else, earlier this month it bungled the drafting of legislation for a planned June national election, thus feeding the paranoia of Libyans who believe that many of its members are Gaddafi loyalists trying to manipulate the revolution to their own ends.

- It has no press office. Or rather, it [does](#), but as one of its former press officers recently explained to an online journalism forum, a decision was taken that the NTC would have no press officers, so the office is unmanned

and the door locked. There is no phone.

Instead, what the Libyan people get are occasional edicts delivered from upon high, such as the bewildering pronouncement, in reaction to anti-NTC protests across the country, that the economy and oil ministries would be moved to Benghazi and the finance ministry to Misrata, a recipe for bureaucratic confusion. "Don't think that the NTC is a single cohesive body," said a Libyan who spent years in exile in the UK. "It is chaos. Chaos. It is everybody against everybody else."

- Meanwhile protests continue across the country accusing the NTC of a lack of transparency, and of ineptitude. Earlier this month the NTC's headquarters in Benghazi was stormed by demonstrators; the NTC's vice chairman [resigned](#) after being [roughed up](#) by a crowd.

The militias, meanwhile, are gaining in strength. And the Zintanis and the Misratans have formed a de facto alliance to bolster their position against the NTC. Their rising power was marked by the recent appoint of a Misratan, Youssef al-Manguish, as army chief of staff.

- But it is the two militia leaders who remain the men to watch in Libya. Al-Juwali, the Zintani, is a soft-spoken man whose calm demeanor belies his resolve. It was Zintanis who captured Saif al Islam, Gaddafi's son, last fall, thus prompting al-Juwali's appointment to the NTC. (Saif [remains](#) in the custody of the militia to this day). Al-Juwali's men also control the international airport in Tripoli, an important potential source of funds.

In November, the Zintanis made headlines when they prevented Abdulhakim Belhaj, the former Al Qaeda-sympathizer who now heads the Tripoli Military Council, from entering the airport, accusing him of trying to travel on a fake passport. (He was allowed to travel only after interim Prime Minister Mustafa Abdul Jalil personally intervened to smooth out the dispute.) The month after that, the Zintanis at the airport became embroiled in a firefight with the bodyguard of yet another leading light of the NTC.

- Both Zintan and Misrata have transformed themselves into virtual statelets, with heavy security forces that control all movements in and out. Misrata's "gate" boasts thirty white poles flying the flags of the world, giving you the feeling of entering another country. The city's bewildering array of local militias operate on a duty roster that allows their members to keep up with their day jobs when they're not carrying guns. The city and its operational zone, which includes East Tripoli and stretches as far as the inland city of Sirte (a distance of about 300 miles), is to all intents and purposes outside NTC control. Abdul Aal, the Misratan militia leader now serving on the NTC, is regarded as urbane and smart, and enjoys the unreserved loyalty of the cityfolk.
- Yet there are reasons to doubt the durability of the Zintan-Misrata alliance as a basis for national stability. In both Zintan and Misrata there are problems with rogue units; the flip side of this citizens' army is that each element is free to do its own thing. At one point a Misratan unit decided to attack rebels in Tripoli when they refused to hand over a wanted man. Elders in Misrata bemoan the attack, saying that it has fractured relations between the groups involved and that the militia should have awaited some judicial mechanism for the arrest of the individual.

The situation is not hopeless. These militias could potentially serve as useful building blocks for the new Libyan state. The easiest way would be to give each group wide-ranging responsibility for its own turf. But so far that is not happening. The appointment of the two militia leaders to their posts in the NTC were concessions to reality, not part of any wider process of coalition-building.

- And there is still considerable sympathy for the idea of a unitary Libyan state -- especially among the revolutionaries who hail from the relatively sophisticated towns of the coast.

Hitching a lift back from the Beni Walid front line to Tripoli in a car full of National Guard is instructive. Two of the young men are from Bani Walid itself, the third from Benghazi. None of them takes the NTC particularly seriously. They dismiss current NTC head Jalil as neither charismatic nor decisive, though they do regard him as relatively trustworthy.

- Going down the list of other leaders, they agree that the shedding by the NTC of former Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril and former Finance and Oil Minister Ali Tarhuni, men who did so much to muster international support in the war, was a mistake. Libyans did not much warm to them when in office, but the NTC seems a faceless beast without them.

We pass a National Army road block at Tarhuna, and there are polite hellos to the soldiers in newly pressed beige uniforms from my companions. They tell me that that the National Army specializes in keeping out of the real action, in case their uniforms are spoiled. While the militias don't like the army or the NTC, they are willing -- at least for the moment -- to follow orders from Juwali and his boss, commander in chief Sansoun Mansour. (He spent most of the war in a Gaddafi jail.)

- The man they mistrust most of all, however, is Abdel Hakim Belhaj, figurehead of the Islamists.

Contrary to much feverish reporting, jihadism is not really the threat in Libya. Despite backing from Qatar, the intelligent, charismatic Belhaj, often cited for his past sympathies with al Qaeda, remains a minor player. This is not to say that Libya is a bastion of liberal thought. Talk to the many flourishing women's groups, who are making impressive inroads into politics, and they will tell you how Libya's male-dominated pro-democracy political outlook contrasts with a deep social conservatism.

- "We *are* Islam," a young fighter in Misrata once told me. "Why do we need an Islamic Party? It would be like America having an America Party."

Meanwhile, Washington, its fingers badly burned in Afghanistan and Iraq, is taking a back seat in postwar Libya, leaving the British and, more discreetly, the French and Qataris, as the leading international players.

- Many of the American diplomats are veterans of a decade of blunders and misguided theories in Baghdad and Kabul, and are now more chastened. Their challenge, as they try to push and prod the NTC in the right direction, is to figure out what this direction should be.

But the problems, like the one at Bani Walid, are the NTC's to solve. Thus far, it is too befuddled and besieged to indulge in such forward planning. It will be an achievement if it survives until the promised summer elections. If it delays those elections, or is seen as tweaking the voting process, its days may be numbered. As one Benghazi militiaman recently told me: "With this government we will wait and see. If it is no good, well, we know how to do revolution."

[Libya militias prepare to retake Bani Walid from Gaddafi loyalists | World news | The Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/26/libya-militias-bani-walid-gaddafi-loyalists?newsfeed=true)
http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/26/libya-militias-bani-walid-gaddafi-loyalists?newsfeed=true

• Libya militias prepare to retake Bani Walid from Gaddafi loyalists

Fighters return to their old frontline after war crimes suspects are released and four soldiers are killed in attack on local garrison

- - [Chris Stephen](#) near Bani Walid
 - guardian.co.uk, Thursday 26 January 2012
- A powerful sense of déjà vu grips the men of [Libya's](#) national guard as they mass for battle in the freezing desert outside Bani Walid, the new frontline of a war most had thought was long over.

Last October, many of these same fighters battled their way into this desert town, one of the last pro-Gaddafi redoubts to hold out against the rebels.

- Now they are back again after fighting this week resulted in the deaths of four soldiers and forced the closure of a small government garrison. Several dozen former Gaddafi administration officials arrested for war crimes in recent weeks were sprung from jail during the uprising.

The town, home to the powerful Warfalla tribe, has become a no-go area for government units. The militias, drawn from units across Libya, are ready to launch a new offensive unless local leaders allow them back in – and round up war crimes suspects.

"There are 300 pro-Gaddafi guys in that town," says Suleiman Hatir, a fighter from the eastern town of Tobruk. "They have committed crimes and they are living in Bani Walid."

- Fighters here agree with the assessment UN special envoy Ian Martin gave to the security council in New York on Wednesday in which he said the fighting was not part of a pro-Gaddafi uprising.

The real problem, Martin said, lay in the weakness of the ruling National Transitional Council, which has faced protests against its perceived lack of transparency, most notably concerning the destination of the country's swelling oil revenues.

The frontline is the same as it was last October, a small desert settlement named al-Estada, no more than a collection of sand coloured huts, a mosque and a shop, 30 miles north of Bani Walid. Pro-Gaddafi graffiti have long been whitewashed out, replaced by revolutionary slogans rendered in red, black and green paint.

- The weather, however, is very different. The fighters now look fat in winter combat jackets of as many different camouflage patterns as the origins of their units, hunched against a freezing wind that whips off the desert scrub.

Alerts come and go. A convoy of 14 armed jeeps rumbles past towards Bani Walid and a white helicopter lands amid clouds of dust on the road, awaiting the wounded. But with no sounds of battle audible, the helicopter flies away again and the fighters resume their chilly vigil.

Hatir says the fighters hail from units from Tripoli, Misrata, Benghazi, Tobruk and Bani Walid itself, but they have no dealings with the official national army, an anaemic force staffed by former Gaddafi-era officials which is, perhaps wisely, keeping well out of the way, manning a few roadblocks to the north.

- The fighters say they are at one with demonstrators in the cities demanding more accountability and democracy from the government. "We are with the protesters," Hatir says. "The militias are united."

Across the street from the shop, a group of migrant workers from Nigeria sit against a wall, having been arrested a few hours before on suspicion of being mercenaries. "We were not in the army," says Sunday Sienda, 21, wearing a grubby Barcelona football shirt. "I am telling you, I have been in Libya two years. I work. I was trying to get to Tripoli."

Their guards suspect otherwise but there is no sign of mistreatment. Finally, after a discussion among commanders, it is decided they are innocent. An hour later, two white Red Cross jeeps arrive to collect them.

- Civilians leaving Bani Walid insist they are not pro-Gaddafi and accuse the former rebels of theft and vandalism when the town fell in the autumn. Bani Walid's elders are more circumspect, saying they are in no position to confront the

pro-Gaddafi elements who have made the town their home.

Abdul Aziz Guma, a fighter from Tripoli who wears blue leggings under his combat trousers to keep warm, says the war criminals, not the local population, are the target. "We do not want to harm innocent people."

But Osama el-Hadi, a fighter in a grey Wrangler hoodie, is gloomier. "I'm from Bani Walid and I can tell you the reality, which is that 90% of the inhabitants of Bani Walid are pro-Gaddafi. It's just their mentality, it is the way they are."

In some ways, neither the political orientation of Bani Walid nor edicts from central government matter. What matters is whether the elders hand over their war crimes suspects. Failure to do so is likely to see a full-blown assault, meaning further destruction for the town and the crumbling reputation of Libya's new government.

[BBC News - UN concerns over Libya militias and secret detention](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16735217)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16735217>

- 25 January 2012
- UN concerns over Libya militias and secret detention
- Libyan militias are out of control and holding thousands of people in secret detention centres, while the weak interim government struggles to assert its authority, the UN has heard.
- The Security Council was told recent violence in Tripoli, Bani Walid and Benghazi highlighted the problem.

More than 8,000 pro-Gaddafi supporters are being held by militia groups, amid reports of torture, UN officials said.

Four died in clashes in Bani Walid, a former Gaddafi stronghold, on Monday.

The UN's Libya envoy, Ian Martin, told the Security Council in New York on Wednesday that those clashes between armed residents of Bani Walid and revolutionaries had been misreported as pro-Gaddafi forces retaking the city.

- Nevertheless, he said, it highlighted the challenge of reconciling the former leader's supporters and the rebels that had defeated them.

Militias were responsible for fatal clashes in Tripoli and fighting in other towns this month, he said.

"The former regime may have been toppled, but the harsh reality is that the Libyan people continue to have to live with its deep-rooted legacy," said Mr Martin.

He described that legacy as "weak, at times absent, state institutions, coupled with the long absence of political parties and civil society organisations, which render the country's transition more difficult".

Mr Martin said some steps had been taken towards demobilising ex-combatants.

But the government was struggling to establish its legitimacy, he added, with weapons freely available and various armed brigades having unclear lines of command and control.

While authorities had so far successfully contained any outbreaks of violence, they could escalate and widen in scope, he warned.

- 'Alarming reports'
- UN human rights chief Navi Pillay meanwhile raised concerns about detainees being held by revolutionary forces, saying there were some 8,500 prisoners in about 60 centres.

"The majority of detainees are accused of being Gaddafi loyalists and include a large number of sub-saharan, African nationals," she said.

- "The lack of oversight by the central authority creates an environment conducive to torture and ill treatment.

"My staff have received alarming reports that this is happening in places of detention they have visited."

She urged the authorities to take control of these informal jails, review the cases, and deal with the prisoners in a legal framework.

Libyan Defence Minister Osama al-Juwali, who has been negotiating with militiamen in Bani Walid, told reporters on Wednesday that the situation was stable.

As he arrived, National Transitional Council (NTC) forces - loyal to the new government - gathered outside the town.

They were heavily armed and apparently poised to attack if talks failed, although one commander insisted they were there for "reconciliation".

Fighters in the town have reportedly expelled NTC forces into the surrounding desert.

Residents have told the BBC that 90% of the town was under militia control.

[Libya is not a divided country | Oliver Miles | Comment is free | guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jan/25/libya-not-divided-country)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jan/25/libya-not-divided-country>

• Libya is not a divided country

The NTC may be less than a lame duck, but media reports about Libya being on the brink of civil war are absurd

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 - [Oliver Miles](#)
 - [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), Wednesday 25 January 2012
- Since I returned from a week in Libya a few days ago there have been some bad headlines, for example "[Protesters storm Libyan government HQ in Benghazi](#)" and "[Gaddafi loyalists seize Libyan town](#)". It was my first visit since the revolution, and I have already written about my [impressions](#), which were favourable and sometimes inspiring. Was I wrong?

First, a word about the media situation. Foreign correspondents move freely in Libya. Ordinary Libyans have found their voice, and there is a flood of new Arabic language newspapers, which have yet to prove themselves. The National Transitional Council is lamentably weak in strategic communication and has failed to make public even basic facts like the names and number of members.

- As a result, news stories have to be looked at critically. While I was there I heard two stories that never made the media: two people "executed" in central Tripoli, quite close to my hotel, and four international officials kidnapped in the far south. Neither story turned out to be accurate – the "execution" was of two would-be carjackers who happened to pick on a car full of armed militia, and the "kidnapping" was the temporary detention of four foreigners driving in an unmarked car in the desert without papers.

Bani Walid, the town reportedly seized by Gaddafi loyalists, is quite remote. It is also untypical, perhaps unique in Libya, in that its inhabitants are virtually all from one tribe. Since the first reports of what happened there a day or two ago, a more complicated story has begun to emerge (as reflected in [more recent reports](#)). A fighter with the revolutionary forces had claimed that Gaddafi loyalists were flying green flags in the central town, but it now appears that this is not true. We are left with a serious breakdown of law and order in which at least four people were killed.

- The transitional government will only be in power until the summer. If plans work out it will then hand over to an elected government. It is not even a lame duck, because it never walked on two legs. It faces many interlinked problems, the most urgent being security, humanitarian relief and kickstarting the economy.

So long as there are weapons on the street out of government control everything is at risk. Libya lives on oil revenues, but its assets have been frozen and oil production halted. These are just the short-term problems; after that come retraining the workforce and building an economy that does not depend on subsidies and which pays proper wages. Civil society and all political activity were eliminated entirely under Gaddafi; they are only now reappearing.

- On the positive side the oil assets remain, so there is a prospect of prosperity. Assets have been unfrozen, even if they are not yet always accessible. Oil production is now more than half the pre-revolution level. Problems of lack of cash remain a nightmare, but the worst is expected to be over by the end of March although it will be impossible to balance a budget this year or next.

Contrary to what many people suppose, Libya is not a divided country. It is almost 100% Sunni Muslim and tribal differences are social rather than political, and in any case not strong in the majority of the population who live in the four main cities. Unlike Tunisia and Egypt, which have suffered from a corrupt form of free capitalist economy, Libya suffered from a corrupt form of centralised socialist rule, so that those who are active in trying to develop the private sector are working with the grain, not against it.

- Considerable progress has been made on security. I personally heard no shooting, although there was some even in central Tripoli during my visit. During a visit to Misrata, two-and-a-half hours by bus, we were only asked to show passports once, which I believe was very different from the situation a few weeks ago.

The threat of political or violent Islam was not mentioned to me by anyone I met. Libyans take for granted that Libya is a Muslim country, and that its institutions will be based in Islam, but they claim to be moderate (churches that cater for non-Libyans appear to have been unaffected by the revolution). They are worried about jihadist activity in the Sahara, and working with their neighbours to control the Sahara borders is their top foreign policy priority. It is curious to reflect that Gaddafi's Libya was the only Saharan country in which there were no al-Qaida-type atrocities in the last 10 years or so. I do not know how that was done, or whether the new Libya will be able to keep up the record.

- Overall, the situation is fragile and things could still go wrong. But there is a plan that leads to constitutional and democratic government, and the leadership are trying to stick to it. Media reports that referred to "the brink of civil war" struck me as absurd when I was there. Reports I have seen since have not made me change my mind.



- [Cozener](#)

25 January 2012 1:47PM

Libya is in CHAOS. You can always count on Oliver Miles to paper over the cracks on behalf imperialism. It's not just 'media reports' suggesting Libya is in chaos it's also the chairman of the National Transitional Council who recently stated Libya could be heading towards a 'bottomless pit' and 'civil war'. Libya is ruled by armed gangs who have murdered, looted and tortured their way into position with the full military and political backing of NATO - No analysis of that here though Mr. Miles, no analysis of the huge opposition the rebels and NATO had and still have within Libya, no analysis of the discontent of rebel factions which culminated in an armed storming of the NTC offices in Benghazi. I happen to believe the uprising in Bani Walid was pro-Gaddafi and Mr. Miles is in fact propagating 'absurd' NTC propaganda. It wouldn't be the first time that western journalists have prostituted themselves as NTC/NATO propaganda mouthpieces. As to the reasons why Libya is in the mess it is I suggest you watch the following

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UEMb4m3eU8>



- [splutteringleft](#)

25 January 2012 1:51PM

Response to [Cozener, 25 January 2012 1:47PM](#)

Well said, but he's not a journalist, he's a businessman. Take a look at his company and its dealings.



- [PaulLambert](#)

25 January 2012 1:54PM

'Contrary to what many people suppose, Libya is not a divided country'.

Unless you're black of course - in which you'll face relentless persecution from the various NTC militias. According to Human Rights Watch's Peter Bouckaert, the [situation](#) is one of 'racist violence against all dark-skinned people'.

The worst example is probably when the dark skinned population of Tawergha, all 30'000 of them, were [driven out](#) of their town by vengeful rebels (with a little help from NATO bombing), and then terrorized and victimised, in what HRW have described as a potential Crime Against Humanity.

It's also thought that many of the 7000 people currently [being detained without charge](#) or trial, and [tortured](#), are black.

But then these are the victims that many of the erstwhile 'humanitarians' who supported the bombing of Libya pretend not to notice, so it's no surprise that Oliver Miles has as good as airbrushed them out of history. Don't quite fit the narrative, do they?



- [cocaineandheroin](#)

25 January 2012 1:57PM

- Hifter's convoy was ambushed by NTC troops in December.
- Bani Walid revolted against the NTC a few days ago, which you even noted.
- Massacres of Black Africans in Misrata and Sirte by the "revolutionaries".
- Belhadj (AQ member) refuses to be left out of Libya's political process.
- Various reports of warfare between Libya's biggest tribes.



- [Dithyramb](#)

25 January 2012 2:01PM

Overall, the situation is fragile and things could still go wrong.

So you admit to this, in addition to Benghazi and Bani Walid having been captured by Gaddafi loyalists, but it would still be absurd to suggest Libya is on the brink of civil war?

How many towns in Libya were captured by rebels before NATO saw fit to declare the situation in Libya a civil war? Is it different now that it is a favourable NATO proxy government being threatened?



- [Dithyramb](#)

25 January 2012 2:05PM

By the way, care to take this up with your man in Libya?

The head of Libya's National Transitional Council Mustafa Abdel Jalil today warned of the threat of another civil war.

<http://rt.com/news/libya-new-civil-war-489/>



- [PaulLambert](#)

25 January 2012 2:10PM

Reuters' Oliver Holmes gives his verdict on the current situation in Libya:

['Torture and lawlessness as Libya "victory high" ends'.](#)



- [Jamestown](#)

25 January 2012 2:12PM

First, a word about the media situation. Foreign correspondents move freely in Libya.

Then why are news reports from Libya so erroneous? Doesn't add up.

It is also untypical, perhaps unique in Libya, in that its inhabitants are virtually all from one tribe.

One tribe of many different tribes. The past is not such a reliable indicator of what's to come in Libya..

Torture and lawlessness as Libya victory high ends | Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/25/us-libya-lawlessness-idUSTRE80O18P20120125>

- Torture and lawlessness as Libya "victory high" ends
- By Oliver Holmes

TRIPOLI | Wed Jan 25, 2012

- (Reuters) - Violent crime and clashes between armed militants are running rife in Libya as the jubilation of last year's liberation fades, to be replaced by the harsh and unromantic reality of building a new state.

Although much less frequent than the celebratory shooting in the weeks after Muammar Gaddafi died in October, the sound of gunfire can still be heard at night in Tripoli, where security sector workers say theft, infighting and murder are on the rise.

- Last week, two grenade attacks were reported in central Tripoli and gunfights occur on a near-daily basis.

"The country is coming down off a victory high," a western diplomat in the capital told Reuters.

"Not only are there clashes between rival militias, but we are seeing a lot more reports of crime in the capital and I think it is because people are disillusioned with the slower-than-hoped progress of the country," the diplomat said.

- The National Transition Council (NTC), Libya's internationally recognized but self-appointed government, has received praise for getting many of the country's ministries up and running and, notably, for drafting an election law in which NTC leaders will be unable to run in June elections.

But many Libyans thought progress would be faster, and the defense ministry and the interior ministry are failing to incorporate disparate militias, armed with anything from pistols to tanks, into a police force and an army.

- These groups fought hard in the campaign to topple Gaddafi but now refuse to hand in their weapons, saying they are suspicious of the country's new rulers.

The ramshackle government lost control of a former Gaddafi stronghold on Tuesday after local people staged an armed revolt, posing the gravest challenge yet to the NTC's authority.

The revolt in Bani Walid will heighten doubts in the West about the NTC government's ability to instill law and order crucial to rebuilding oil exports, to disarm tribal militias and to guard Libyan borders in a region where al Qaeda is active.

- Elders in Bani Walid, 200 km (125 miles) southeast of the capital, said they were appointing their own local government and rejected any interference from the authorities in Tripoli.

Although seen unlikely to spread elsewhere, the fighting added to the problems besetting the fragile new government.

The sense of lawlessness - and the lingering influence of Gaddafi even in death - is exemplified in recent clashes between the neighboring towns of Assabia and Gharyan, 50 miles south of Tripoli.

• ESCALATING FIGHTING

Although accounts are conflicting, residents from both towns -- perched on the edge of the sandstone Western, or Nafusa, Mountains -- say that a knife fight broke out at a weekly market along a road that connects them.

The towns' respective militias rapidly amassed their troops, blocked off the main connecting road with walls of dirt to hide behind and started a three-day battle, in which shells, mortars and 9-foot-long GRAD rockets were fired.

- Near the front line, a towering Catholic church can be seen at the peak of a nearby hill. During the Italian occupation in the early 20th century, fighters from Gharyan and Assabia fought together to decolonize Libya.

During the fighting, the military council of Gharyan swore that they were fighting the remnants of pro-Gaddafi forces still hiding in Assabia.

"Assabia and us are brothers, but due to the presence of Gaddafi fighters we have a problem," Gharyan spokesman Ismail al-Ayeb told Reuters.

- He said there are more than 1,000 pro-Gaddafi troops in Assabia -- a town of just over 50,000 people -- and showed Reuters documents which listed tens of thousands of weapons that the Gharyan military council claims are in Assabia.

• TORTURE CLAIMS

In Assabia, a different story was being told, in which residents not involved in the fighting were kidnapped and tortured, one to death, by Gharyan fighters.

"We are not Gaddafi supporters. Gharyan just want to legitimize their fight against us," said Ibrahim Mohammed, 23, who was covered head to toe in black and blue bruises which he says he got from beatings with metal chains in Gharyan.

- "I was on the road to the capital and I was stopped by Gharyan fighters. They asked me where I was from and when I said Assabia they forced me out the car with guns and took me to a military base," he told Reuters from his bed at the

central hospital in Assabia, having been released in a ceasefire agreement brokered by the NTC.

"I recognized them as being from the military council in Gharyan," he said in a coarse voice, adding that his ankles were crushed in metal workshop clamps and that his finger and toe were smacked with metal bars. Blood seeped from under his fingernails during the interview.

- "During my interrogations, I saw our main military commander in Gharyan lying on the floor in a pool of blood ... he was barely breathing and they had tied a metal pole to his arms and legs and were giving him electric shocks," Ibrahim said.

The body of this Assabia military commander, Ezzedine al-Ghool, was anonymously dropped at the Tripoli hospital where it was later collected by members of Assabia's city council, including Bashir al-Nwer, who says Gharyan fighters took the body to Tripoli to avoid escalating the conflict by returning the tortured body directly to Assabia.

- "We have come to get the doctor's report which proves he was tortured to death. Then we will take his body to Assabia. Three days after Ezzedine was killed, his wife gave birth to his son, Ali, and we want the son to see his first and last glimpse of his father," he told Reuters at the morgue in Tripoli.

Ezzedine spent two months in a Gaddafi prison during the war and is heralded as a hero of the revolution.

- Reuters travelled in a convoy of dozens of cars which transported Ezzedine's body back to Assabia hospital where Ezzedine's wife was recovering from giving birth a day before. On arrival, the widow's wails echoed through the corridors and she kissed her dead husband's face and whispered prayers.

"This is your son," she said, holding her newborn child, tightly wrapped in blankets to protect him from the thin, cold mountain air.

- TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

So far, the NTC has been efficient at mediating and ending these sort of flare-ups that are happening all over the country and undermining Libya's fragile stability.

The Gharyan-Assabia ceasefire was brokered quickly, and prime minister Abdel Rahim El-Keib and NTC head Mustafa Abdel Jalil personally visited both towns.

But the NTC has yet to prove it can prevent militia fighting and rising violent crime.

"Libya is making a transition from war to peace and trying to deal with what happened," said the western diplomat who is involved in a movement to start a truth and reconciliation committee to document war crimes committed during the civil war.

"After going through what Libya went through, any country would have problems and especially as people realize that the country will take time for laws to be enforced and adhered to."

[BBC News - Libyan defence minister in restive Bani Walid for talks](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16725653)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16725653>

- 25 January 2012
- Libyan defence minister in restive Bani Walid for talks
- Libya's defence minister has arrived in Bani Walid, a former stronghold of the Gaddafi regime, after four people were killed in fighting there on Monday.

Osama al-Juwali wants to negotiate with militiamen who drove those loyal to the National Transitional Council into the surrounding desert, officials say.

Locals have told the BBC 90% of the town is under the militiamen's control.

- In case Mr Juwali is unsuccessful, NTC forces armed with artillery and rockets have gathered outside, ready to attack.

'Iron fist'

However, one commander was overheard telling his men that they were there "for the purposes of reconciliation, not fighting".

[Continue reading the main story](#)

At the scene



Gabriel Gatehouse BBC News, Bani Walid

There were no green flags flying from the roofs of houses in Bani Walid. But nor were there many of the red, black and green banners of the revolutionaries who now control the country. Or most of it.

The government has played down accusations that Gaddafi loyalists were behind the clashes that drove out NTC forces on Monday. But it has nevertheless sent sizeable military reinforcements towards the town.

A long convoy of military vehicles snaked along the road running through the Nefusa Mountains towards Bani Walid. There were hundreds of men, fighters from various militias from across western Libya, but all loyal to the government.

Their commanders said they were not going to fight but to keep the peace. They too played down the link to the former regime. But, inside Bani Walid, behind the locked doors of his office, one local official said the town was full of Gaddafi loyalists.

"These people think that one day they will control Libya again," he said. "They have money and they have weapons."

On Tuesday, the head of Bani Walid's council, Mubarak al-Fatamni, said that forces loyal to the new government were attacked on 23 January in a "barbaric manner" by members of the "remnants of the Gaddafi regime".

- In case Mr Juwali is unsuccessful, NTC forces armed with artillery and rockets have gathered outside, ready to attack.

However, one commander was overheard telling his men that they were there "for the purposes of reconciliation, not fighting".

- 'Peacekeeping force'

On Tuesday, the head of Bani Walid's council, Mubarak al-Fatamni, said that forces loyal to the new government were attacked on 23 January in a "barbaric manner" by members of the "remnants of the Gaddafi regime".

- Mr Fatamni said the green flag used by Libya during Col Muammar Gaddafi's rule had been flown over the town for a short time on Monday.

But spokesmen for the interim prime minister and defence ministry told the BBC the dispute was a local one, involving rival militias.

- Later, Mr Juwali warned that forces loyal to the NTC would "strike with an iron fist" against anyone who posed a threat to Libyan security.

On Wednesday, a member of the local council, Abdul Aziz al-Jumaili, told the Reuters news agency that he had been speaking to the defence minister "to find a solution to this problem".

Mr Jumaili said a "peacekeeping force" comprised of units of former rebel fighters loyal to the NTC and drawn from other towns in the region had set up checkpoints on the outskirts of Bani Walid.

- The BBC's Gabriel Gatehouse, who is on the outskirts of Bani Walid, says that for the moment the NTC is describing the recent clashes as a local problem rather than an organised pro-Gaddafi counter revolution.
- The NTC says it hopes order can be restored through negotiation, but judging by the force now gathering outside the town it looks like they are keeping their military options open, our correspondent adds.

This is the latest in a series of clashes between rival armed groups, three months after the official end of the revolution that ousted Col Gaddafi.

- Earlier this month, armed clashes between militias in the towns of Assabia and Gharyan left 12 dead and about 100 injured.

Libya's interim leader, Mustafa Abdul Jalil, has warned of the dangers of a civil war if the country's militias are not disarmed.

Gadhafi Loyalists Seize Libyan City - ABC News

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/moammar-gadhafi-loyalists-seize-libyan-town-15428203?singlePage=true#.Tx828aVSR2A>

- Gadhafi Loyalists Seize Libyan City
- By MAGGIE MICHAEL and RAMI AL-SHAHEIBI Associated Press

BENGHAZI, Libya January 24, 2012 (AP)

- Moammar Gadhafi loyalists seized control of a Libyan mountain city in the most serious challenge to the central

government since the strongman's fall, underlining the increasing weakness of Libya's Western-backed rulers as they try to unify the country under their authority.

The taking of Bani Walid, one of the last Gadhafi strongholds captured by the new leadership late last year, was the first such organized operation by armed remnants of Gadhafi's regime. A simultaneous outbreak of shootings in the capital and Libya's second largest city Benghazi raised authorities' concern that other networks of loyalists were active elsewhere.

The security woes add to the difficulties of the ruling National Transitional Council, which is struggling to establish its authority and show Libyans progress in stability and good government. Bani Walid's fall comes after violent protests in Benghazi, where Libyans angry over lack of reform stormed the NTC headquarters and trashed offices.

- In Bani Walid, hundreds of well-equipped and highly trained remnants of Gadhafi's forces battled for eight hours on Monday with the local pro-NTC revolutionary brigade, known as the May 28 Brigade, said Mubarak al-Fatmani, the head of Bani Walid local council. The brigade was driven out and Gadhafi loyalists then raised their old green flag over buildings in the western city.

Four revolutionary fighters were killed and 25 others were wounded in the fighting, al-Fatmani said.

- There were no immediate signs that the uprising was part of some direct attempt to restore the family of Gadhafi, who was swept out of power in August and then killed in the nearby city of Sirte in October. His sons, daughter and wife have been killed, arrested or have fled to neighboring countries.

Instead, the fighting seemed to reflect a rejection of NTC control by a city that never deeply accepted its rule, highlighting the still unresolved tensions between those who benefited under Gadhafi's regime and those now in power. Those tensions are tightly wound up with tribal and regional rivalries around the country.

- The May 28 Brigade had kept only a superficial control over the city, the head of Bani Walid's military council, Abdullah al-Khazmi, acknowledged.

"The only link between Bani Walid and the revolution was May 28, now it is gone and 99 percent of Bani Walid people are Gadhafi loyalists," he said.

He spoke to The Associated Press at a position on the eastern outskirts of Bani Walid, where hundreds of pro-NTC reinforcements from Benghazi were deployed with convoys of cars mounted with machine guns, though there was no immediate move to retake the city.

- The fighters who captured the city Monday night belong to Brigade 93, a militia newly created by Gadhafi loyalists who reassembled after the fall of the regime, said al-Khazmi and al-Fatmani. The fighters, flush with cash and heavy weaponry including incendiary bombs, have been increasing in power in the city, they said.

There was no possibility to confirm their claims. However, there were no mass evacuations from the town after the clashes, an indication that the residents appear to accept the new arrangement, said Ali al-Fatmani, a revolutionary brigade commander in Bani Walid.

Authorities in Benghazi, where the NTC is centered, appeared concerned that the Bani Walid uprising could have sent a signal to other cells of Gadhafi forces.

- An AP reporter who was present in the Benghazi operation room heard military commanders on Monday saying coordinated incidents of drive-by shootings in Tripoli and, to a lesser extent, Benghazi erupted as news of the Bani Walid takeover spread. In Tripoli, some shops closed, and fighters responsible for security in the capital were on a state of alert over the shootings.

Five months since the Gadhafi regime's fall and three months since his death, the National Transitional Council has so far made little progress in unifying its armed forces. Instead it relies largely on multiple "revolutionary brigades," militias made up of citizens-turned-fighters, usually all from a specific city or even neighborhood.

The militias were created during the months of civil war against Gadhafi's forces last year, and since the war ended in October, the various brigades remain in control of security affairs of each city they liberated. Though loyal to the NTC, they have also feuded among themselves and acted on their own initiative, and the council has been unable to control them.

- A month ago, Gadhafi loyalists attacked another revolutionary brigade from Tripoli that entered Bani Walid, killing 13, said Mubarak al-Fatmani.

"The council (NTC) did absolutely nothing," said al-Fatmani, who resigned from his local council chief post to protest

the NTC's failure to investigate the ambush. He still holds his position, since his resignation has not yet been accepted.

The council has faced increasing complaints that it is doing little to bring stability to the country. It faces a daunting task, since Gadhafi's regime stripped Libya of most institutions, and the civil war has stirred up widespread divisions, rivalries and resentments.

- In the Benghazi unrest last Saturday, protesters broke into the NTC headquarters, smashed windows and carted off furniture and electronics, then threw bottles at NTC chief Mustafa Abdul-Jalil as he tried to address them and torched his car. The next day, Abdul-Jalil suspended the Benghazi representatives on the council in an apparent attempt to appease protesters. The deputy chief of the NTC resigned in protest over the suspension.

Bani Walid, a city of 100,000 located in the mountains 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli, held out for weeks against revolutionary forces after Gadhafi's fall from power, with loyalist fighters dug into its formidable terrain of valleys and crevasses. Pro-NTC fighters finally took it in October.

- The main tribe in Bani Walid is a branch of the Warfala tribal confederation, which stretches around the country with around 1 million members. The Bani Walid branch was one of the most privileged under Gadhafi, who gave them top positions and used their fighters to try to crush protests in the early months of last year's uprising against his rule.

That has left a deep enmity between the tribe and others. Ali al-Fatmani said Bani Walid loyalists were among Gadhafi troops that tried to march on Benghazi during the civil war and were used to in the siege of Zawiya, west of Tripoli. There were reports, he said, that Bani Walid fighters desecrated graves of fallen revolutionary fighters in Zawiya.

"The hatred and mistrust have been building up during the revolution," said al-Fatmani, himself a Warfala.

[Libya: Gaddafi's green flag raised in Bani Walid after bloody uprising | Mail Online](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2091144/Libya-Gaddafis-green-flag-raised-Bani-Walid-bloody-uprising.html?ito=feeds-newsxml)
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2091144/Libya-Gaddafis-green-flag-raised-Bani-Walid-bloody-uprising.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>

• **Gaddafi's green flag raised in Libyan town after bloody uprising... as civil war fears rise**

- **Bani Walid now under control of Gaddafi loyalists**
- **Four dead and 25 wounded in violent battles**

- By [Lee Moran](#)

Last updated at 4:53 PM on 24th January 2012

- Libya's ramshackle government lost control of a former Gaddafi stronghold today after locals staged an armed uprising.

Forces loyal to ousted, and now dead, leader Muammar Gaddafi seized control of Bani Walid and then raised in celebration the deposed regime's green flag on hundreds of buildings.

- The re-taking of the town, which saw elders driven out in a lengthy bloody gunbattle which killed four people and left 25 others wounded, raises the spectre that the country will descend into civil war.



Celebration: A photo, reportedly from Bani Walid which appeared on a Libyan website, shows a green flag being raised as Gaddafi loyalists re-captured the town



Captured: Photos, reportedly taken in Bani Walid, show the flags that represent the presence of supporters of the ousted regime

- The return of violence to the oil-rich North African nation will also be met with a rolling of the eyes in Washington and London, who both spent billions in pushing Gaddafi out.

This week's bloodshed in Bani Walid poses the gravest challenge yet to the country's new rulers - the National Transitional Council.

- A local resident said yesterday's battles began when members of the May 28 militia, affiliated to the NTC, arrested some former Gaddafi loyalists.

That prompted other supporters of the former leader to attack the militia's garrison.



Anger: Libyans damage the car of National Transitional Council Chairman Mustafa Abdel Jalil over the weekend



Demands: Among protesters in Benghazi are Islamists demanding Libyan ruler apply Islamic sharia law

Mubarak al-Fatamni, the head of Bani Walid local council, fled to the nearby city of Misrata following the attack, which witnesses said was fought using heavy weaponry.

- A top commander of a revolutionary brigade in Bani Walid, Ali al-Fatamni, who was present in Benghazi during the attack, said he had lost contact with other fighters in the town.

The NTC still has the backing of the NATO powers who, with their diplomatic pressure and bombing campaign, helped push out Gaddafi and install the new government.

NTC authorities pledged to unify the tribally-divided country, reconstruct its once mighty oil industry that made Libya a major exporter in OPEC, and hold democratic elections.

But the town's revolt heightens doubts in the West about the NTC government's ability to instil law and order.

- This is seen as crucial to rebuilding oil exports, to disarming tribal militias and guarding Libyan borders in

a region where Al Qaeda is active.



Discontent: Crowds break into the local NTC headquarters in Benghazi on Saturday



Occupation: Crowds demanded to speak NTC leader Mustafa Abdel Jalil after reaching the second floor

The collapse of NTC authority in the town, one of the most die-hard bastions of pro-Gaddafi sentiment during Libya's nine-month civil war last year, could not come at a worse time.

- Growing discontent about the NTC has spread across the country - with the biggest demonstration taking place in Benghazi, the birthplace of last year's uprising.

Abdel Hafiz Ghoga, vice-president of the NTC, resigned on Monday after a series of violent protests in the eastern port city.

Demonstrators, who claim many NTC members are tarnished by ties to Gaddafi and failed to quickly restore basic public services, smashed windows at the local headquarters on Saturday night.

And on Thursday, crowds jostled Ghoga during a library visit as security staff struggled to help him escape. Last night he said he was quitting to try to limit the damage to the council.

- 'My resignation is for the benefit of the nation and is required at this stage,' Ghoga told Al Jazeera News.



Confusion: NTC deputy Abdel Hafiz Ghoga, left, quit despite leader Mustafa Abdel Jalil saying he didn't think his colleague would resign. Abdel Jalil warned the country was descending into a 'bottomless pit'

He said the national consensus that helped the country rise up and end Gaddafi's rule had not lasted into peacetime, giving way instead to what he called an atmosphere of 'hatred.'

- 'I do not want this atmosphere to continue and negatively affect the National Transitional Council and its performance,' said Ghoga, who also acted as the NTC's spokesman.

He is one of the most senior of Libya's new rulers to have left office since Gaddafi's overthrow in August. His departure will revive doubts about the NTC's ability to form a cohesive and effective government.

NTC chief Mustafa Abdel Jalil, speaking in Benghazi on Monday, appealed to the protesters to be more patient.

'We are going through a political movement that can take the country to a bottomless pit,' he said. 'There is something behind these protests that is not for the good of the country.'

- 'The people have not given the government enough time and the government does not have enough money.'



Disturbing legacy: Many NTC members are said to be tainted by former dictator Muammar Gaddafi, while his son Saif, right, is the now the focus of international human rights groups over the way he is being held

'Maybe there are delays, but the government has only been working for two months. Give them a chance, at least two months.'

- In a glimpse of the lack of co-ordination which Western diplomats say pervades the workings of the NTC, Abdel Jalil was asked if Ghoga would be stepping down and said he would not.

The organisation is also under increasing pressure to hand over Gaddafi's influential son Saif to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Despite his father's regime's brutal record, the case has become an unlikely rallying point for global human rights advocates.

- The NTC have been criticised for failing to tell him what he is charged with or give him access to a lawyer.

Saif, who lost his right thumb and forefinger during the civil war, is also denied visitors, television, radio and the internet at his compound in Zintan, 100 miles from Tripoli.

Libyan leaders insist the country will hold a trial. But Donatella Rovera, an Amnesty International official, said the NTC had failed to put in place a trial system with independent judges and skilled prosecutors.

[Former Gaddafi stronghold rejects Libyan government's authority | World news | The Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/24/former-gaddafi-stronghold-rejects-government)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/24/former-gaddafi-stronghold-rejects-government>

• Former Gaddafi stronghold rejects Libyan government's authority

Elders in Bani Walid abolish government-appointed military council and appoint own representatives following gun battle

- - [Chris Stephen](#) in Tripoli, [Luke Harding](#) and agencies
 - [guardian.co.uk](#), Tuesday 24 January 2012



- Libyan interior minister Fawzi Abdelali said the battle in Bani Walid was between tribal militias rather than a pro-Gaddafi uprising. Photograph: Mahmud Turkia/AFP/Getty Images
- Negotiations were going on in Bani Walid on Tuesday, a day after fighters seized control of the Libyan town from the militias loyal to the country's provisional government.

Elders in Bani Walid said they were appointing their own local government and rejected any interference from the authorities in the capital, Tripoli. On Monday, the fighters drove out militias loyal to [Libya's](#) ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) in a bloody gun battle, with at least four people reported dead.
- The elders denied claims they were loyal to [Muammar Gaddafi](#), who was captured and killed in October after weeks on the run.

There were no signs on Tuesday of Gaddafi-era green flags, which witnesses earlier said had been hoisted over the town.

Libya's interior minister, Fawzi Abdelali, said the battle was between tribal militias rather than a pro-Gaddafi uprising. "The information we have says that there are internal problems between the people of this city and this is the reason for what happened," he said.
- About 200 elders who gathered in a mosque decided to abolish an NTC-appointed military council for the town and appoint their own local council, in direct defiance of the authority of the government in Tripoli.

"If [the NTC chief, Mustafa] Abdel Jalil is going to force anyone on us, we won't accept that by any means," one of the elders, Ali Zargoun, told Reuters.
- Accounts from Bani Walid, which is about 120 miles from Tripoli, late on Monday described armed Gaddafi supporters attacking the barracks of the pro-government militia in the town and then forcing them to retreat.

A fighter with the routed pro-government militia claimed the loyalists were flying "brand new green flags" from the centre of town. The flags were symbols of Gaddafi's 42-year dictatorship.

- But elders on Tuesday disputed that account. "In the Libyan revolution, we have all become brothers. We will not be an obstacle to progress," said another elder, Miftah Jubarra. "Regarding allegations of pro-Gaddafi elements in Bani Walid, this is not true. This is the media. You will go around the city and find no green flags or pictures of Gaddafi."
- British diplomats characterised the skirmish as a "localised issue" between different factions, rather than a resurgence by pro-Gaddafi forces. They said the dispute had been simmering for several weeks and erupted when locals tried to replace the NTC-appointed leader of the town's revolutionary council with their own representative. The situation was now calm with negotiations going on, they added.

Dave Hartwell, a Middle East analyst with IHS Jane's, said he was still "broadly optimistic" about Libya's future, despite the NTC's failure to assert its political authority.

- He said it was premature to predict Iraq-style conflagration for Libya, or interpret the latest clashes as the beginnings of a nascent civil war.

"It's de rigeur at the moment for rival groups to accuse each other of being loyalists. Whenever you have a local dispute one side will accuse the other of being pro-Gaddafi. It's indicative of the wider problem that the government is having in establishing law and order and the perception that the government doesn't control the whole of the country."

- He added, however: "Libya doesn't have the problems Iraq experienced in 2003 with things like infrastructure. Despite its political failures the NTC has been able to keep society functioning."

The NTC is due to announce soon a plan which, in theory, will see elections take place later this year for a new assembly. The assembly will then draft Libya's new constitution, with a referendum and new parliamentary and presidential elections to follow in 2013.

- Bani Walid, the base of the powerful Warfallah tribe, was one of the last towns to surrender to the anti-Gaddafi rebellion last year. During Libya's nine-month war, anti-Gaddafi NTC rebels tried to take Bani Walid but did not progress much beyond the outskirts of the town. It later emerged that Saif al-Islam, one of Gaddafi's sons, who was captured in the Sahara desert in November, had been using Bani Walid as a base.

Shortly before the end of the conflict, with Gaddafi's defeat unavoidable, local tribal elders negotiated an agreement under which forces loyal to the NTC were able to enter the town without a fight. Relations have been uneasy since then and there have been occasional flare-ups of violence.

- A local resident, who did not want to be identified, said Monday's violence began when members of the 28 May militia, affiliated to the NTC, arrested some former Gaddafi loyalists. That prompted other supporters of the former leader to attack the militia's garrison. "They massacred men at the doors of the militia headquarters," said the resident, according to Reuters.

[BBC News - Libya: Competing claims over Bani Walid fighting](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16702044)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16702044>

- 24 January 2012
- Libya: Competing claims over Bani Walid fighting
- Confusion surrounds events in the Libyan town of Bani Walid after fighting broke out between armed groups on Monday, leaving four people dead.
- The head of the local council has said a local militia was attacked by remnants of forces supporting late Libyan leader Col Muammar Gaddafi.

But the post-Gaddafi government has denied pro-Gaddafi forces were involved, saying instead the fighting was between rival militias.

The town is now reported to be calm.

- The state-run Libyan news agency WAL quotes the head of Bani Walid's council, Mubarak al-Fatamni, as saying that forces loyal to the new government were attacked on 23 January in a "barbaric manner" by members of the "remnants of the Gaddafi regime".

Mr Fatamni said pro-Gaddafi forces raised their green flag over the town for a short time on Monday afternoon, the Associated Press news agency reports.

But spokesmen for the prime minister and defence ministry have told the BBC the dispute is a local one.

Armed groups

- A source within the Libyan government, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the BBC the fighting broke out after a group of former rebel fighters, the 28 May Brigade, arrested one person.

The fighting was "more a clash between local people regarding a difference of who this [arrested] person was," the source said. "But of course now other people seem to be involved as well. The situation is not very clear who is who."

It's still confused."

- This is the latest in a series of clashes between rival armed groups, three months after the official end of the revolution that ousted Col Gaddafi, says the BBC's Gabriel Gatehouse in the eastern city of Benghazi.

On Tuesday, Reuters reporters who visited the town said militias loyal to the NTC had been driven out and town elders said they were appointing their own local government.

The Libyan defence ministry will be sending someone to the town, the government source said.

It is likely that some of the men involved in these latest clashes were indeed amongst those fighting on Col Gaddafi's side, our correspondent says - but in post-revolutionary Libya, the pro-Gaddafi label is also increasingly used in bitter local feuds.

Bani Walid was one of the last pro-Gaddafi towns to fall in the conflict.

Earlier this month, armed clashes between militias in the towns of Assabia and Gharyan left 12 dead and about 100 injured.

Libya's interim leader Mustafa Abdul Jalil has warned of the dangers of a civil war if the country's militias are not disarmed.

[AFP: Libya says will strike back if Kadhafi men behind unrest](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5heLpzOuLimk737l9sxccYxZ0-nkA?docId=CNG.42ccd078a6b0d69692b7b9f1af4d137f.c1)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5heLpzOuLimk737l9sxccYxZ0-nkA?docId=CNG.42ccd078a6b0d69692b7b9f1af4d137f.c1>

- Libya says will strike back if Kadhafi men behind unrest

By Imed Lamloum and Ines Bel Aiba (AFP)

- TRIPOLI — Libya said it will strike back if diehards of slain dictator Moamer Kadhafi were behind deadly clashes in his former bastion of Bani Walid, where confusion reigned Tuesday as to who was behind the unrest.

Five people were killed and several wounded on Monday when fighting erupted in the town, which local officials said began with an attack by supporters of Kadhafi against a base of former rebels

- Those claims were strongly denied by Interior Minister Fawzi Abdelali late Monday, while an AFP correspondent who visited the town the same day said it was unclear who controlled it.

On Tuesday, Abdelali said the reasons for the violence still remained unclear, but added that Libyan forces were ready to strike back if the unrest was indeed triggered by Kadhafi's men in Bani Walid, a town 170 kilometres (110 miles) southeast of Tripoli.

"We do not want to rush," Abdelali told a news conference in Tripoli.

But if the trouble in Bani Walid was due to "remnants of the former regime for political reasons," then the authorities "are capable of striking anyone who dares to harm the security of Libya", he said.

Abdelali said he was still waiting for more information to "assess what really happened and find solutions to the crisis," adding that some reports spoke of a tribal conflict in the town while others blamed Kadhafi loyalists.

- "The two ministries (of defence and interior) are capable of taking all necessary steps to maintain security. We are ready," he added.

Abdelali's remarks came after the interim government met earlier Tuesday to discuss the deadly clashes even as other sources said calm had returned to the town on Tuesday.

On Monday, Abdelali had said the clashes erupted due to "internal problems" in Bani Walid.

He told Libyan television that the fighting was linked to "the issue of compensation for those affected by last year's war."

"The information we have from inside the city does not say that there are green flags (hoisted on town buildings) and there is nothing in relation to the former regime," referring to claims made by several other local officials.

Colonel Salem al-Ouaer, a tribal leader from Bani Walid told AFP Tuesday that calm was returning to the town.

"The situation is under control and calm is returning" to the town, he said.

- Ouaer said that representatives of local tribes were holding a meeting to discuss the issue outside Bani Walid with a delegation of tribes from the nearby towns of Zintan and Sabratha.

"What happened yesterday was purely a local conflict," Ouaer said, indicating that the firefight was not caused by supporters of Kadhafi as claimed by other officials on Monday.

He said passage was also secured for those holed up in the former rebel base that was surrounded Monday by what officials claimed were supporters of Kadhafi.

Ouaer said he was in touch with the chief of the ruling National Transitional Council, Mustafa Abdel Jalil, and Defence Minister Osama Juili to "update them of the situation in Bani Walid."

Bani Walid was one of the last pro-Kadhafi bastions to fall in the bloody uprising against Kadhafi.

Its capture was followed days later by the fall of his hometown Sirte in a battle which also led to Kadhafi's killing and marked the "liberation" of Libya.

- Monday's firefight follows an outburst of opposition to the NTC in the eastern city of Benghazi last week that prompted council chairman Jalil to warn of possible "civil war" in post-conflict Libya.

Libyan mufti Sadeq al-Ghariani, meanwhile, urged the government to rapidly integrate the former rebels into security forces.

"For the sake of maintaining security in the country ... the government should not delay to integrate them (ex-rebels) because it is a critical time" that the country was undergoing, he said in a fatwa sent by text message.

He also called on the former rebels to "urgently" get integrated into the forces of interior and defence ministries.

The government has plans to rehabilitate about 200,000 former rebels into various fields, including integrating around 50,000 into security services of these ministries.

Gadhafi loyalists seize Libyan city - AP

http://news.yahoo.com/gadhafi-loyalists-seize-libyan-city-185847206.html;_ylt=AnKmnwW9w_NWjzld3YMoltNvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNyb3RkdjE2BG1pdANUb3BTdG9yeSBXb3JsZFNGBHBzZwM5OG-;_ylg=X3oDMTFwZTltMWVnBGLudGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAN3b3JsZARwdANzZWNoaW9ucwR0ZXN0Aw-;_ylv=3

• Gadhaifi loyalists seize Libyan city



By MAGGIE MICHAEL and RAMI AL-SHAHEIBI | Associated Press

- BENGHAZI, Libya (AP) — Moammar Gadhaifi loyalists seized control of a Libyan mountain city in the most serious challenge to the central government since the strongman's fall, underlining the increasing weakness of Libya's Western-backed rulers as they try to unify the country under their authority.

The taking of Bani Walid, one of the last Gadhaifi strongholds captured by the new leadership late last year, was the first such organized operation by armed remnants of Gadhaifi's regime. A simultaneous outbreak of shootings in the capital and Libya's second largest city Benghazi raised authorities' concern that other networks of loyalists were active elsewhere.

- The security woes add to the difficulties of the ruling National Transitional Council, which is struggling to establish its authority and show Libyans progress in stability and good government. Bani Walid's fall comes after violent protests in Benghazi, where Libyans angry over lack of reform stormed the NTC headquarters and trashed offices.

In Bani Walid, hundreds of well-equipped and highly trained remnants of Gadhaifi's forces battled for eight hours on Monday with the local pro-NTC revolutionary brigade, known as the May 28 Brigade, said Mubarak al-Fatmani, the head of Bani Walid local council. The brigade was driven out and Gadhaifi loyalists then raised their old green flag over buildings in the western city.

Four revolutionary fighters were killed and 25 others were wounded in the fighting, al-Fatmani said.

- There were no immediate signs that the uprising was part of some direct attempt to restore the family of Gadhaifi, who was swept out of power in August and then killed in the nearby city of Sirte in October. His sons, daughter and wife have been killed, arrested or have fled to neighboring countries.

Instead, the fighting seemed to reflect a rejection of NTC control by a city that never deeply accepted its rule, highlighting the still unresolved tensions between those who benefited under Gadhaifi's regime and those now in power. Those tensions are tightly wound up with tribal and regional rivalries around the country.

The May 28 Brigade had kept only a superficial control over the city, the head of Bani Walid's military council, Abdullah al-Khazmi, acknowledged.

"The only link between Bani Walid and the revolution was May 28, now it is gone and 99 percent of Bani Walid people are Gadhaifi loyalists," he said.

- He spoke to The Associated Press at a position on the eastern outskirts of Bani Walid, where hundreds of pro-NTC reinforcements from Benghazi were deployed with convoys of cars mounted with machine guns, though there was no immediate move to retake the city.

The fighters who captured the city Monday night belong to Brigade 93, a militia newly created by Gadhaifi loyalists who reassembled after the fall of the regime, said al-Khazmi and al-Fatmani. The fighters, flush with cash and heavy weaponry including incendiary bombs, have been increasing in power in the city, they said.

There was no possibility to confirm their claims. However, there were no mass evacuations from the town after the clashes, an indication that the residents appear to accept the new arrangement, said Ali al-Fatmani, a revolutionary brigade commander in Bani Walid.

Authorities in Benghazi, where the NTC is centered, appeared concerned that the Bani Walid uprising could have sent

a signal to other cells of Gadhafi forces.

- An AP reporter who was present in the Benghazi operation room heard military commanders on Monday saying coordinated incidents of drive-by shootings in Tripoli and, to a lesser extent, Benghazi erupted as news of the Bani Walid takeover spread. In Tripoli, some shops closed, and fighters responsible for security in the capital were on a state of alert over the shootings.

Five months since the Gadhafi regime's fall and three months since his death, the National Transitional Council has so far made little progress in unifying its armed forces. Instead it relies largely on multiple "revolutionary brigades," militias made up of citizens-turned-fighters, usually all from a specific city or even neighborhood.

The militias were created during the months of civil war against Gadhafi's forces last year, and since the war ended in October, the various brigades remain in control of security affairs of each city they liberated. Though loyal to the NTC, they have also feuded among themselves and acted on their own initiative, and the council has been unable to control them.

A month ago, Gadhafi loyalists attacked another revolutionary brigade from Tripoli that entered Bani Walid, killing 13, said Mubarak al-Fatmani.

- "The council (NTC) did absolutely nothing," said al-Fatmani, who resigned from his local council chief post to protest the NTC's failure to investigate the ambush. He still holds his position, since his resignation has not yet been accepted.

The council has faced increasing complaints that it is doing little to bring stability to the country. It faces a daunting task, since Gadhafi's regime stripped Libya of most institutions, and the civil war has stirred up widespread divisions, rivalries and resentments.

In the Benghazi unrest last Saturday, protesters broke into the NTC headquarters, smashed windows and carted off furniture and electronics, then threw bottles at NTC chief Mustafa Abdul-Jalil as he tried to address them and torched his car. The next day, Abdul-Jalil suspended the Benghazi representatives on the council in an apparent attempt to appease protesters. The deputy chief of the NTC resigned in protest over the suspension.

- Bani Walid, a city of 100,000 located in the mountains 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli, held out for weeks against revolutionary forces after Gadhafi's fall from power, with loyalist fighters dug into its formidable terrain of valleys and crevasses. Pro-NTC fighters finally took it in October.

The main tribe in Bani Walid is a branch of the Warfala tribal confederation, which stretches around the country with around 1 million members. The Bani Walid branch was one of the most privileged under Gadhafi, who gave them top positions and used their fighters to try to crush protests in the early months of last year's uprising against his rule.

That has left a deep enmity between the tribe and others. Ali al-Fatmani said Bani Walid loyalists were among Gadhafi troops that tried to march on Benghazi during the civil war and were used to in the siege of Zawiya, west of Tripoli. There were reports, he said, that Bani Walid fighters desecrated graves of fallen revolutionary fighters in Zawiya.

"The hatred and mistrust have been building up during the revolution," said al-Fatmani, himself a Warfala.

Anger, chaos but no revolt after Libya violence - Reuters

http://news.yahoo.com/former-gaddafi-stronghold-revolts-against-tripoli-122757601.html;_ylt=Ai2HNjwP2wGvDZmvXqXiHEdvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNxMHQ3dWNvBG1pdANUb3BTdG9yeSBXb3JsZFNGBHBzWmM5N-;_ylv=3

• Anger, chaos but no revolt after Libya violence



REUTERS

By Oliver Holmes | Reuters

- BANI WALID, Libya (Reuters) - A bullet-scarred barracks, scorched and abandoned like the ageing tanks guarding its shattered gateway, was all that remained on Tuesday of what passed for the Libyan government's grip on Bani Walid.

But a day after townsmen put to flight a force loyal to the Western-backed interim administration in Tripoli, elders in the desert city, once a bastion of support for Muammar Gaddafi, dismissed accusations they wanted to restore the late dictator's family to power or had any ambitions beyond their local area.

"Allegations of pro-Gaddafi elements in Bani Walid, this is not true," said Miftah Jubarra, who was among dozens of leading citizens gathered at a local mosque to form a municipal council now that nominal representatives from the capital have fled.

"In the Libyan revolution, we have all become brothers," Jubarra told Reuters. "We will not be an obstacle to progress."

That might reassure the National Transitional Council, the body which won NATO backing to oust Gaddafi last year but which is now struggling to restore services and impose order on myriad armed groups. An official of the NTC's government in Tripoli insisted it saw no threat from the "limited local incident."

Yet the violence, 150 km (90 miles) south of the capital, was also symptomatic of major obstacles to Libyan hopes of a rapid transition to peace, democracy and oil-fueled prosperity.

- Residents heard warplanes overhead late on Monday as NTC forces hastily drove south from Tripoli to take up positions 50 km from Bani Walid. But those troops had, as yet, no orders to move on the town, where Gaddafi loyalists fought rebel forces to a standstill before negotiating a surrender in October.

Interior Minister Fawzi Abd al-All told a news conference in Tripoli would "strike with an iron fist" anyone who posed a threat to Libyan security - but he also said there would be no NTC move against Bani Walid until it was clear what happened.

People in Bani Walid urged the NTC to keep back and the government official in Tripoli, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that the interim administration was in no hurry to get mired in a dispute he characterized as a spat between local factions, rather than a counter-revolution.

- "GREEN FLAGS" ABSENT

Though pro-government militiamen who fled on Monday spoke of their barracks being overrun by fighters flying the green flag of the old regime, Reuters journalists who toured the town of 75,000 on Tuesday saw little overt sign of such allegiances to Gaddafi, whose now captive son Saif al-Islam staged a last stand in Bani Walid before fleeing into the Sahara three months ago.

Rather than green flags, the most common banners flying were the red, green and black tricolor of the NTC.

Some graffiti spoke of lingering nostalgia for the Gaddafis in a town whose dominant Warfalla tribe fared well under him. But those willing to talk to reporters insisted the violence was no revanchist putsch but was provoked by local abuses allegedly committed by The May 28th Brigade, a militia loyal to the NTC.

- "When men from Tripoli come into your house and harass women, what are we to do?" said Fati Hassan, a 28-year-old Bani Walid resident who described the men of May 28th as a mixture of local men and outsiders, former anti-Gaddafi rebels who had turned into oppressors when given control over the town.

"They were arresting people from the first day after liberation. People are still missing. I am a revolutionary and I have friends in The May 28th Brigade," said Hassan, who said he urged them to ease off. "The war is over now."

A sleep-deprived doctor at the poorly supplied local hospital in Bani Walid, as well as other residents of the town, said at least seven people were killed on Monday when tempers boiled over, and an eighth died of wounds on Tuesday.

- It was unclear if this figure included four militiamen whose comrades in the NTC brigade said were killed.

Jubarra, who sat at the meeting of elders, gave details of the incident which, he said, caused patience to snap among the people of the town.

"On Friday, the May 28th Brigade arrested a man from Bani Walid. After Bani Walid residents lodged a protest, he was finally released. But he had been tortured.

"This caused an argument that escalated to arms.

"Bani Walid fighters took over the 28th May camp, confiscated weapons and pushed them out of the city," Jubarra explained to the elders, who sat in silence around him, many of them wrapped in traditional white woolen blankets.

- SIGNS OF BATTLE

At the barracks once used by Gaddafi's army, which had been their headquarters, spent cartridge cases crunched under foot, testifying to an intense gunfight. A meter-wide hole in the perimeter wall showed where a rocket had blasted through. Local people said the two sides exchanged fire with anti-tank weapons.

Clearly conscious of the risk that the NTC, keen to assert an authority that has been ebbing in recent weeks as memories fade of the victory over dictatorship, local people were anxious to send a message to Tripoli not to hit back:

"We are asking the NTC not to escalate this issue by sending troops," Jubarra said, turning his from the assembled town elders gaze to address Reuters journalists directly.

- Another of those gathered at the mosque to form a local government, Ali Zargoun, said they would reject any attempt by NTC chairman Mustafa Abdel Jalil, Libya's de facto head of state, to impose an authority on them: "If Abdel Jalil is going to force anyone on us, we won't accept that by any means."

Abdel Jalil was already having a bad week and has warned Libyans of a "bottomless pit" if trouble goes on in a country awash with guns. His deputy quit, bemoaning an "atmosphere of hatred" after being roughed up by disgruntled citizens.

And Abdel Jalil found himself besieged in his office by protesters in Benghazi, the seat of the revolt. They were complaining about delays in providing services for people in a country impatient to see its oil riches shared out more widely.

There is also growing dismay at progress toward an election due in June, with details still unclear on how the vote will be conducted and complaints of a lack of transparency from a body that includes many who held important positions under Gaddafi.

• TENSIONS NATIONWIDE

While Bani Walid was and remains a particular headache for the NTC, it is not alone. Towns and cities across the country are being run with little reference to central authority and in a number of areas old scores and local frictions are being fought over by groups that were nominally allies in the revolt.

"The civil war has produced new conflicts that are far from settled and that have yet to play out, namely power struggles at the local level, and conflicts between local centers of power for influence at the national level," said Wolfram Lacher of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs who has been in the country researching post-Gaddafi Libya.

- "Most of these are unlikely to develop into violent conflicts as in Bani Walid," Lacher said from Berlin. "But they will be playing out across the country in the coming months."

The government official acknowledged the difficulties. Speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity, he said: "As we all know, some regions are fragile in view of the vastness of the country and the presence of huge quantities of arms."

Among the issues being disputed is determining who will replace those who held power under Gaddafi, and who might be punished or otherwise held accountable for past abuses.

Many Libya watchers urge caution, however, in branding any of those competing groups as "Gaddafi loyalists," and few see any real threat of the late leader's exiled sons, or Saif al-Islam who is being held captive by pro-NTC fighters in the town of Zintan, becoming a focus for a fight back by the old guard.

- Rather, the label "pro-Gaddafi" has tended to be applied to adversaries by groups keen to undermine their rivals' cause:

"We should be cautious regarding reports of Gaddafi loyalists," Libya expert Lacher said. "This may be one local party to the conflict trying to get other forces to intervene by painting its adversaries as pro-Gaddafi."

During clashes between rival militias since "liberation" was declared in October, Reuters journalists have often been told by both sides in various disputes that they are aligned with the NTC and are fighting the remnants of Gaddafi's troops.

Though there are those among the six million Libyans who yearn for the old days, and there is pro-Gaddafi graffiti in Bani Walid, as well as boisterous children ready to yell "Only Gaddafi!" at foreign journalists, many regard that as largely evidence of irritation with the NTC than of a serious threat to turn the clock back on Libya's "Arab Spring" revolution.

• LOCAL PRIDE

Mustafa Fetouri, an academic and writer who comes originally from Bani Walid, saw this week's violence there as a matter of local pride, notably among elders of the Warfalla tribe, who felt ill used by the incoming powers in Tripoli - even though many Warfalla clansmen fought for the NTC during the war.

"It's tribal dignity not necessarily in support of the old regime," Fetouri told Reuters. "The (NTC's) goal is to teach the

Warfalla a lesson ... It will be bloody and fruitless."

Many townspeople were keeping indoors on Tuesday, although markets were being held and life seemed relatively normal. Handfuls of armed local men manned checkpoints out the edges of the town, which sits in a desert ravine that proved hard for NTC forces to take during the fighting last September and October.

- The fighters themselves were distinguishable from the motley forces loyal to the interim government only in that they did not wear the laminated identity badges distributed to NTC militiamen. They carried the same automatic rifles and drove the same pick-up trucks mounted with anti-aircraft guns that became the emblem of the chaotic war against Gaddafi's army.

Potential adversaries from men who describe themselves as part of the NTC's "national army" sat by the road closer to Tripoli. "We have received no orders to enter Bani Walid," said Mohammed al-Ajali, who said his unit had been sent there from eastern Libya on Monday to deal with the trouble in the town.

He had little patience for the protestations of the townsfolk that they were not counter-revolutionaries: "The solution for Bani Walid is to disarm them," Ajali said.

"I think 75 percent are Gaddafi supporters."

A Libyan air official said warplanes were being mobilized to fly to Bani Walid. But it was not immediately clear what the government in Tripoli could do. It has yet to demonstrate that it has an effective fighting force under its command.

[Tribalism, simmering grievances help give Gadhafi's loyalists a comeback in new Libya - The Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/moammar-gadhafi-loyalists-have-seized-control-of-libyan-town-officials-and-fighters-say/2012/01/24/gIQA0rDNQ_print.html)

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/moammar-gadhafi-loyalists-have-seized-control-of-libyan-town-officials-and-fighters-say/2012/01/24/gIQA0rDNQ_print.html

• Moammar Gadhafi loyalists have seized control of Libyan town, officials and fighters say

By Associated Press, Updated: Tuesday, January 24, 2:20 PM

- BENGHAZI, Libya — Moammar Gadhafi loyalists seized control of a Libyan city and raised the ousted regime's green flag, an official and military commanders said Tuesday, in the most serious revolt yet against the country's government.

The retaking of Bani Walid highlights the vulnerability of Libya's new leaders, who have faced mounting criticism as they struggle to unify the oil-rich North African nations and build state institutions from scratch three months after Gadhafi was captured and killed.

- The seizure also appeared to be the first major, organized operation by armed remnants of Gadhafi's regime, adding to the security woes of the ruling National Transitional Council. The council has so far made little progress in unifying armed forces. Instead it is left reliant on multiple "revolutionary brigades," militias made up of citizens-turned-fighters, usually all from a specific city or even neighborhood.

The militias were created during the months of civil war against Gadhafi's forces last year and when the war ended in October, the various brigades remain in control of security affairs of each city they liberated. Though loyal to the NTC, they have also feuded among themselves and acted on their own initiative, and the council has been unable to control them.

- Hundreds of well-equipped and highly trained remnants of Gadhafi's forces battled for eight hours in Bani Walid with the local revolutionary brigade, known as the May 28 Brigade, which was eventually driven out, said Mubarak al-Fatmani, the head of Bani Walid local council. The Gadhafi loyalists then raised the green flag over buildings in the western city.

On Monday's attack, he said four revolutionary fighters were killed and 25 others were wounded.

- The revolutionary brigade had kept only a superficial control over the mountain city, a longtime Gadhafi stronghold which was one of the last to fall to NTC rule late last year.

"The only link between Bani Walid and the revolution was May 28, now it is gone and 99 percent of Bani Walid people are Gadhafi loyalists," said the head of Bani Walid's military council, Abdullah al-Khazmi, confirming the fall of the city. He spoke to The Associated Press at a position on the eastern outskirts of Bani Walid, where hundreds of pro-NTC reinforcements from Benghazi were deployed, with convoys of cars mounted with machine guns.

- A top commander of a revolutionary brigade in Bani Walid, Ali al-Fatmani, who was present in Benghazi during the attack, says he has lost contact with other fighters in the town.
- The three officials said the attackers belong to Brigade 93, a militia newly created by Gadhafi loyalists who reassembled after the fall of the regime. The fighters, flush with cash and heavy weaponry including incendiary bombs,

have been increasing in power in the city, they said.

- A month ago, Gadhafi loyalists attacked another revolutionary brigade from Tripoli that entered Bani Walid, killing 13, said al-Fatmani.

"The council (NTC) did absolutely nothing," said al-Fatmani, the local council chief, who resigned from his post to protest the NTC's failure to investigate the ambush. He still holds his position, since his resignation has not yet been accepted.

- The revolt has underlined the weakness and what is seen as reluctance of the NTC in delivering and meeting promises. Protests have surged in recent weeks, with people demanding that the interim leaders deliver on promises of transparency and compensation for those injured in the fighting.

On Sunday, the head of the NTC Mustafa Abdul-Jalil suspended the Benghazi representatives on the council after protests in the city accusing the body of corruption and for not moving forward on reforms. The second top official in the NTC has also resigned. Benghazi, Libya's second largest city, was where the movement that toppled Gadhafi began and it served as the capital of the movement until Gadhafi's fall.

- Bani Walid, located in the mountains 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli, was one of the last Gadhafi strongholds to fall to revolutionary forces amid a monthslong civil war. It held out for weeks after the fall of the regime, with loyalist fighters dug into its formidable terrain of valleys and crevasses.
- Gadhafi's son and longtime heir apparent, Seif al-Islam, was long believed to have been hiding in the town. Seif al-Islam, who has been charged with crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court, was captured in November by fighters from the town of Zintan in Libya's western mountains, who continue to hold him.

The main tribe in Bani Walid is a branch of the Warfala tribal confederation, which stretches around the country with around 1 million members. The Bani Walid branch was one of the most privileged under Gadhafi, who gave them top positions and used their fighters to try to crush protesters in the early months of last year's uprising against his rule.

- Such has left the tribe with deep mistrust and enmities with the rest of the cities, especially those whose residents have suffered the most during the uprising.

The fighters who rose up in Bani Walid on Monday belong to Brigade 93, a militia created by Gadhafi loyalists who reassembled after the fall of the regime in August, said al-Khazmi and the local council chief.

The brigade is named after a famous coup against Gadhafi in 1993 by members of the Warfala tribe. Gadhafi ordered executions and arrests of all the military officers involved in the coup, except for a few. Among those spared was Salem al-Awar, who is believed to have helped the regime uncover the plot and who is believed to head Brigade 93, said al-Khazmi.

- The Britain's Foreign Office said that tension is not between pro-Gadhafi loyalists but between tribal leaders and the National Transitional Council.

"This follows increased tensions in this area in recent weeks with local tribal leaders," a ministry spokesman said on customary condition of anonymity. "These events underline the importance of an inclusive political process, which the Libyans are working hard to take forward together with rebuilding Libya," he said.

[Gaddafi loyalists attack on town denied | News.com.au](http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/gaddafi-loyalists-attack-on-town-denied/story-e6frfku0-1226252234984)

<http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/gaddafi-loyalists-attack-on-town-denied/story-e6frfku0-1226252234984>

- Gaddafi loyalists attack on town denied
 - *By AFP*
 - From: *NewsCore*
 - January 24, 2012
- **DEADLY clashes erupted today in Bani Walid, with a Libyan minister denying local officials' claims the attack on the former bastion of Muammar Gaddafi was carried out by his loyalists.**

An AFP correspondent who managed to enter the town for a short time said thick smoke billowed into the sky, while the identity of those present was unclear and there was limited evidence of the new Libyan authorities on the roads outside the town.

- While local officials said the town was attacked by Gaddafi's men, Interior Minister Fawzi Abdelali dismissed these claims, saying the firefight was caused by "internal problems" in the town.

He told Libyan television that the fighting was among the people of Bani Walid, and linked to "the issue of compensation for those affected by last year's war".

"The information we have from inside the city does not say that there are green flags (hoisted on town buildings) and there is nothing in relation to the former regime."

But Mr Abdelali confirmed that five people were killed in the fighting as claimed by local officials.

- "The loyalists of Gaddafi took control of the entire city of Bani Walid," said M'barek al Fotmani, a former member of the ruling Transitional National Council (TNC) in the desert oasis, 170km south of Tripoli as he led the claims of the so-called attack.

Mr Fotmani said the daylight attack started with an assault on a base of former rebels which killed "five thuwar (anti-Ghaddafi revolutionaries) including a commander".

Around 30 former rebels were also wounded, he said from inside the base which he later fled.

Mahmud Warfelli, spokesman of the Bani Walid local council, also said the attack was launched by "a group of remnants of the old regime" and called for outside help against a feared "massacre".

- "There are around 100 and 150 men armed with heavy weapons who are attacking. We have asked for the army to intervene, but the defence ministry and (TNC) have let us down," he said.

"(The gunmen) took control and hoisted the green flag on some districts, some important districts in the centre of the city," Mr Warfelli said.

A senior TNC member, Fathi Baja, said reinforcements had been sent to protect the town, adding the "fighting is between some Ghaddafi supporters and thuwar".

Mr Fotmani said the assailants had surrounded the base, which belonged to the May 28 Brigade, a unit attached to the defence ministry.

- But Salem al Ouaer, a military commander from the town, said the Brigade of May 28 itself had caused today's clashes.

"Recently the brigade arrested two persons from the tribe of Tlatem and after negotiations it was decided it would release them today. But when members of the tribe came to take them, the brigade refused and clashes ensued," he said.

In recent months Libya has also seen clashes between rival militias, comprised of the former rebels.

Bani Walid was one of the last pro-Gaddafi bastions to fall in the bloody uprising against the dictator and his regime

[Gaddafi supporters seize control of Libyan town | Reuters](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/23/us-libya-fighting-idUSTRE80M28Q20120123)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/23/us-libya-fighting-idUSTRE80M28Q20120123>

- Gaddafi supporters seize control of Libyan town
- By Taha Zargoun

TRIPOLI | Mon Jan 23, 2012

- (Reuters) - Fighters loyal to Libya's overthrown leader Muammar Gaddafi took control of a town south-east of the capital on Monday, flying their green flags in defiance of the country's fragile new government.
- The fightback by Gaddafi supporters defeated in Libya's civil war, though unlikely to spread elsewhere, added to the problems besetting a government which in the past week has been reeling from one crisis to another. Gaddafi himself was captured and killed in October after weeks on the run.

Accounts from the town of Bani Walid, about 200 km (120 miles) from Tripoli, described armed Gaddafi supporters attacking the barracks of the pro-government militia in the town and then forcing them to fall back.

"They control the town now. They are roaming the town," said a fighter with the 28th May militia, loyal to Libya's ruling National Transitional Council (NTC), which came under attack.

- The fighter told Reuters the loyalists were flying "brand new green flags" from the centre of town. The flags were symbols of Gaddafi's 42-year rule.
- A resident said four people were killed and 20 wounded in the fighting, during which the sides used heavy weapons.

Bani Walid, base of the powerful Warfallah tribe, was one of the last towns to surrender to the anti-Gaddafi rebellion last year. Many people there oppose the new leadership.

- A Libyan air force official said war planes were being mobilized to fly to Bani Walid. A spokesman for the military council in Zawiyah, near Tripoli, said a 1,500-strong force, drawn from militias across western Libya, was on stand-by.

"If the situation in Bani Walid is still complicated, we will go there," the spokesman, Ayad Laaroussi, said.

But it was not immediately clear what the government in Tripoli could do. It has yet to demonstrate that it has an effective fighting force under its command and Bani Walid, protected behind a deep valley, is difficult to attack.

- **EMBATTLED GOVERNMENT**

The uprising in Bani Walid could not come at a worse time for the NTC. In the past week its chief has had his office overrun by protesters angry at the slow pace of reform and the second most senior official has quit, citing what he described as an "atmosphere of hatred."

- During Libya's nine-month war, anti-Gaddafi rebels tried to take Bani Walid but did not progress much beyond the outskirts of the town. It later emerged that Saif al-Islam, one of Muammar Gaddafi's sons who was captured in the Sahara desert in November, had been using Bani Walid as a base.
- Soon before the end of the conflict, with Gaddafi's defeat unavoidable, local tribal elders negotiated an agreement under which forces loyal to the NTC were able to enter the town without a fight.

Relations have been uneasy since then and there have been occasional flare-ups of violence.

The resident, who did not want to be identified, said Monday's violence began when members of the May 28 militia arrested some Gaddafi loyalists.

- That prompted other supporters of the former leader to attack the militia's garrison.

"They massacred men at the doors of the militia headquarters," said the resident.

A militia based in Tripoli said its fighters had captured 17 people who, it said, were part of a network trying to smuggle arms to Gaddafi loyalists in Bani Walid and elsewhere. The militia said in a text message that the weapons included Russian-made Grad rockets.

- **FRAGILE GRIP ON POWER**

The NTC still has the backing of the NATO powers who, with their diplomatic pressure and bombing campaign, helped push out Gaddafi and install the new government.

But questions are now being raised inside some Western governments about the NTC's ability to govern Libya effectively and secure its borders against al Qaeda, arms traffickers and illegal migrants trying to get into Europe.

- The NTC was pitched into its worst crisis since the end of the civil war at the weekend when a crowd of protesters in the eastern city of Benghazi stormed the council's local headquarters when NTC chief Mustafa Abdel Jalil was inside.

The protesters, who supported the revolt against Gaddafi, were angry that more progress had not been made to restore basic public services. They also said many of the NTC's members were tarnished by having served in Gaddafi's administration.

Abdel Hafiz Ghoga, deputy head of the NTC and target of some of the protests, said he was resigning. Abdel Jalil warned that the protests could drag the country into a "bottomless pit."

[Gaddafi diehards seize former stronghold Bani Walid | Herald Sun](http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/world/gaddafis-men-seize-town/story-e6frf7lf-1226252033364)

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/world/gaddafis-men-seize-town/story-e6frf7lf-1226252033364>

- **Gaddafi diehards seize former stronghold Bani Walid**

- by: [AFP](#)
- From: [AFP](#)
- January 24, 2012

- **SUPPORTERS of slain dictator Muammar Gaddafi have taken control of Bani Walid, his one-time bastion.**

Yesterday's brazen attack at a base there left five people dead, officials said.

The assault on the base of ex-rebels who helped oust Gaddafi was the first major offensive launched by his loyalists since the "liberation" of Libya on October 23, shortly after the fall of Bani Walid.

"The loyalists of Gaddafi took control of the entire city of Bani Walid," said M'barek al-Fotmani, a former member of the ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) in the desert oasis, 170km south of Tripoli.

Mr Fotmani said the daylight attack on the stronghold of men who helped oust Gaddafi's regime last year killed "five thuwar (anti-Gaddafi revolutionaries), including a commander." Around 30 ex-rebels were also injured, he said.

- Yesterday's attack follows an outburst of opposition to the National Transitional Council in the eastern city of Benghazi last week that prompted NTC chairman Mustafa Abdel Jalil to warn of possible "civil war" in post-conflict Libya.

Mahmud Warfelli, spokesman of Bani Walid local council, said the attack was launched by "a group of remnants of the old regime," and called for outside help against a feared "massacre".

"There are around 100 and 150 men armed with heavy weapons who are attacking. We have asked for the army to

intervene, but the defence ministry and NTC have let us down," he said.

"(The gunmen) took control and hoisted the green flag on some districts, some important districts in the centre of the city," Mr Warfelli added.

"We're out of the frying pan into the fire. We've been warning about this for the past two months."

- A senior NTC member, Fathi Baja, said reinforcements had been sent to protect the town.

"Two hours ago orders were given for the army to go and they are on the way. The fighting is between some Gaddafi supporters and thuwar," he said.

Speaking from inside the former rebels' base, Mr Fotmani said the assailants had surrounded it.

"The compound of thuwar is surrounded on all sides by loyalists of Gaddafi who are attacking it with all kinds of weapons," he said.

"The attackers are carrying green flags," symbol of the Gaddafi regime, he added.

Mr Fotmani said the base belonged to the May 28 Brigade, a unit of former rebels attached to the defence ministry.

"The attackers shouted 'Allah, Muammar, Libya and that's it!'," he said, referring to a slogan popularised by Gaddafi loyalists during his rule.

- "Yesterday they had distributed leaflets saying "We will be back soon. We will take the rats out," Mr Fotmani added.

"I call upon Libya to save Bani Walid thuwar urgently. Their ammunition is almost over."

He also said ambulances were unable to evacuate those wounded because there were "snipers postioned on a school and a mosque in the vicinity" of the attack.

Bani Walid was one of the last pro-Gaddafi bastions to fall in the bloody uprising against the former dictator's rule.

Its capture was followed days later by the fall of the longtime strongman's hometown Sirte in a battle which also led to his killing and marked the "liberation" of Libya.

- Speaking on Libya al-Hurra television on Sunday, Abdel Jalil said the new Libya would fall into a "civil war" if protests against the ruling NTC continued.

Crowds of protesters in Benghazi - the city which first rebelled against Gaddafi last year - had earlier thrown home-made grenades at and stormed the NTC offices with iron rods and stones before setting the building's front ablaze, witnesses and council members said.

The demonstrators denounced the interim government for its lack of transparency and accused the NTC of marginalising some wounded veterans of the uprising that toppled Gaddafi, in favour of people previously loyal to the slain dictator.

There have also been repeated clashes between rival militias, comprised of the former rebels, in the streets of Tripoli and other towns, significantly adding to the country's security concerns.

[Gaddafi loyalists seize Libyan town](http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/gaddafi-loyalists-seize-libyan-town-20120124-1qedv.html)

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/gaddafi-loyalists-seize-libyan-town-20120124-1qedv.html>

• Gaddafi loyalists seize Libyan town

January 24, 2012

- **AP**

Supporters of deposed Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi have seized control of the town of Bani Walid after clashes with a group loyal to the new government, media reports say.

- Bani Walid, 140 kilometres southeast of Tripoli, was one of the last bastions of followers of the late ruler.

The head of the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC), Mustafa Abdel Jalil, said a force from the Libyan Defence ministry headed to the area to contain the situation, but played down reports that the city was seized by Gaddafi loyalists.

- Libyan Interior Minister Fawzi Abdelali said on Libyan television that "the information we have says that there are internal problems between the people of this city and this is the reason for what happened".

Doha-based al-Jazeera television quoting witnesses said gunmen loyal to Gaddafi took control of the town and hoisted green flags, which were used during the rule of Gaddafi, over some important districts in the centre of the city.

- Witnesses added that the two sides fought throughout the day using heavy weaponry, killing four people and wounding 20 others.

"We are coming back soon," read leaflets thrown across the town by Gaddafi loyalists, witnesses in the area told Arab media.

- The clashes were the first such fierce battles between Gaddafi loyalists and the fighters of the new rulers of Libya since Gaddafi was overthrown and assassinated in October 2011.
- In November, 15 soldiers loyal to the new leadership were killed in an ambush by Gaddafi loyalists just outside Bani Walid.

Libya's NTC has already been struggling with violent protests in its stronghold city of Benghazi and with the resignation of its second most senior official.

- On Saturday, crowds of protesters threw several home-made grenades at the NTC offices in Benghazi, then stormed it with iron rods and stones before setting the building's front ablaze.

They even threw plastic bottles at Abdel Jalil, who is respected across Libya for his active role in the anti-Gaddafi rebellion.

The Benghazi demonstrators denounced the NTC and described it a "non-transparent" body.

[Libyan revolutionary forces battle Gadhafi loyalists - World - CBC News](http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2012/01/23/libya-clashes.html)

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2012/01/23/libya-clashes.html>

• Libyan revolutionary forces battle Gadhafi loyalists

Fighters clash in former regime stronghold

The Associated Press

Posted: Jan 23, 2012

- Forces loyal to Libya's late leader Moammar Gadhafi attacked the former regime stronghold of Bani Walid on Monday, killing at least four fighters from the new government, officials and residents said.
- The fierce clashes in the town, located some 140 kilometres southeast of Tripoli, comes as the Libya's new leaders struggle to stamp out lingering resistance from pro-Gadhafi forces and unify a deeply fractured country after eight months of civil war and more than 40 years of authoritarian Gadhafi rule.
- Mahmoud al-Warfali, a spokesman for revolutionary brigade of the new regime in Bani Walid, said up to 150 pro-Gadhafi fighters raised his old green Libyan flag at the northern gate of the town and were battling revolutionary forces in the streets with rocket-propelled grenades and AK-47s.
- "These are Gadhafi remnants who tried to take over the city," al-Warfali said. "They have tried to do this before and take over the interim government's office, but thank God we have been able to fight them off."
- He said four revolutionary fighters were killed. He did not know how many people were wounded.

Bani Walid resident Moussa al-Warfali said the clashes began early Monday when Gadhafi loyalists angry over the arrest of one of their men attacked revolutionary fighters in the town.

The fighting originally was centred around the revolutionary brigade's base, but has since spread to other parts of the town.

• Gadhafi loyalists open fire in Tripoli

The clashes are considered serious enough that dozens of revolutionary fighters from Tripoli have been dispatched to Bani Walid to help, said brigade commander Saddam Abdel-Zein.

- Revolutionary commanders in Tripoli also said "sleepers" loyal to Gadhafi opened fire in the capital Monday evening in an attempt to take advantage of the fighting in Bani Walid. There was no word of casualties.
- Abdel-Rahman al-Soghayar, a commander from the new regime in the capital, said shooting took place in several neighbourhoods of Tripoli Monday evening, forcing people to remain indoors and stores to close early.
- There were also reports of shooting in the western Nafusa mountains, according to al-Soghayar, who was in touch with fellow fighters there. No further details were available.
- The outbreak of violence prompted revolutionary fighters in the western city of Misrata and the eastern city of Benghazi to declare a high alert, setting up checkpoints and securing entrance points to the cities, according to Benghazi military officials and Misrata's revolutionary brigade spokesman, Walid Khashif.
- The main flashpoint remained Bani Walid, where pro-Gadhafi fighters have long tormented Libya's revolutionaries.
- After the fall of Tripoli to anti-Gadhafi fighters in August, loyalists of the ousted regime took refuge in the town and held off revolutionary forces for weeks, using the surrounding mountains and valleys to pick off revolutionary forces.

- Even after Gadhafi's capture and killing in October, the city and its surrounding region have troubled Libya's new leaders.
- In November, 15 soldiers were killed in an ambush by Gadhafi loyalists just outside the town. Revolutionary fighters in Bani Walid have complained that the country's interim government has done little to help secure the city.

Libya: UN official impressed by pace of returns to cities emerging from conflict

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40886&Cr=libya&Cr1=>

- Libya: UN official impressed by pace of returns to cities emerging from conflict
- 5 January 2012 –
A senior United Nations official who has visited the Libyan cities of Bani Walid, Sirte and Misrata, which saw some of the most intense fighting during last year's military campaign to oust Muammar al-Qadhafi's regime, said today he was impressed by the rate of return of displaced residents to their homes.

Georg Charpentier, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, who visited the cities on Tuesday and yesterday, noted that an estimated 60 per cent of the population displaced by the fighting had returned to Bani Walid and Sirte.

He voiced his admiration of the strong resilience amongst residents and the local council's striving to tackle the prevailing humanitarian challenges.

- "Following the liberation of Bani Walid and Sirte in October and the progressive return of their populations over the last months, the two cities now need more attention and concrete action to accelerate their full return to normalcy," Mr. Charpentier, who is also the deputy head of the UN Support Mission for Libya (UNSMIL).
- "Public infrastructure, housing, education and health facilities need to be rehabilitated, reconstructed and reactivated, intense and focused reconciliation efforts also need to be encouraged in these two cities."
- During his visit to the three cities, Mr. Charpentier met with members of the local and military councils, as well as representatives of the local population and viewed houses and public facilities that were destroyed during the conflict.

He also visited a local warehouse in Bani Walid to see the distribution of relief supplies, including food aid by the UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)). Beneficiaries included residents and people from the other countries.

- The violent uprising in Libya, which led to the overthrow of Mr. Qadhafi's long-standing regime, caused the deaths of thousands of civilians and the displacement of tens of thousands of others, including many foreign nationals and refugees.

IPS Inter Press Service – Telling Africa's Untold Stories » Libya's "Other" Victims

<http://www.ips.org/africa/2011/10/libyas-other-victims>

- Libya's "Other" Victims
- By Karlos Zurutuza



Khaled Abdullah next to the hole in the wall of his home in Bani Walid, the last stronghold of the Gaddafi regime. / Karlos Zurutuza/IPS

BANI WALID, Libya, Oct 31 (IPS) – Suleyman and Rasool have come to the University of Bani Walid, in western Libya. If they are lucky they might find some chemistry notes and, perhaps, a computer that works. Unfortunately it is not likely, since NATO reduced the campus to rubble.

- Saif al Islam – Muammar Gaddafi's son and heir apparent – had taken refuge in Bani Walid, a city of 80,000 people 150 km southeast of Tripoli. This city and Sirte, Gaddafi's hometown, were the last two strongholds of [the regime that ruled Libya](#) for the last four decades.

"Why did NATO shell this place?" complains Suleyman amid tons of twisted metal, rubble and papers blown around by the wind.

There is no sign whatsoever of a recent military presence here: no uniforms or mortar shells, not even the bullet cases that dot the broken streets of Bani Walid.

- "There was a rumour about Musa Ibrahim – Gaddafi's former spokesman – sleeping here, probably that's why they bombed," says Rasool, standing next to a massive crater left by a NATO missile.

The brand-new red seats in the auditorium are among the few things that can be salvaged. A group of rebels are piling them up in the back of their pickup trucks.

"We are taking them with us to a safe place, there's been a lot of looting here, you know?" says Omar Rahman, one of the drivers.

But it's already too late for the computer room in the annex building. There, two rows of intact yet empty computer desks suggest that a new Internet café might open its doors somewhere in Libya in the next few days.

The picture is equally bleak along the bazaar's long avenue. Only one store has raised its blind. The shopkeeper, Rafiq, doesn't want to talk. The blackened mannequins he is now removing from inside his shop speak for themselves.

"Zawiya Brigade", "Misrata boys", "Geryan forever" can be read along the alley – just some of the graffiti left by the more than forty rebel battalions that finally captured Bani Walid on Oct. 17, supported by NATO air strikes.

Most of the slogans on the walls look alike, but there is one that is repeated throughout the entire city: "Warfallas are dogs". Bani Walid is the only "monotribal" location in the entire country. Everybody here belongs to the Warfalla clan, Libya's biggest, made up of over one million people out of a total population of 6.4 million. Along with the Qaddafi, they were the most loyal to Libya's ousted ruler.

- **Few houses intact**

It is almost impossible to find a house that hasn't been burnt or looted in Bani Walid. In the southern district of Bahra, a projectile opened a hole the size of a window in Bubakhar Shaman's apartment. The windows are broken and their shades have disappeared along with the curtains, the television and the radiators.

"They have plundered every house," the 51-year-old former aircraft technician complains in the courtyard, where there is a mountain of clothes and objects that nobody wanted. Shaman picks up a small, empty jewellery case. "I wonder who is wearing these rings and earrings now."

Breaking into Khaled Abdullah's house was even easier. This 24-year-old truck driver was about to marry, and the couple were to move afterwards to the first floor of his family home. But all their dreams dashed out through the ugly hole in his wall.

"I left Bani Walid on Oct. 14, three days before the rebels entered the city. My house was intact," says Abdullah, who is now renting a flat.

The stories are painfully similar throughout the city. Athila Athman Abdallah, 65, lost two of the trucks he had tried to protect by taking them to the outskirts of the city. Somebody set them ablaze. Nevertheless, Abdallah smiled today for the first time in months when his son brought back his car.

"It was in Geryan, southwest of Tripoli. We were told that they had spotted it so we went there to pick it up," explains Abdallah from the threshold of his house. "Allah u akbar" - God is great – reads a graffiti next to him. Whether they painted it before or after taking his lamps and curtains and television is irrelevant at this point.

Abdallah says he will stay. But according to local sources, more than 100,000 civilians have fled the former Gaddafi strongholds of Sirte and Bani Walid since the war started in February. However, the number of those seeking refuge in camps could be much higher, as that is only the figure for those who registered.

- **Paying in gold**

Sheikh Omar Mukhtar is the leader of the 45 militias currently in control of Bani Walid.

"Many people in Bani Walid were loyal to Gaddafi, so we had to check every single house to make sure nobody was hiding any weapons," the commander and tribal leader explains to IPS at his headquarters in the city's airport.

Mukhtar says he does not know where Saif al Islam is. But he believes Gaddafi's son had to escape on foot after the convoy he was travelling in was reportedly attacked by NATO last week.

"We heard the rocket but when we arrived there we only found the bodies of those who accompanied Saif," recalls Mukhtar.

The commander admits that looting has happened in Bani Walid, but says that compensation will be paid. "We are almost ready to deliver three million Libyan dinars (1.5 million euros) in gold among the people who were affected," adds the commander.

Until that day arrives, Abdulhamid Saleh, a local resident, is producing a detailed census of all the victims among his neighbours. The 52 bullet holes in the door of his house attest that, although it was not an easy task, the assailants eventually managed to get in without knocking down the door.

"All these crimes must be brought to the authorities. No one in Bani Walid is willing to work with any administration that ignores us," says the electrical engineer. Among the personal things he has lost, there is one he misses most:

"They tore up my son's school diploma, probably because it read 'the Green School of Bani Walid'" – green is the colour of the former government- says Saleh, who is seriously thinking of retaking his former position as a professor at the University of Manchester in England.

"Our city has been shelled by NATO and assaulted by militias coming from all parts of Libya," complains Saleh. "They call this 'liberation'? To me this is nothing but a blatant occupation".

[Libyans fight against last Gadhafi holdouts - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/libyans-fight-against-last-gadhafi-holdouts-110125547.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libyans-fight-against-last-gadhafi-holdouts-110125547.html>

• Libyans fight against last Gadhafi holdouts



By CHRISTOPHER GILLETTE - Associated Press | AP

- SIRTE, Libya (AP) — Libyan revolutionary forces fought building by building Wednesday against the final pocket of resistance in Moammar Gadhafi's hometown — the last major city in Libya to have been under the control of forces loyal to the fugitive leader.

While Libya's transitional leadership worked to consolidate control over the entire country, the country's acting prime minister warned in a newspaper interview that Gadhafi can still cause trouble from his hiding place.

- Mahmoud Jibril was quoted by the pan-Arab Asharq Al-Awsat paper Tuesday as saying that the ousted leader is moving between Niger, Algeria and the vast southern Libyan desert and has been trying to recruit fighters from Sudan to help him establish a separate state in the south, or to march to the north and destabilize the new regime.

The report could not be confirmed, but it underscored fears that the inability to catch Gadhafi, who escaped with two of his sons after revolutionary forces swept into Tripoli in late August, would allow him and his supporters to wage an insurgency.

"Gadhafi has two options: either to destabilize any new regime in Libya or to declare a separate state in the south," Jibril was quoted as saying, adding there was evidence about this but he didn't elaborate.

- Suggesting that the U.S. also was concerned about the possibility, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said during a visit to Tripoli Tuesday that she hoped Gadhafi would be captured or killed.

Although two months have passed since Gadhafi fled the capital, Libya's new leaders have refrained from declaring national "liberation" until the fall of Sirte, which Gadhafi transformed from a fishing village into a modern city after he seized power in 1969.

Revolutionary forces on Tuesday pushed from the east into the small pocket of the city under the control of Gadhafi loyalists and captured a vegetable market, though they came under heavy fire from snipers and rocket-propelled grenades on the rooftops of residential buildings and homes along major streets.

- On Wednesday, Wissam bin Hmade, the commander of one of the revolutionary brigades from the eastern city of Benghazi, said they had the Gadhafi supporters corralled in a 700 square meter residential area but were still facing heavy rocket and gunfire from snipers holed up in surrounding buildings.

It took the anti-Gadhafi fighters, who also faced disorganization in their own ranks, two days to capture a single residential building.

Another commander, Khaled al-Maghrabi, said 15 fighters were killed in a friendly fire incident.

It is unclear whether loyalists who slipped out of the besieged cities of Bani Walid, which was captured this week, and

Sirte might continue the fight and attempt to organize an insurgency using the vast amount of weapons Gadhafi was believed to have stored in hideouts in the remote southern desert.

- Unlike Iraq's Saddam Hussein, Gadhafi had no well-organized political party that could form the basis of an insurgent leadership. However, regional and ethnic differences have already appeared among the ranks of the revolutionaries, possibly laying the foundation for civil strife.

Gadhafi has issued several audio recordings trying to rally supporters. Libyan officials have said they believe he's hiding somewhere in the vast southwestern desert near the borders with Niger and Algeria.

The whereabouts of two of his sons also remain unknown, although commanders have said they believe Muatassim and Seif al-Islam are hiding in Sirte and Bani Walid, respectively. Seif al-Islam had been Gadhafi's likely choice to succeed him as Libya's leader.

Anti-Gadhafi fighters combed Bani Walid on Tuesday for signs of Seif al-Islam and other high-level regime figures in the desert enclave, 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli.

"Seif was seen on Thursday. He was eating in a desert village close to the city," one field commander, Said Younis, said.

The Netherlands-based International Criminal Court has charged Seif al-Islam, his father and Gadhafi's former intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senoussi with crimes against humanity for a brutal crackdown on the uprising.

[Libyan capital sees first big firefight in months -AP](http://news.yahoo.com/libyan-capital-sees-first-big-firefight-months-205245969.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libyan-capital-sees-first-big-firefight-months-205245969.html>

• Libyan capital sees first big firefight in months



By KIM GAMEL and RAMI AL-SHAHEIBI - Associated Press | AP

- TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — The Libyan capital saw its first major gunbattle since Moammar Gadhafi fled Tripoli more than two months ago, as his supporters traded fire with revolutionary forces Friday after a crowd raised the ousted regime's green flag.
- Fearing more attacks, revolutionary forces set up checkpoints manned by young, armed men across the metropolis of some 2 million people, snarling traffic. They also rounded up several suspected African mercenaries, pulling them from cars and houses.
- The violence in Tripoli and fierce resistance on two other fronts set back the new rulers' stated goals of declaring total victory and establishing democracy as Gadhafi, the ruler for nearly 42 years, remains on the run.
- The capital has been relatively calm since then-rebels swept into the city in late August. But Gadhafi's loyalists have control of parts of his hometown of Sirte and the desert enclave of Bani Walid and have battled off NATO-backed revolutionary forces besieging them for weeks, perhaps encouraged by several audio recordings issued by Gadhafi from hiding.
- The firefight in Tripoli began after Friday prayers. Witnesses said dozens of loyalists carrying the green flag appeared on a square in the Abu Salim neighborhood, which has long been a pro-Gadhafi stronghold and houses a notorious prison of the same name.

"I looked out of my window and I saw men and women in a group of 50 to 80 people, carrying the green flag," said Abadi Omar, a resident in one of the buildings in the area. "They put one of these flags at the end of our street. This is when the revolutionary forces came out and these people disappeared."

- Revolutionary forces started searching every building in the area and found weapons on some of the rooftops, many hidden under water tanks, Omar said. Then pro-Gadhafi snipers opened fire, and the gunbattle began as anti-Gadhafi fighters chased loyalists around the closely packed buildings.

In amateur video shown to The Associated Press, gunfire can be seen coming from the upper floors of apartment buildings surrounding the square, prompting revolutionary forces to scramble and begin shooting from the street below.

- Shouting "God is Great," hundreds of revolutionary fighters converged on the area in pickups mounted with weapons. They set up checkpoints as heavy gunfire echoed through the streets.

Ameena Sami, a 39-year-old resident, said her brother was shot in his waist.

"My brother was standing at the front door of our house, and we heard shooting in the streets. We don't know where it came from, and the revolutionaries came speeding onto our street and surrounded one of the buildings across the street," she said. "The shooting just got more intense, and we looked outside and found my brother shot."

- Tripoli military officials said 12 suspected Gadhafi supporters were detained but played down the shooting, saying no clashes occurred and that the gunfire was primarily from revolutionary forces themselves. The local military council issued a statement saying 30 people were injured in friendly fire.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland also downplayed the seriousness of the fighting, calling it an "isolated, relatively small incident, by the sound of it."

Ahmad al-Warfly, a fighter from the revolutionary forces' Zintan brigade, said several Gadhafi supporters apparently planned a protest but drew fire because they were armed. They then fled and were pursued by revolutionary forces, prompting fierce street battles.

Al-Warfly said one man carrying a gun was captured and identified as a suspect wanted for the killings of protesters in the nearby city of Zawiya.

"It seems like it was organized," he said. "They were planning to have a big demonstration, then the fight started."

Witnesses also reported fighting elsewhere in the capital, but the shooting was most intense in Abu Salim.

- Interim leader Mustafa Abdul-Jalil, the head of the governing National Transitional Council, has said that he hoped to declare liberation this week after the imminent fall of the holdout city of Sirte, 250 miles (400 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli on the Mediterranean coast. That could allow the council to name a new interim government and set a timeline for holding elections within eight months.

The revolutionary forces control much of Sirte after launching a major push a week ago.

On Friday, they pounded loyalists holed up in two neighborhoods with rocket and machine-gun fire but also suffered heavy casualties themselves. Wounded men streamed into front-line medical units, then were evacuated to field hospitals on the city's outskirts.

Tanks and weapons-mounted vehicles from the revolutionary forces have kept up a steady barrage of fire into the small enclave known as District 2, where commanders believe several hundred remaining loyalists, possibly including high-ranking figures from the former regime, are hiding.

AP Television footage on Friday showed smoke rising from a building in one part of the city, and a burning car presumably in another. Pickup trucks with mounted machine guns are seen driving through a flooded street, and elsewhere an injured revolutionary soldier is carried on a stretcher into an ambulance.

- Thousands of civilians have fled the city to escape the violence.

One resident returned Friday to collect personal items from his home, which had been used as a firing position for pro-Gadhafi forces. Their uniforms and mattresses littered the front courtyard.

The owner, who would not give his name because of fear of reprisals, left carrying just a blanket, saying, "the pictures speak for themselves." He then left the city with several of his relatives.

NATO has called the continued resistance by Gadhafi forces in Sirte "surprising," as they appear to be losing the battle since revolutionary forces have the area surrounded.

- In Geneva, meanwhile, a senior U.N. human rights official, Mona Rishmawi, expressed concern about a risk of serious abuses against suspected loyalists after Gadhafi's last strongholds fall to revolutionary forces.

Rishmawi, who recently visited Libya as part of a U.N. delegation, said the transitional government is trying to ensure that the rights of captured Gadhafi fighters are protected but "the system that is currently in place is not adequate."

She said "there is a lot of room for abuse" of the estimated 7,000 people detained in sometimes makeshift prisons throughout Libya.

Civilians flee Sirte battle, fighting hampers aid: U.N. - Reuters

http://news.yahoo.com/civilians-flee-sirte-battle-fighting-hampers-aid-u-230728920.html;_ylt=AmMv8gpNFqDPi2EjGQm7Fsqwag8F;_ylu=X3oDMTQ0OG91YnRoBG1pdANBcnRpY2xlIFNlY3Rpb24gV29ybGQEcGtn-;_ylg=X3oDMTJ0bGZkMWVhZGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDZjNmYmEwODgtOGU5Yi0zZjkwLWJlMTQtNzc0NGU3YjM5ZmJl-;_ylv=3

• Civilians flee Sirte battle, fighting hampers aid: U.N.



By William Maclean | Reuters

- TRIPOLI (Reuters) - Desperate civilians are fleeing the besieged Libyan coastal city of Sirte where the battle to dislodge fighters loyal to ousted leader Muammar Gaddafi has caused heavy casualties, U.N. and other sources said.

Interim government forces on Thursday recaptured the airport in Sirte, where Gaddafi loyalists have been using sniper, rocket and artillery fire to fight off full-scale assaults and retain one of their last two main bastions.

But the prolonged fight for Gaddafi's hometown has raised mounting concern for civilians trapped inside the city of about 100,000 people, with each side accusing the other of endangering civilians.

- "They're shelling constantly. There's indiscriminate fire within individual neighborhoods and from one area to another," Hassan, a resident who escaped the city, told Reuters.

Aid agencies said on Wednesday that a humanitarian disaster loomed in Sirte amid rising casualties and shrinking supplies of water, electricity and food.

Libya's interim government has asked the United Nations for fuel for ambulances to evacuate its wounded fighters from Sirte, a U.N. source in Libya said on Thursday.

The U.N. is sending trucks of drinking water for the increasing flow of civilians crammed into vehicles on the road from Sirte, heading either toward Benghazi to the east or Misrata to the west, he added.

- But fighting around the city and continuing insecurity around Bani Walid, the other loyalist hold-out, are preventing the

world body from deploying aid workers inside, he said.

"There are two places we'd really like access to, Sirte and Ben Walid, because of concern on the impact of conflict on the civilian population," the U.N. source in Tripoli, speaking by telephone on condition of anonymity, told Reuters in Geneva.

- CARE FOR FIGHTERS

In Tripoli, interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril said the NTC had allocated \$400 million to treat fighters who were wounded in the rebellion against Gaddafi and provide grants for Libyan students studying abroad.

Jibril also said that families of fighters killed in fighting would be paid 400 Libyan dinars (\$335) a month and a monthly salary of 450 to 500 Libyan dinars would be paid to Libyans who quit their jobs to pick up arms against Gaddafi. He did not say for how long those payments would be made.

Libya's new rulers are trying to get a grip on the whole country, rein in their own unruly militias and get on with reconstruction and democratic reform.

- Jibril said efforts to form a new interim government have been suspended until after the capture of Sirte and Bani Walid.

"There are no negotiations at the moment to form a transitional government after the NTC decided to keep the current formation to facilitate the (country's) affairs until the land is liberated," Jibril said.

"There are two fronts, Sirte and Bani Walid. I hope those two areas would be liberated soon so that we can start forming a new interim government," he said, ruling out any role in the future government.

There has been speculation that divisions are preventing the formation of a more inclusive interim government.

- INTERPOL ALERT

More than a month after NTC fighters captured Tripoli, Gaddafi remains on the run, trying to rally resistance to those who ended his 42-year rule. Some of his family members have taken refuge in neighboring Algeria and Niger.

Interpol issued an alert calling for the arrest of Gaddafi's son Saadi who fled to Niger three weeks ago. The Lyon-based police agency said it was acting at the request of the NTC, which accuses Saadi of leading military units that cracked down on protests and of misappropriating property.

- Interpol has already issued "red notices" for the arrest of Gaddafi, his son Saif al-Islam and his intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi, all wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged crimes against humanity.

Gaddafi's former prime minister, Al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmoudi, who had fled to Tunisia, only to be arrested for illegal entry, has started a hunger strike in prison to protest a Libyan request for his extradition, his lawyer said.

Tunisian prosecutors say Mahmoudi will stay in jail pending an extradition decision, even though he won an appeal against a six-month prison sentence for entering Tunisia illegally.

[BBC News - Libya: NTC says key oasis towns taken](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15018921)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15018921>

- 22 September 2011
- Libya: NTC says key oasis towns taken
- Libya's interim leadership says it has captured several key areas in the south but its forces have paused advances on two pro-Gaddafi strongholds.

Commanders said all three main towns in the al-Jufra oasis had been captured.

Officials say they aim to cut off escape routes south from Bani Walid and Col Gaddafi's hometown, Sirte, which are still offering stiff resistance.

Meanwhile, the UK's Financial Times says Libya's new leaders have found \$23bn (£15bn) in the central bank.

It said the National Transitional Council had told UK officials it had found about 28bn dinars in the Central Bank of Libya unspent by Col Gaddafi - a major boost for the NTC's efforts to govern the country.

On Thursday, a military spokesman said the southern oases had been taken after fierce fighting.

- "Al-Jufra - Hun, Waddan and Sokna - is liberated," he said.

"Our forces seized Waddan on Tuesday and then captured the base between Waddan and Hun at dawn on Wednesday, and took Hun during the day."

On Wednesday the NTC announced its forces had captured much of Libya's largest desert city, Sabha, also in the south.

Correspondents say the seizure of the Saharan towns mean pro-Gaddafi forces in Sirte and Bani Walid have lost their escape routes south.

The NTC says many of Col Gaddafi's die-hard supporters holed up in Sirte and Bani Walid believe they have no choice but to resist or face war-crimes charges.

- Commander Mustafa bin Dardef, whose troops are on the front line 25km (15 miles) east of Sirte, told AFP news agency that ammunition was in short supply and fighting would stop for a week.

But he said troops loyal to the NTC would create a "strong defensive line" around the nearby town of Sultana, which they captured on Monday.

UK officials said British jets, as part of the Nato force tasked with protecting civilians in Libya, had targeted two "command and control facilities" in Sirte on Wednesday.

- Nato said on Wednesday that the alliance was extending its Libya campaign for another 90 days.

NTC fighters have also paused outside Bani Walid following several advances over the past week that have ended in retreat.

Witnesses north of Bani Walid on Thursday said NTC forces were bringing forward tanks and Grad rocket launchers in preparation for a renewed assault. It was not clear when that would happen.

In the capital Tripoli on Thursday, the US planned to raise its flag over the US embassy first the first time since the fall of Col Gaddafi.

It comes a day after US Ambassador Gene Cretz arrived back in the country.

Libya's Interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril is at the UN General Assembly meeting in New York.

He said he expected a new government to be announced within 10 days.

[Libya rulers says Gaddafi running out of options | Reuters](http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/22/us-libya-idUSTRE7810I820110922)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/22/us-libya-idUSTRE7810I820110922>

- Libya rulers says Gaddafi running out of options
- By Alexander Dziadosz and [Maria Golovnina](#)

Thu Sep 22, 2011

- SIRTE/NORTH OF BANI WALID, Libya - Libya's interim rulers said on Thursday they had further consolidated their control

over Sahara desert towns that had been among Muammar Gaddafi's last strongholds, and said Gaddafi himself was running out of places to hide.

But a spokesman for the fugitive Libyan leader told Reuters that forces with the new government had killed over a hundred people while trying to capture Gaddafi's birthplace of Sirte, though there was no independent confirmation of this.

Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC), the country's de facto government after Gaddafi was swept from the capital last month, is anxious to show that it is establishing military control over the country and can govern Libya effectively.

- Progress has been slow in seizing the towns of Sirte and Bani Walid, with military ineptitude hampering the advance. Reuters saw one fighter blow his own head off and kill a comrade while handling a rocket propelled grenade.

If the NTC is unable to swiftly assert its control over the country and its own forces, it could embarrass Western leaders, especially France's Nicolas Sarkozy and Britain's David Cameron, who took a gamble by backing the anti-Gaddafi leadership.

"Our revolutionaries are controlling 100 percent of Sabha city, although there are some pockets of resistance by snipers," NTC military spokesman Ahmed Bani told reporters in the capital, Tripoli.

- "This resistance is hopeless ... They know very well that at the end of the day they will show the white flag or they will die. They are fighting for themselves, not for the tyrant," he said, referring to Gaddafi.

Until now some parts of Sabha, the traditional base for Gaddafi's own tribe about 800 km (500 miles) south of Tripoli, had been occupied by fighters loyal to him.

The council says its forces have now also taken control of Jufra, to the north-east of Sabha, and the nearby oasis towns of Sokna, Waddan, and Houn.

The NTC official said the manhunt for Gaddafi, in hiding for weeks though he occasionally issues defiant audio messages, was drawing closer to its target.

"There is no whole tribe or city on Gaddafi's side," said Bani. "I'm asking everyone in the south who has any news about the tyrant or his loyalists ... to notify the legal bodies about them."

"We are doing our best looking for the tyrant. There is some news here and there that he ran away from Sabha to another place but it cannot be confirmed."

• CLAIM OF CIVILIAN DEATHS

Despite support from NATO warplanes, government forces have struggled to capture Sirte, the biggest of the towns still outside their control.

Gaddafi's spokesman told Reuters on Thursday that NATO air strikes and interim government forces' shelling of Sirte were killing civilians.

"Between yesterday and this morning, 151 civilians were killed inside their homes as the Grad rockets and other explosives fell upon their heads," Moussa Ibrahim said in a satellite phone call to Reuters from an undisclosed location.

His claims could not immediately be verified as journalists are unable to reach the city. NATO comment was not immediately available.

But the account of casualties from Ibrahim, whose family is from Sirte, underlined the thorny problem the new government faces in taking Sirte, a city where there are still large numbers of civilians, including many whose sympathies lie with Gaddafi.

On the eastern side of Sirte, NTC forces came under heavy artillery attack more than 50 km (30 miles) outside the city. One fighter said Gaddafi artillery batteries appeared to have found the range of the NTC tanks, and were targeting them.

"There has been heavy shelling from Gaddafi forces," said Adel Al-Tarhouni, an anti-Gaddafi fighter in the village of Sultana, which came under artillery attack. "I was able to see palm trees cut from the top by the shrapnel."

A Reuters reporter on the western side of Sirte said hundreds of civilians in pickup trucks and sedans loaded with mattresses, food and water, were pouring out of the city.

- At checkpoints, NTC fighters searched their vehicles to make sure they were not loyalist fighters, and then handed out juice, biscuits, water and yoghurt to the fleeing civilians.

Aid groups have expressed concern about deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Sirte, under siege by NTC forces.

"There is no water inside, there is no gas, there is nothing," said one resident, who declined to give his name, at a checkpoint as he drove his white sedan away from Sirte.

Fighters patrolling the outskirts of the city in pickup trucks mounted with machine guns and rocket launchers said there had been skirmishes with Gaddafi loyalists. They said they were waiting for civilians to evacuate before launching an assault.

"It's not a problem with the army. It's not a military problem," said Hishem, a fighter whose pickup was mounted with a 106 mm recoilless rifle.

"The problem is that there are families still inside. Getting them out is still the most important thing."

• LACK OF Organization

North of Bani Walid on Thursday morning, NTC military forces were bringing forward tanks and Grad rocket launchers in

preparation for a renewed attempt to take the town. It was not clear though when that attack would begin.

Later in the day, a Reuters reporter near the town said fighting had resumed after a lull, though it did not appear to be an all-out assault.

Gaddafi loyalists were firing shells at NTC positions on the edge of the town, and plumes of smoke could be seen rising up from within Bani Walid.

The offensive there has been frustrated by stiff resistance from well-drilled loyalist fighters, and also by a lack of organization among the NTC forces. They operate in disparate units based on their home town, with little overall command.

On Wednesday, one fighter shot his own head off and killed another fighter while handling a rocket-propelled grenade in full view of a Reuters team. In another incident, a fighter wounded himself and another fighter after losing control of his machinegun.

The nascent NTC national army tried to bring order.

"We have set up a unified operations room to unite all brigades," said brigade commander Omar Kabout. "The purpose is to increase coordination and end all this chaos because many rebels have arrived without commanders. We need to put them into brigades and stop all this random shooting."

But the message was not getting through to all the fighters, many of whom go into battle wearing flip-flop sandals, T-shirts and jeans and have no military training.

"We don't take orders from the NTC. We listen only to our own commander," said Ziyad Al Khemri, a fighter from the town of Zawiyah, just west of Tripoli.

(Reporting by [William Maclean](#), Joseph Logan and [Emma Farge](#) in Tripoli, Sherine El Madany east of Sirte, [David Brunnstrom](#) in Brussels, [Barry Malone](#) in Tunis, [John Irish](#), [Matt Spetalnick](#) and [Laura MacInnis](#) at the United Nations; Writing by [Christian Lowe](#); Editing by [Giles Elgood](#))

[WRAPUP 1-Libyan forces say they captured part of Sabha | Reuters](#)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/20/libya-idUSL5E7KJ46920110920>

- WRAPUP 1-Libyan forces say they captured part of Sabha
- Mon Sep 19, 2011 9:25pm EDT

* Interim leaders struggle to form new administration

* Disorder and infighting among NTC soldiers

* NTC dismisses reports of foreign mercenaries (Adds quotes, detail, reported arrest of mercenary leader)

- By [Maria Golovnina](#) and Alexander Dziadosz
- BANI WALID/SIRTE, Libya, Sept 20 (Reuters) - Libya's interim government said its forces seized the airport and fort in Sabha, one of the last strongholds of forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi which also controls the main route south out of Libya.

"Our forces are there in the airport and in the castle ... Our flags are flying there," Ahmed Bani, a military spokesman for the National Transitional Council (NTC), told a news conference in Tripoli on Monday. It was not possible to get independent confirmation.

Sabha, 770 km (480 miles) south of Tripoli and overlooked by an old fort built by Libya's former Italian colonial rulers, controls the main trail south to neighbouring Niger, an escape route used by members of Gaddafi's entourage.

Any advance on the town would be an important boost for government forces who have struggled to contain disunity in their ranks and faced stark reversals on other parts of the battlefield.

- Nearly a month after Gaddafi was driven from power, his loyalist holdouts have beaten back repeated assaults by NTC forces at Bani Walid and Sirte, Gaddafi's birthplace. NTC fighters have been sent fleeing in disarray after failing to storm Gaddafi bastions.

NTC forces with huge rocket launchers and artillery gathered outside Sirte on Monday, saying their were preparing for a fresh assault, as hundreds of families fled the town.

NTC fighter Mohamed Ahmed told Reuters the troops were advancing slowly, but holding back their heavy weaponry until civilians were clear.

Rockets fired by Gaddafi loyalists fell near NTC lines, throwing up clouds of dust.

Humanitarian groups have voiced alarm at reported conditions in Sirte.

"There's no electricity, no phone coverage. Nothing," resident Ibrahim Ramadan said, standing by a car packed with his family at a checkpoint.

Residents said homes had been destroyed and cars smashed to pieces as disorder spread through the city.

"People are fed up. There are explosions going off everywhere and you don't know where the bullets will come from next," said Abubakr, a resident making his way out of the city.

"Look at this," he said, pointing to a bullet hole in his windshield. "Bullets are coming down from above. People are just firing randomly."

- MERCENARY REPORT DENIED

NTC spokesman Bani denied an assertion by Gaddafi's spokesman that Gaddafi's forces had captured 17 mercenaries, some of them British and French, in the fight for Bani Walid. "There are no British or French prisoners" in the town, Bani said.

The report by Gaddafi's spokesman Moussa Ibrahim could not be verified and no immediate proof was presented.

"A group was captured in Bani Walid consisting of 17 mercenaries. They are technical experts and they include consultative officers," Ibrahim said on [Syria](#)-based Arrai television, which has backed Gaddafi.

"Most of them are French, one of them is from an Asian country that has not been identified, two English people and one Qatari."

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said there were "no French mercenaries in Libya", while the British foreign office said it had no information about whether the report was true. Qatar's foreign ministry was not available for comment. NATO, which is staging air strikes on Gaddafi loyalist positions, says it has no troops on the ground in Libya.

Western nations have sent special forces in the past, and media have reported that private security firms have aided anti-Gaddafi forces in training, targeting and with leadership.

Bani said NTC forces on Monday arrested pro-Gaddafi mercenary leader Belqasem Al-Abaaj, who had been operating in the south of the country.

- POLITICAL INFIGHTING

The NTC, still based in the eastern city of Benghazi, has faced questions about whether it can unify a country divided on tribal and local lines. A long-promised attempt to set up a more inclusive interim government fell apart overnight.

On Monday, NTC forces were unable to approach the northern gate of Bani Walid, 150 km (95 miles) southeast of Tripoli, to attack the town because of heavy gunfire from Gaddafi loyalists.

"There is a lack of organisation so far. Infantrymen are running in all directions," said Zakaria Tuham, a senior fighter with a Tripoli-based unit.

Many fighters spoke of tension between units drawn from Bani Walid itself and those from other parts of the country.

Some fighters openly disobeyed orders. In one incident, an officer from Bani Walid was heckled by troops from Tripoli after he tried to order them to stop shooting in the air.

In Benghazi, interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril failed to name a new cabinet on Sunday when his proposals did not receive full backing from all current members.

Sources familiar with the negotiations said Jibril's own role had been a sticking point. There was also disagreement about whether it was right to form a transitional government before declaring Libya "liberated", which NTC officials say can only happen when all Gaddafi loyalists are defeated.

The political infighting reveals some of the fractures in an alliance that was united in civil war by hatred of Gaddafi but remains split among pro-Western liberals, underground Islamist guerrillas and defectors from Gaddafi's government.

The NTC has its roots in Libya's east, but most of the militiamen who finally succeeded in driving Gaddafi out of Tripoli are from towns in the west. (Additional reporting by [John Irish](#) in New York, William MacLean and Joseph Logan in Tripoli, Sherine El Madany east of Sirte, Ahmed Al-Shemi in Benghazi and Juliane von Reppert-Bismarck in Brussels; Writing by [Peter Graff](#) and Andrew Heavens)

[video]<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6K3DoUZuHB8...> - [justpaste.it](#)
<http://justpaste.it/luzbek>

- This phone call is a dispute between a Misurati rebel leader and the NTC's Military spokesman, Colonel Ahmed Bani, showing numerous rebel's lies & hypocrisy. It confirms several facts:

- They talk about the presence of U.S & French troops within Misurata and Tripoli, and they are clearly admitting that foreign troops engaged in the attack & occupation of Tripoli, and are still there.

- A major conflict between the Misurata brigade and the NTC in Benghazi, about how the Misurata brigade is perceived by Benghazi, the minimizing of its role in the fights. The Misurati commander seems really tired of hearing the Military spokesman gloating on TV & in the news, talking about a so-called new National Army, while they are being crushed by Gaddafi troops, without the help of Benghazi. He says **"Your So-called National Army has been totally crushed at Dafniya by Gaddafi troops, and they took all the weapons and armoured vehicles. There is no National Army anymore. Where is your National army in Sirte? Are you talking about those waiting outside parading for TV & photographs? A Commander like you should come to the battleground, not go parading on TV! Stop acting like**

the Americans & French, like Sarkozy parading while the war is still ongoing in the country. Come to the battleground! "

- - Ahmed Bani, The NTC's Spokesman, answer him about the psychological operation & aims for his use of the word "New National Army", he says that the whole world is fearing a guerrilla situation in Libya, fearing Al Qaeda and fratricide fights between the different factions. The international community must not see the Libyan rebels as a bunch of different factions, militias and brigades, so he uses the word "Libyan Army" to pretend that Libya is ok, that the situation is under control, and that there are only small pockets of pro-Gaddafi fighters to defeat. So they try to convince the US, UK and France that a Libyan army is under construction, blablabla...

- The Misurati commander stop him, telling him that the US & French are very well informed about the situation on the ground, since they are with them on the ground. They where in Tripoli during the assault, and they are still there. He says in his own brigade only, there is a foreign intel. group of 12 US spec ops, and 6 French (spies?), they are giving all the info, through internet & press (?). So the situation is quiet clear for them, no need to pretend there is a new Libyan army.

- - A dispute over the weapons & "troops" or "mercenaries" from Qatar. ***"Where are the weapons from Qatar, where are the troops when we need them?"***, says the Misurati rebel. The deficiency of backing troops and weapons from Benghazi, while they have given them 150 millions (?) for it- The Misurati commander says that they didn't get the weapons they were promised while they know they are in Benghazi. He swears that each of those in Benghazi who betrayed the Misurata brigade will pay the hard price and that the 'revolution' will succeed with or without them. He says that even if colonel Bani pretend he didn't betrayed, he need to fix the situation, and give what they promised to Misurata brigade, as he's in power.

- The Misurati commander says that Benghazi owe them money and respect for the Misurata 'martyrs', the wounded and amputations (?), for all what they have done, including destroying the Gaddafi army in Misurata and areas ***"Think about the armies we destroyed, Man, we destroyed 16 battalions in Misurata, there are MASS GRAVES of Gaddafi soldiers, but we are not supposed to talk about it. Who destroyed them? And you are talking about a National army?! Where is your National army of Benghazi? We are taking major casualties right now. Ambulances and planes are full of our casualties; hospitals are full of Misuratan rebels! Where is the help coming from Qatar? Where are the weapons coming from Qatar? You guys are excluding us from Libya like if we were Bangladesh. You are doing worse than Gaddafi, forgetting us and putting us apart"***

[Rebels Express Mix Of Emotions In Siege Of Qaddafi Bastion | Fox News](http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/09/19/rebels-express-mix-emotions-in-siege-qaddafi-bastion)

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/09/19/rebels-express-mix-emotions-in-siege-qaddafi-bastion>

• Rebels Express Mix of Emotions in Siege of Qaddafi Bastion

Published September 19, 2011

| Associated Press

- The rockets and mortars rained down on the position where the revolutionaries had retreated on the outskirts of the mountainous stronghold of Muammar Qaddafi's loyalists. So, in a fury, the fighters charged wild and unorganized back into the city for yet another day of fighting.

Fighters for Libya's new rulers have been throwing themselves into the battle to take Bani Walid for days with no progress against the old regime loyalists, strongly fortified and bristling with heavy weaponry. The frustration is showing among the amateur revolutionary fighters.

- "We expected this kind of resistance from [Qaddafi](#) forces, but I thought we could take them on," said Mohammad Bendalla, a doctor treating wounded fighters Sunday at a field hospital set up outside of the city.

The official, trained military of the National Transitional Council, Libya's interim government, has pulled away from Bani Walid to regroup and reinforce for a new assault after they were heavily beaten in the city Friday. That has left ragtag, undisciplined volunteers at the front line. Most are youths from the most die-

hard revolutionary neighborhoods of Tripoli, like Souq al-Jomaa or Tajoura, strong on zeal to kill some Qaddafi supporters and weak on training on how to do so.

- The amateur Tripoli fighters get lost in the neighborhoods rolling up and down Bani Walid's confusing mountain ravines. Behind the front lines, frustrated fighters turn blame on the Bani Walid Brigade, units of city residents who are fighting alongside them but whose loyalties some of them suspect.

The new leadership is facing a tough fight uprooting the remnants of Qaddafi's regime nearly four weeks after the then-rebels rolled into Tripoli on Aug. 21 and ousted the now fugitive leader.

Bani Walid, southeast of the capital, is just one holdout. Fighting is also raging at Sirte, Qaddafi's hometown on the Mediterranean coast. The regime stronghold of Sabha lies hundreds of miles away in the southern deserts, and there are others deep in the central deserts like the cities of Houn and Zallah.

The battle at Sirte, launched Friday, has also been fierce, but there the revolutionaries have been more organized and have made slow progress.

- Most of the fighters besieging Sirte are from Misrata, a city further northwest along the coast that survived a brutal weeks-long siege by Qaddafi forces during the [civil war](#). That conflict left them battle-hardened and savvy on the tactics of urban fighting. Regular truckloads of fuel and food arrive from Misrata to keep the fighters supplied outside Sirte.

"We deserve our reputation," said Ali el-Hani, a Misrata native leaning back against his pickup truck mounted with an anti-aircraft gun.

The past three days, they have battled block by block into the western side of Sirte, along the beach and along a eucalyptus tree-lined main avenue parallel to the coast. Other fighters in the low hills to the south have been drumming Qaddafi strongpoints in the flat plain of the city below with rockets and mortars. At least two dozen fighters were killed Saturday, but commanders say they gain ground each day. Another revolutionary unit from Benghazi -- further to the east -- claimed to be fighting its way to Sirte's eastern side to open up a second front.

- Late Sunday, Qaddafi spokesman Moussa Ibrahim charged that revolutionary fighters have killed "hundreds every day." He told the Syrian Al-Rai TV station, which has become the Qaddafi mouthpiece, "Sirte is the symbol of resistance in Libya." He did not say where he or Qaddafi were.

Bani Walid, perched in the mountains 90 miles southeast of Tripoli, is far tougher to besiege.

A desert valley, called Wadi Zeitoun, runs through the center of the city, dividing it into north and south. In the southern part, loyalists command the heights of 100-foot-high escarpments overlooking the valley. Revolutionaries moving in through the city's northern half have reached the edge of the valley several times in the past few days, only to be pummeled by gunfire, mortars and rockets from the other side.

Each time, they retreat back to the relative safety of Wadi Dinar, at the city's northern entrance.

The loyalists inside are believed to have received reinforcements and weapons through desert valleys that connect to other Qaddafi-controlled areas.

- "Most of the guys here are not from here so it is a big challenge for us to fight," said Walid [Turkey](#), a 28-year-old fighter from Tripoli. "We don't know the streets, and we're learning the makeup as we go along. This causes confusion and chaos."

At Wadi Dinar, the fighters rest, regroup and drink tea, decked out in their versions of revolutionary gear: baggy camouflage pants, berets and sunglasses -- or, in a more Islamic-chic version, beards with no mustaches and Palestinian-style kaffiyah scarves. When news emerges from the front line of any success

-- a captured loyalist or piece of weaponry -- they shoot in the air in celebration. When frustration is high, they break into arguments with each other.

One group, rolling hash joints and relaxing on mattresses on the ground, fumed about their allies, the Bani Walid Brigade, made up largely of members of the Warfala tribe, which dominates the city they are besieging.

- Some are convinced the Warfala fighters are secretly helping the city's defenders. One fighter swore that he saw a Warfala fighter feeding information to cousin, another said a Warfala fighter made him let go a loyalist he caught. Their accounts could not be independently confirmed -- but there was a definite bitterness among the city boys of Tripoli against their mountain allies.

"After today there is no Warfala and no Bani Walid," barked Abdel-Ghafar Marwan, a 28-year-old from Tripoli's Tajoura district. "They betrayed us and we don't want them to fight with us."

More Tajoura fighters pulled up Saturday night with a tank they said was captured during Tripoli's downfall. On Sunday, they posed for pictures on the tank and boasted more tanks were on the way.

Dr. Ehab Agha said two revolutionary fighters and one pro-Qaddafi soldier were killed and 15 wounded in the day's fighting.

- After Friday's defeat, the NTC military -- which is somewhat more organized than the irregular fighters -- pulled back to re-attack later with more force, said Nasser Abu Zaid, 52, a representative from the council. "The Qaddafi force is too strong, fighting with weapons that we can't match."

Sunday afternoon, mortars and rockets rained down on the revolutionaries' position at the northern entrance. The irregular fighters fired back with rocket-launchers and anti-aircraft guns, then charged into the city for another push to Wadi Zeitoun.

Smoke rose from the city. Two ambulances rushed out carrying a revolutionary each. Abu Zaid seemed unbothered by their unorganized fighting style.

"The revolutionaries have lots of passion," he said. "Yes, it's chaotic but this is war."

[Libyans fail to agree new government - Reuters](http://news.yahoo.com/libyan-forces-renew-battle-gaddafi-towns-101938484.html;_ylt=AnSkNZ_ztXIsxk1vNE4n7CCs0NUE;_ylu=X3oDMTNtdWk5dDdoBG1pdANUb3BTdG9yeSBGUARwa2cDNzYyMjc3NTk;_ylg=X3oDMTFvdnRqYzJoBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdANob21lBHB0A3NIY3Rpb25zBHRlc3QD;_ylv=3)

http://news.yahoo.com/libyan-forces-renew-battle-gaddafi-towns-101938484.html;_ylt=AnSkNZ_ztXIsxk1vNE4n7CCs0NUE;_ylu=X3oDMTNtdWk5dDdoBG1pdANUb3BTdG9yeSBGUARwa2cDNzYyMjc3NTk;_ylg=X3oDMTFvdnRqYzJoBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdANob21lBHB0A3NIY3Rpb25zBHRlc3QD;_ylv=3

• Libyans fail to agree new government



By Emma Farge and Maria Golovkina | Reuters

- BENGHAZI/BANI WALID, Libya (Reuters) - Libya's interim leaders failed to agree a new cabinet on Sunday and the forces that forced Muammar Gaddafi from power remained bogged down in fighting with troops loyal to the former ruler.

Interim government forces fled in chaos from the town of Bani Walid and pulled back from Sirte after yet more failed attempts to storm Gaddafi's final bastions and take control of the entire country.

The political and military problems underscored how hard it would be to restore stability to Libya after Gaddafi was driven out of Tripoli last month.

The former rebels' executive committee, or cabinet, was dissolved last month. A new committee, to include officials responsible for defense and interior affairs, was supposed to be appointed by interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril on Sunday.

But the talks broke down when his proposals did not receive full backing from all current members.

- "We had an advisory meeting with the NTC in order to form a new cabinet. We have agreed on a number of portfolios. We still have more portfolios to be discussed," Jibril told reporters through a translator at a news conference on Sunday.

A list of the approved ministries was not available, though sources familiar with the negotiations said that the position of Jibril himself was a sticking point during the talks.

There was also disagreement about whether it is necessary to form a transitional government before the declaration of "liberation" - a concept that appears to include the capture of Gaddafi and the defeat of his loyalists who still hold three key towns.

The NTC has drawn up a road map setting out plans for a new constitution and elections over a 20-month period, which should start once that declaration is made.

With political negotiations bogged down, Sunday's failed attempt to take Bani Walid set off angry recriminations among the attackers, who must capture the town and Gaddafi's birthplace Sirte before they can declare Libya "liberated".

- RECRIMINATIONS

Since taking Tripoli last month, National Transitional Council (NTC) fighters have tried several times to storm Bani Walid, 150 km (90 miles) southeast of the capital, only to retreat under heavy fire and in disorder.

NTC fighters said they had planned for tanks and pickup trucks with anti-aircraft guns and rocket launchers to lead Sunday's attack, but foot soldiers had piled in first.

"There is a lack of organization so far. Infantry men are running in all directions," said Zakaria Tuham, a senior fighter with a Tripoli-based unit.

"Our commanders had been told that heavy artillery units had already gone ahead, but when we advanced into Bani Walid they were nowhere to be seen.

"Gaddafi forces were hitting us heavily with rockets and mortars, so we have pulled out."

A Reuters reporter saw fighters withdraw around two km (more than a mile) after they had stormed into the town.

- NATO planes circled above the town later on Sunday and loud explosions were heard from the center, though it was not clear whether the planes had attacked.

Anti-Gaddafi fighters from Bani Walid blamed comrades from elsewhere in Libya for being unwilling to coordinate. Those from elsewhere accused some local fighters of being traitors and passing information to Gaddafi loyalists.

"Commanders who are from the Warfalla tribe, they tell us one thing and then commanders from the other cities say something else. We do not understand anything," said pro-NTC fighter Mohamed Saleh.

Some fighters openly disobeyed orders. In one incident, an officer from Bani Walid was heckled by troops from Tripoli after he tried to order them to stop randomly shooting in the air as they celebrated seizing a mortar from Gaddafi forces.

"You are not my boss. Don't tell me what to do," one of the Tripoli fighters snapped back at him.

Shells whistled above anti-Gaddafi positions and exploded across the desert valley as invisible snipers sprayed bullets from Bani Walid's rooftops and smoke rose above the town.

NTC fighters helped some families leave the town, driving them out in military trucks.

"The past two weeks have been awful but last night was particularly bad," said Zamzam al-Taher, a 38-year-old mother of four. "We have been trapped here without a car and with no food. Snipers are everywhere."

- BATTLE FOR SIRTE

NTC forces and NATO warplanes also attacked Sirte, Gaddafi's birthplace. Fighters launched rockets from the city's southern entrance and traded fire with Gaddafi loyalists holed up in a conference center.

"The situation is very dangerous. There are so many snipers and all the types of weapons you can imagine," said fighter Mohamed Abdullah as rockets whooshed through the air and black smoke rose above the city.

As in many episodes during Libya's conflict, the front lines at Sirte and Bani Walid have moved back and forth, with shows of bravado crumbling in the reality of battle.

An incoming shell landed within 200 meters of NTC-held lines, only to be met with return fire from NTC fighters shouting "Allahu Akbar!" (God is greatest).

Speaking against the roar of NATO jets overhead, one anti-Gaddafi fighter at Sirte, Mahmoud Othman, said his men were helping families who had fled ahead of the next assault.

"We don't want any more bloodshed between us. But if the Gaddafa want more blood, we are ready," he said, referring to the deposed leader's tribe. "In the end we want Gaddafi."

A spokesman for Gaddafi told Syrian-based Arrai TV on Sunday that 17 "mercenaries", including what he called French and British "technical experts" had been captured in Bani Walid.

It was not immediately possible to verify the report. NATO, French and British officials had on Saturday denied a report by Arrai TV that NATO troops had been captured by Gaddafi loyalists.

(Additional reporting by William MacLean and Joseph Logan in Tripoli, Sherine El Madany in Herawa, Alexander Dziadosz in Benghazi, Barry Malone and Sylvia Westall in Tunis; Editing by Myra MacDonald)

[Libyan NTC leaders fail to agree on interim cabinet as fighting continues | World news | The Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/18/libya-ntc-leaders-interim-cabinet)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/18/libya-ntc-leaders-interim-cabinet>

- **Libyan NTC leaders fail to agree on interim cabinet as fighting continues**

Pressure mounts to appoint Islamic figures to senior positions, while rebels continue bid to take control of Sirte and Bani Walid

- - [Ian Black](#) in Tripoli and [Chris Stephen](#) in Misrata
 - guardian.co.uk, Sunday 18 September 2011



- As Libya's NTC haggles over the cabinet expansion, anti-Gaddafi fighters come under fire outside the besieged desert town of Bani Walid. Photograph: Zohra Bensemra/Reuters
- Libya's new leaders haggled over expanding their interim cabinet on Sunday as fighting continued for control of two strategic strongholds of the old regime.
Mustafa Abdel Jalil, chairman of the National Transitional Council (NTC), had been expected to announce a cabinet of up to 36 members in an effort to emphasise unity and counter criticism that the body was unrepresentative.
But a failure to reach agreement appears to reflect divisions that are casting a shadow over the post-revolutionary political landscape. Mahmoud Jibril, the acting prime minister, would only say consultations in Benghazi had not been completed, but NTC sources said they believed a deal would be done "within days".
The NTC has been under pressure to appoint some Islamist figures to reflect their role in the revolution, but tensions have emerged between the council and rebel commanders, as well as with Ali Salabi, an influential preacher being promoted by Qatar and its al-Jazeera TV channel.
- Rebels in the former enclave of Misrata, who took heavy losses during the revolution, announced their own candidate, Abdul-Rahman Sweilhi, for prime minister. Sweilhi warned of the danger of a "new dictatorship" and insisted the government could not include "symbols of the Gaddafi regime".
The focus of the tension is Jibril, a technocrat and former regime official who has been accused of failing to consult enough with grassroots opposition groups. Jibril, who helped craft the [Nato](#) strategy towards the Libyan uprising, is still expected to retain his post as interim prime minister. Ali Tarhuni, a US-educated economist, is favourite to take charge of economic affairs.
- The US, Britain and other western governments have been encouraging Abdel Jalil and Jibril to be more inclusive amid nervousness about internal disagreements while the liberation of the country is incomplete and Gaddafi is still at large and trying to rally support.
Alarm bells first rang in July when the opposition military commander, General Abdel-Fattah Younis, an early defector from the regime, [died in what many think was an attack by an Islamist group](#).
- The NTC has laid down a detailed timetable under which the "countdown" to a constitutional referendum and elections can begin only when the country is declared liberated.
An NTC military spokesman predicted at the weekend that Sirte on the coast and Bani Walid in the centre would fall soon but, in reality, it could still take weeks to retake the cities from fighters loyal to Gaddafi. Reuters correspondents at the Bani Walid front described a chaotic rebel retreat after another day of inconclusive fighting.
- Refugees fleeing Sirte on Sunday told rebels that supplies of food, medicines and water were running low. A fourth day of combat inside the city saw rebels launch attacks against loyalist units fortified around Ouagadougou hall, the venue for pan-African congresses before the war, and a line of luxury beach-front villages held by the 32nd brigade, commanded by Gaddafi's son Khamis.
Nato jets have continued to bomb in support of the offensive, hitting command centres, vehicles and missile sites on Saturday. The alliance said it had destroyed 39 targets since rebel forces entered the city on Thursday. Rebel commanders said they were rethinking their strategy of avoiding the use of heavy weapons in the city centre for fear of harming civilians.
- Four days of fighting have resulted in 25 deaths and 76 injuries among anti-Gaddafi forces. Many happened on Saturday when they were hit by Grad missiles fired from loyalist compounds. Truck-mounted Grad rocket launchers, tanks and two 155mm guns, recently captured from pro-Gaddafi forces, are being readied to target sites in the city.
Misrata military council, which is commanding the offensive, said six Scud missiles were found, two prepared for launching, when loyalist positions in the Jaref valley close to Sirte were overrun. Reports from Sabha, another regime stronghold in the south of Libya, described advances by rebel forces amid rumours that Gaddafi himself, his son Mutasim and intelligence chief Abdullah Sanussi were all in the area.
Gaddafi's spokesman, Moussa Ibrahim, claimed Nato air raids killed 354 people in Sirte on Friday. "We will be able to continue this fight and we have enough arms for months and months to come," Ibrahim said in a call to Reuters via satellite telephone on Saturday.

[Libya ex-rebels advance on Bani Walid again - AP](#)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libya-ex-rebels-advance-bani-walid-again-143922972.html>

• Libya ex-rebels advance on Bani Walid again



By HADEEL AL-SHALCHI - Associated Press | AP

- BANI WALID, Libya (AP)** — Libyan revolutionary forces repelled an attack by Moammar Gadhafi loyalists on Sunday but faced fierce resistance from a valley separating them from the loyalist stronghold of Bani Walid, fighters said.

Explosions resounded across the area and smoke rose on the horizon as the two sides exchanged fire with rockets and anti-aircraft missiles.

Fighters said they made the push without orders from commanders Sunday after forces loyal to the fugitive leader shelled revolutionary lines at the northern gate of the sprawling town.

"We had no command to enter the city, but they are rocketing us and throwing mortars at us so we had to push through," said Sherif Tajouri, a 41-year-old member of a brigade from the nearby town of Tajoura.

NATO aircraft circled the area, but former rebels say there was no sign of airstrikes.

At one point, fighters in a pickup truck dumped the body of a dead Gadhafi fighter wearing green fatigues onto a pile of mattresses away from the front line. They chanted "God is great" and "Here is one of the rats" and flashed a "V for victory" sign.
- The two sides have clashed for days after former rebels made a push toward Bani Walid and Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte to try to break weeks of stalemate and crush the dug-in fighters loyal to the fugitive leader.

Families streamed out Sirte to escape the fighting. Rebels searching vehicles found many assault rifles and pistols. Some people volunteered the weapons; others were confiscated.

While Sirte would be a major symbolic prize, Bani Walid has proven particularly difficult for revolutionary forces.

The loyalists hold the strategic high ground along the ridges overlooking the desert valley called Wadi Zeitoun, which divides the town between northern and southern sections. The terrain has made the town a historical holdout: In the early 20th century, Italian forces occupying Libya struggled to take Bani Walid.

Gadhafi forces blasted fighters at the northern gate with mortar shells, and the revolutionary forces returned fire with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

Reinforcements from Tajoura, meanwhile, posed on a tank they said was captured after revolutionary forces swept into Tripoli on Aug. 21. Fathi Mselati, 31, from the Tajoura brigade, said more captured tanks were on their way to the front.
- Revolutionary forces also have faced fierce resistance in Sirte as they tried to push through crowded residential areas in the coastal city. They claimed Saturday to have progressed less than a mile into the city, along the main coastal highway leading in from the west.

The forces were met by a rain of gunfire, rockets and mortars. A field hospital set up outside Sirte at a gas station filled with wounded fighters, including some from a convoy hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. Twenty-four anti-Gadhafi fighters were killed and 54 wounded in the day's battles, the military council from the nearby city of Misrata reported.

The two sides continued to exchange fire on Sunday.

Abdul Aziz, a 35-year-old businessman, said he was fleeing with his wife and three young children after fighting broke out near his house on Saturday. He said living conditions were difficult in the city of some 100,000 people.

"There hasn't been power in Sirte for a long time. Sometimes there is water, sometimes there isn't. There is food for now but no medicine," he said as revolutionary forces searched his car, which was loaded with clothes, onions and baby powder.

"It's very dangerous in Sirte, yesterday they were fighting near my house, my kids are very scared, that is why I want to get them out," he added.
- The pro-regime radio station in Sirte repeatedly aired a recorded message it said was from Gadhafi, urging the city's defenders to fight on. "You must resist fiercely. You must kick them out of Sirte," the voice said. "If they get inside Sirte, they are going to rape the women." The voice resembled Gadhafi's but its authenticity could not be confirmed.

Gadhafi's spokesman, Moussa Ibrahim, vowed, "We have the ability to continue this resistance for months," in a phone call Friday to Syrian-based Al-Rai TV, which has become the mouthpiece for the former regime.

The persistence of the former regime has raised fears of a protracted insurgency of the sort that has played out in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On a third front in Libya's southern desert, hundreds of revolutionary fighters were negotiating with villagers in the still pro-Gadhafi region to surrender peacefully. The fighters collected on a road near the Nahrouqa village on Sunday.

Col. Bashir Awidat has said they seek to secure the surrounding hinterlands before moving against Sabha, the main southern urban center about 400 miles (650 kilometers) south of Tripoli.

In Tripoli, two Libyan air force pilots who aborted a Gadhafi-ordered bombing raid on a civilian protest before the leader was ousted flew back to the capital Sunday to a hero's welcome.

The men, who had been in Malta, were mobbed by well-wishers who chanted "God is great" on the tarmac. The pilots looked dazed as they were rushed into waiting vehicles and driven away to an unknown location. Their names were not released because of security concerns.

[Gaddafi bastion residents plead for an attack | Reuters](http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/15/us-libya-bani-walid-scene-idUSTRE78E3JO20110915)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/15/us-libya-bani-walid-scene-idUSTRE78E3JO20110915>

- Gaddafi bastion residents plead for an attack
- By [Maria Golovnina](#)

NORTH GATE OF BANI WALID, Libya | Thu Sep 15, 2011

- (Reuters) - Worn out after weeks without proper food and water, refugees gushing out of one of Muammar Gaddafi's last strongholds implored fighters backing Libya's new rulers to hurry up and rescue their families trapped inside the beleaguered town.
- One of the last flashpoints in Libya's seven-month war, the desert town of Bani Walid has been under siege for two weeks, with die-hard Gaddafi loyalists dug into its steep valleys and hills, stoutly resisting advancing interim government troops.

Wary of alienating a powerful local tribe, provisional government forces massing outside the oasis town ceased fire this week to give civilians a chance to flee before storming Bani Walid.

A difficult terrain of treacherous hills and steep, sun-scorched valleys has also kept their advance in check, with most Gaddafi snipers and rocket launchers concentrated on higher ground inside the city.

More than a quarter of Bani Walid's roughly 100,000 population has now fled, but residents said many more people were trapped by feared Gaddafi militiamen threatening to shoot anyone leaving their homes.

- Some of the refugees were openly angry at the lack of progress.

"Why are you waiting?" shouted Ramadan Karim after crossing the lines and stopping at a checkpoint manned by anti-Gaddafi fighters on the northern edge of the city.

Shaking his fist and leaning out of his car's window, he yelled at the soldiers: "Go in now! Rescue them! Our people are trapped inside! It's a ghost city! It's enough! It's enough!"

With ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) troops frozen in their positions, some civilians seized on the lull in fighting to get their families out themselves.

"My family is trapped inside," said one man, Sharef Saleh, as he drove into Bani Walid. "I am going in to rescue them. I am not afraid."

Although their numbers had been believed to be in the low hundreds, Gaddafi militiamen have put up stiffer than expected resistance, shelling their opponents' positions with rocket launchers and threatening civilians via radio messages.

- GADDAFI "COWARDS"

"A number of rebels stayed at home with us and my walls are now full of bullet holes," said Yusef al Hazmi, a farmer driving out of the city with a dozen noisy sheep packed into the back of his truck.

"People are puzzled why it's taking so long, why rebels are not coming. Gaddafi militiamen have put their anti-aircraft guns and snipers on the roofs of schools, civilian houses, mosques."

Libya's new national army, deployed by the NTC from Tripoli and other big cities, has been reinforcing positions in preparation for a full scale attack after earlier attempts to retake the city, led by less experienced local fighters, failed earlier this month.

- Libya's new rulers are desperate to avoid another botched attempt to retake the town -- an event that could derail Tripoli's efforts to put the country firmly on the path of reconstruction.

Field commanders around Bani Walid said they were under strict orders to proceed slowly and avoid the loss of civilian life as much as possible.

"We are not using the same tactics as Gaddafi. We want to help our people, all Libyans," said Hafid Bellal, an anti-Gaddafi fighter.

For now, the frontline is in a state of limbo. At dusty checkpoints north of the city, soldiers wait patiently for the green light to advance, gazing at the distant haze of Bani Walid's low-rise skyline from their distant desert positions.

They said commanders had rescinded orders to advance several times at the last minute, contributing to the sense of nervousness on the ground.

As they waited, troops fired volleys of machinegun fire into the empty desert and stamped on Gaddafi's green flag confiscated from a suspected loyalist, shouting, "Gaddafi out! Libya is free."

Explosions boomed around the valley as soldiers test-fired rocket propelled grenades in a show of strength.

Honking wildly and flashing victory signs at NTC fighters greeting them outside the gates, many refugees were visibly relieved.

"I am so happy to see you! We have been trapped there for months!" said one man, Akram. "Gaddafi militiamen are cowards. Everyone is with you."

[AFP: Libya's new rulers to probe war crimes allegations](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iiFyIpr6VASn6MgOR9aioxsentvpg?docId=CNG.896de1096470bc0c4dc74f022ee2ddcd.471)

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iiFyIpr6VASn6MgOR9aioxsentvpg?docId=CNG.896de1096470bc0c4dc74f022ee2ddcd.471>

- Libya's new rulers to probe war crimes allegations

By Mohamed Hasni (AFP)

- TRIPOLI — Libya's new rulers promised to investigate allegations of "serious abuses" including war crimes as their position was consolidated when the World Bank recognised them as the official government.

The National Transitional Council was responding to a report released Tuesday by London-based human rights watchdog Amnesty International that accused the fighters who brought down the Kadhafi regime.

The NTC acknowledged "a small number of incidents involving those opposed to Kadhafi" and vowed to investigate Amnesty's allegations.

Amnesty said in the first days of the uprising groups of anti-Kadhafi protesters killed a number of captured soldiers and suspected mercenaries.

"Some were beaten to death, at least three were hanged, and others were shot dead after they had been captured or had surrendered," Amnesty said.

"The NTC is facing a difficult task of reining in opposition fighters and vigilante groups responsible for serious human rights abuses, including possible war crimes, but has shown unwillingness to hold them accountable," it said.

- But Amnesty acknowledged the alleged atrocities were of a "smaller scale" than those carried out by Kadhafi's regime, which it says may be responsible for crimes against humanity.

In a statement issued in its eastern bastion of Benghazi, the council's executive committee said it "strongly condemns any abuses perpetrated by either side".

"The NTC is firmly committed to human rights and the rule of law, both international and local," it said.

In his first public speech since arriving in Tripoli on Saturday, Libya's interim leader Mustafa Abdel Jalil told thousands of supporters in Martyrs' Square that moderate Islam would be Libya's main source of legislation.

"We will not accept any extremist ideology, on the right or the left. We are a Muslim people, for a moderate Islam, and we will stay on this road," he said Monday night.

The World Bank said its decision was based on "evolving events in Libya and the views of member countries."

It pledged a major rebuilding role after the seven-month insurrection that ousted the fugitive Kadhafi.

- The NTC meanwhile continued to seek the surrender of Kadhafi diehards who have been mounting attacks against its fighters from a few enclaves, including the oasis town of Bani Walid, southeast of Tripoli.

Kadhafi, wanted for crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court, remains in hiding.

Earlier, in a statement read out on Syria-based Arrai Oruba television, he vowed to defeat those behind the "coup" that had ousted him.

"All that remains for us is the struggle until victory and the defeat of the coup," he said.

NATO said it did not know if Kadhafi senior was still in Libya.

"He has not made public appearances in the country for a while and this raises questions about his whereabouts," spokesman Colonel Roland Lavoie told reporters from the operation's headquarters in Naples, Italy.

Thirty-two members of Kadhafi's inner circle, including his son Saadi, have fled to Niger.

Saadi Kadhafi arrived in the Niger capital Niamey late Tuesday under the protection of the country's security forces, a Nigerian government source said.

- He flew in from the northern town of Agadez on a Hercules c-130 transport plane, local sources said.

In Agadez, he had stayed at the governor's residence with eight other close associates of his father, they added.

The International Energy Agency said Libya could recover a quarter of its oil production by the end of 2011, and two-thirds by end-2012.

A return to full output of about 1.6 million barrels a day could take two to three years, it said.

Canada said it has freed up \$2.2 billion of Libyan assets frozen in its banks as it renewed ties with the North African country.

The World Bank's recognition of the NTC came a day after China, which had long helped prop up Kadhafi before the uprising broke out, became the last permanent member of the UN Security Council to do so.

But South African President Jacob Zuma said the African Union still did not recognise Libya's new leaders.

- On the battlefield, fighters of Libya's new rulers brandished new weapons outside Bani Walid, where residents were fleeing fearing clashes with Kadhafi forces.

Talks were under way through mediators for the surrender of Kadhafi diehards but "so far there is no result," said Abdullah Kenschil, the NTC's chief negotiator.

"They want to continue to fight and yesterday they bombed residential areas," he said.

Kenschil, citing fleeing residents, said the humanitarian situation in Bani Walid was difficult, with shortages of water,

electricity and commodities.

Although a deadline set for Kadhafi loyalists to surrender has expired, the NTC assault on the desert town 180 kilometres (110 miles) southeast of Tripoli has been stalled for three days.

The area was mainly calm Tuesday, save for intermittent exchanges of fire and the sound of NATO warplanes flying overhead.

NATO said its warplanes had hit a radar system, eight surface-to-air missile systems, five surface-to-air missile trailers, an armed vehicle and two air defence command vehicles.

Those strikes came a day after Kadhafi loyalists launched ferocious counterattacks on the oil refinery town of Ras Lanuf in the east and on the road towards Kadhafi's hometown of Sirte.

[Libya's new leadership rejects Amnesty claim of abuses - The Irish Times - Wed, Sep 14, 2011](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2011/0914/1224304081758.html)

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2011/0914/1224304081758.html>

- The Irish Times - Wednesday, September 14, 2011
- Libya's new leadership rejects Amnesty claim of abuses
- CHRIS STEPHEN in Tawarga

- LIBYA's new leadership hit back yesterday at a report accusing it of permitting attacks against civilians accused of supporting Muammar Gadafy and black migrant workers.

Justice minister Mohammed al-Alagi said any crimes committed were not the work of rebel forces. "They are not the military[committing these crimes] they are only ordinary people."

- Libya's authorities say that it is difficult to regulate a revolutionary movement that mostly remains outside National Transitional Council (NTC) control.

Amnesty International's report blamed the majority of abuses in the Libyan conflict on forces loyal to Col Gadafy, listing abuses including murder, torture and bombardment of civilian areas.

- But it also listed violations by his opponents. "Opposition fighters and supporters have abducted arbitrarily tortured and killed former members of the security forces, suspected Gadafy loyalists, captured soldiers and foreign nationals wrongly suspected of being mercenaries," said the report. It highlighted cases in which black African migrants had been lynched by rebel groups following the fall of Tripoli, saying many had been accused of being in the pay of the Gadafy regime.

There is widespread resentment among rebel units of mercenaries who have been captured from Chad and other African countries.

But Libya is also home to several thousand African migrant workers who were trapped by the war and insist they played no part in abuses by the Gadafy regime.

- Amnesty said that it had yet to get a full picture of abuses, with the war still raging in parts of Libya, but it called on the governing NTC, now installed in Tripoli, to take action.

On Sunday, NTC prime minister Mahmoud Jibril called on all rebel military commands to come under a single, unified civilian control, though he has yet to receive pledges that the various rebel units will comply.

The NTC says the nature of the revolution, in which rebel units were formed in different towns by civilians, makes it difficult to police all revolutionary forces.

- Amnesty acknowledged that the new government will struggle to gain control of the country's armed factions.

"The NTC is facing a difficult task of reigning in opposition fighters and vigilante groups responsible for serious human rights abuses, including possible war crimes, but has shown unwillingness to hold them accountable."

- An early test of the new regime's resolve may come with the incidence of home burnings at Tawarga, a rebel-held town abandoned by its black population after pro-Gadafy forces retreated last month. At least five homes and shops were ablaze yesterday in a town where the only occupants are rebel units. A rebel police officer blamed the attack on arsonists in the pay of Col Gadafy but offered no evidence.
- Meanwhile, NTC forces have given Gadafy-supporting residents of Bani Walid, 180km (112 miles) southeast of Tripoli, two days to leave before a threatened onslaught. Along with Col Gadafy's hometown Sirte on the central Mediterranean coast and Sabha in the remote southern desert, Bani Walid counts among the last strongholds of old regime fighters. Their resistance has impeded NTC efforts to normalise life in the oil-producing North African state again.

Residents fleeing the town have reported days of intense firefights, and Nato warplanes were backing up NTC fighters with air strikes on pro-Gadafy rocket positions.

Families trapped there for weeks started to slip out after Col Gadafy's forces abandoned some checkpoints on the outskirts, and dozens of cars packed with civilians streamed out of the area on Monday and yesterday.

[Libya: Bani Walid residents given two days to leave before onslaught - Telegraph](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocan/libya/8761667/Libya-Bani-Walid-residents-given-two-days-to-leave-before-onslaught.html)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocan/libya/8761667/Libya-Bani-Walid-residents-given-two-days-to-leave-before-onslaught.html>

• **Libya: Bani Walid residents given two days to leave before onslaught**

Residents of Bani Walid have been give two days to leave before an onslaught begins aimed at capturing one of former Libyan leader Col Muammar Gaddafi's last bastions.

- 8:47AM BST 14 Sep 2011

Complaining of hardship and intimidation, residents of Bani Walid headed to nearby towns or started the 112 mile journey north towards the capital Tripoli on Tuesday in cars packed with children and possessions.

- Forces of the new ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) that overran Tripoli on Aug 23 have met unexpectedly stout resistance in five days of fighting for Bani Walid, a sun-baked town set in rocky hills and valleys. Along with Gaddafi's hometown Sirte on the Mediterranean coast and Sabha in the southern desert, Bani Walid is one of the last strongholds of old regime fighters.

Their dogged resistance has complicated NTC efforts to normalise life in the oil-rich North African state and the United Nations has voiced fears about the plight of civilians marooned inside besieged pro-Gaddafi towns, particularly Sirte.

Gaddafi's whereabouts is unknown. NTC officials have said he could be hiding in one of the outposts like Bani Walid, helping to rally a last stand against Nato-backed forces.

Residents escaping Bani Walid on Monday and Tuesday reported days of intense street-to-street fighting. They began to slip out after Gaddafi forces abandoned some checkpoints on the outskirts.

- Bani Walid resident and NTC supporter Isa Amr, 35, said the town was running out of fuel, food and water, making it impossible for his family to stay any longer.

"Rebels gave us some petrol, enough to drive to Tripoli. The rebels are really helping us," he said, driving away with his wife and three young children.

Mr Amr said the NTC was handing out free fuel at the northern entrance to Bani Walid to smooth the evacuation.

Abdulbaset Mohamed Mohamed, 25, another Bani Walid residents driving towards Tripoli, said it was too dangerous to venture outside in the town. Militia men are hiding around the city and (pro-Gaddafi) green flags are everywhere."

- NTC field commanders said people in Bani Walid had been told via broadcast radio messages they had two days to leave town before it came under full-blown attack.

"I think only 10 per cent of the people are Gaddafi supporters. They are fanatics. And the rest are waiting to be liberated. We have given them two more days to leave the city," NTC fighter Abumuslim Abdu said. The country's new rulers have hesitated to employ heavy-handed tactics to seize Bani Walid, which is home to the Warfalla tribe, Libya's largest.

[Libya's](#) interim rulers have said that, along with taking control of pro-Gaddafi enclaves, capturing or killing the fugitive leader is a priority and only then could Libya be declared "liberated".

- The US State Department said one of his sons, Saadi Gaddafi, who arrived in neighbouring Niger on Sunday on one of four convoys of senior Gaddafi loyalists to have crossed the southern Sahara desert frontier, was being held there.

"Our understanding is, like the others, he's being detained in a state guesthouse," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said in Washington on Tuesday.

"It's essentially a house arrest in this government facility, is our understanding," she said, adding that Niger was working with Libya's interim rulers on the issue.

Niger said on Monday it was keeping Saadi Gaddafi under surveillance but had not detained him.

- In Tripoli, officials trying to re-establish security said they needed to integrate the fighters who toppled Gaddafi into the police force to ensure the revolution's legitimacy.

Osama Abu Ras, a member of the Supreme Security Committee for Tripoli, told Reuters that Gaddafi's forces remained capable of firing missiles and the capital could become a target for such attacks.

"We have a very strong (military) front now in our favour but there is a threat of some missiles, including Grad missiles, and rockets. This could be a real threat," he said.

- While Gaddafi and his son Saif al-Islam, wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), have remained elusive, three Gaddafi officials were reported to be in NTC custody.

Abdel Hafid Zlitni, a former Central Bank governor and finance minister, was captured in Zawiyah, 30 miles west of Tripoli, NTC sources said on Tuesday.

They also said Mohammed Zwei, parliament speaker and a former ambassador to Britain, had been captured in the past week. Senior military officer Mustapha Kharroubi was also now under the NTC's watch, witnesses said.

- Kharroubi is a veteran Gaddafi official and one of the few remaining officers who participated in the 1969 coup that brought Gaddafi to power. It is believed he handed himself over to NTC officials late last month but this could not immediately be confirmed.

Two of Gaddafi's sons and his only biological daughter have made their way to Algeria. One son is reported to have died in the war and three others, including Saif, are still on the run.

[NATO airstrikes pound pro-Gadhafi targets - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/nato-airstrikes-pound-pro-gadhafi-targets-104635905.html;_ylt=Aq5Y6556FRHO0z9U.6zcgSewag8F;_ylu=X3oDMTRob2toOXZ2BGNjb2RIA2dtcHRvcDIwMHBvb2xyZXN0BG1pdANC;_ylg=X3oDMTMzMmU5bWs0BGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi1cwRwc3RhaWQDNTE1MDI0NWYtZjcxMC0zMjQ5LTg4MjEtZWQ5ZTZINTY2OW-;_ylv=3)

http://news.yahoo.com/nato-airstrikes-pound-pro-gadhafi-targets-104635905.html;_ylt=Aq5Y6556FRHO0z9U.6zcgSewag8F;_ylu=X3oDMTRob2toOXZ2BGNjb2RIA2dtcHRvcDIwMHBvb2xyZXN0BG1pdANC;_ylg=X3oDMTMzMmU5bWs0BGludGwDdXMEbGFuZwNlbi1cwRwc3RhaWQDNTE1MDI0NWYtZjcxMC0zMjQ5LTg4MjEtZWQ5ZTZINTY2OW-;_ylv=3

. NATO airstrikes pound pro-Gadhafi targets



- TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — NATO says its warplanes have pounded targets in a number of key strongholds of support for fugitive dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

The alliance said Tuesday that airstrikes struck one radar system, eight surface-to-air missile systems, five surface-to-air missile trailers, one armed vehicle and two command vehicles a day earlier near Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte.

NATO also says it struck six tanks and two armored fighting vehicles in Sabha in the southern desert.

Those two cities, along with Bani Walid, are the primary bastions of Gadhafi loyalists remaining in the country more than three weeks after revolutionary forces captured Tripoli.

Libyan fighters launched an assault Friday on Bani Walid, but the offensive has stalled in the face of fierce resistance.

[Libya's revolutionary leader calls for civil state - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/libyas-revolutionary-leader-calls-civil-state-212544725.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libyas-revolutionary-leader-calls-civil-state-212544725.html>

. Libya's revolutionary leader calls for civil state



By BEN HUBBARD - Associated Press, HADEEL AL-SHALCHI - Associated Press | AP

- TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — The chief of Libya's revolutionary movement told thousands of cheering Libyans in Tripoli Monday to strive for a civil, democratic state, while loyalists of the hunted dictator Moammar Gadhafi killed at least 15 opposition fighters in an attack on a key oil town in Libya's east.

From hiding, Gadhafi urged his remaining followers to keep up the fight, a sign that Libya's six-month civil is not over even though revolutionary forces now control most of the country and have begun setting up a new government in the capital.

Mustafa Abdul-Jalil addressed a rowdy crowd of thousands in Martyr's Square in central Tripoli, a site that until recently was famous for pro-Gadhafi rallies. Flanked by a few dozen revolutionary leaders in their largest public gathering since rebel forces stormed into the capital on Aug. 21, he called on Libyans to build a state based on the rule of law.

"No retribution, no taking matters into your own hands and no oppression. I hope that the revolution will not stumble because of any of these things," he said.

As he spoke, thousands waved flags, cheered and chanted, "Hold your head high, you're a free Libyan!" Some wept openly as fireworks exploded overhead.

Abdul-Jalil heads the National Transitional Council, founded in the eastern city of Benghazi early in the six-month civil war to guide the rebel movement. Its leaders have been arriving in the capital since it fell into rebel hands last month to start building a new government.

- Abdul-Jalil, who served as Gadhafi's justice minister before joining the rebels at the uprising's start, defined the government he says the NTC hopes to create.

"We strive for a state of the law, for a state of prosperity, for a state that will have Islamic sharia law the basis of legislation," he said.

He also thanked NATO, the United States and a number of Arab and European countries for their aid to the rebels during the war. NATO bombed Gadhafi's military under a U.N. mandate to protect civilians, giving rebel forces an edge on Gadhafi's better armed and trained soldiers.

Abdul-Jalil said the new Libya would focus on youth and women, adding that some ministries and embassies would be headed by women. Some have criticized the rebel movement for not putting women in leadership roles, and none stood on stage with the movement's leaders.

This didn't bother some in the crowd.

"God willing, all he said will come true," said Sabriya Mohammed, 50, who came to the rally with her two adult daughters. "He mentioned women specifically and said we'd have our place. He's a man who knows the importance of the law."

- Libya's new leaders face the huge challenge of building a new government in a country with no recent history of democracy or independent civil institutions. They also have yet to extend their control over all of Libya.
- From hiding, Gadhafi called on his remaining followers Monday to keep fighting.

"We will not be ruled after we were the masters," said the brief statement attributed to Gadhafi that was read on Syria's Al-Rai TV by its owner Mishan al-Jabouri, a former Iraqi lawmaker and Gadhafi supporter.

The message described Libya's new leaders as "traitors" who are willing to turn over the country's oil riches to foreign interests.

"We will not hand Libya to colonialism, once again, as the traitors want," said the statement, which pledged to fight against the "coup."

- Gadhafi's whereabouts are unknown, but his followers claim he is still in Libya. Some of his family members have fled to neighboring Algeria and others to Niger, most recently his son al-Saadi.

Showing that his loyalists still pose a threat to opposition control, suspected loyalists staged deadly attacks on the Ras Lanouf oil terminal in Libya's east that began with saboteurs setting fires and then shifted to a convoy of gunmen riding in from the desert.

Col. Hamid al-Hasi, the commander for anti-Gadhafi forces in eastern Libya, said a group of 15 employees set fire to the facility, located on the Mediterranean coast about 380 miles (615 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli.

In a possibly coordinated attack, the port was then targeted by a convoy of armed men apparently based in a refugee camp about 18 miles (30 kilometers) south of Ras Lanouf.

The supervisor of the Ras Lanouf hospital, Dr. Ahmad El-Gnashi, said 15 guards were killed and two injured.

Revolutionary forces are still struggling to seize control of at least three other towns.

Opposition pickup trucks mounted with machine guns converged outside the loyalist-held town of Bani Walid for a possible intensified assault after several failed attempts to drive out pro-Gadhafi forces. One opposition commander claimed Gadhafi's son Seif al-Islam is leading loyalist forces massed in the town, about 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli.

It's unlikely that pro-Gadhafi fighters can withstand a sustained siege on the town. But it's unclear whether the showdowns in the last loyalist strongholds — including Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte — will mark a crippling end or open a new phase of an underground insurgency and hit-and-run attacks against Libya's new leadership.

- Dozens of cars loaded with Libyan families and personal belongings streamed out of the town in anticipation of a fresh assault.

Khairiyah al-Mahdi, a 40-year-old housewife, was fleeing the town along with her husband, six daughters and two sons.

She said her house was among the first to fly the revolution's tricolor flag when Libyan fighters pushed into Bani Walid over the weekend. But deteriorating living conditions, threats from Gadhafi supporters and heavy clashes in the town prompted her family to flee.

"We left Bani Walid because Gadhafi loyalists in control of the local radio announced through airwaves that anyone helping the rebels or part of them will be killed," she said. "A lot of people are scared and now leaving."

NATO, which has played a key role in crippling Gadhafi's military forces since intervening in Libya's civil war in late March, has kept up its attacks on remaining pro-Gadhafi sites. The military alliance said its warplanes hit targets Sunday in Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte, including a military logistics facility and three surface-to-air missile systems.

The Misrata Military Council said clashes inside Sirte between Gadhafi loyalists and opposition backers has left at least three people dead.

[Libya NTC rebel fighters ambushed in Bani Walid by Gaddafi loyalists | News.com.au](http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/libya-ntc-rebel-fighters-ambushed-in-bani-walid-by-gaddafi-loyalists/story-e6frku0-1226134624332)

<http://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/libya-ntc-rebel-fighters-ambushed-in-bani-walid-by-gaddafi-loyalists/story-e6frku0-1226134624332>

- Libya NTC rebel fighters ambushed in Bani Walid by Gaddafi loyalists
- FIGHTERS backing the new regime in Libya have met strong resistance in the Libyan oasis town of Bani Walid, where they came under sniper fire from forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi today.
- But while some fighters put some of the blame on a poorly organised advance by the fighters, others suspected betrayal from some inside their own ranks.

"I did not fire one shot today because there was nothing clear to shoot at... They are shooting at us from above and we can't see anyone," said commander Abdel Monem, 28, from Zawiyah.

Fighters backing the National Transitional Council (NTC) had made a disorganised advance into uncharted territory, he added.

Novices had been mixed in with the veterans and there had been almost no co-ordination between them.

"In one word: it was chaos," he said.

The oasis town, a stronghold of the powerful Warfalla tribe, is one of the last places still loyal to Gaddafi.

Efforts by the NTC in recent days to negotiate a peaceful occupation have foundered.

- Taking Bani Walid will be no easy task, as pro-Gaddafi fighters within the town have the higher ground.

The main challenge, said Monem, was snipers perched on the hills and residents armed by Gaddafi.

They have been led to expect the worst from the NTC force after an intense propaganda campaign that has depicted

them as killers and rapists.

"Civilians are afraid of us because Libya TV said we are rats that will rape their daughters," he said.

The lack of electricity in the Bani Walid area had prevented the NTC from countering that message, he added.

All afternoon, a local pro-Gaddafi radio station broadcast an appeal to residents to rally against the invaders.

- NTC fighters backed by armoured vehicles mounted with anti-aircraft guns arrived today on the edge of Bani Walid, 180km from Tripoli.

The fighters said they had routed Gaddafi loyalists and snipers from Wadi Dinar, a valley in the shadow of Bani Walid, during their Saturday advance towards the town.

By Sunday, they were sending in scouting missions to probe the defences.

Clashes erupted in the afternoon in the neighbourhoods of Al-Mansila and Al-Hawasim, according to one fighter, Ahmed al-Warfalli, and two shells crashed into a hill six kilometres north of the town.

NATO warplanes and explosions could be heard throughout the day.

There were contradictory accounts however as to how far rebels had advanced into the city and the strength of the resistance they had encountered.

Military commanders insisted that the main assault had yet to begin.

- "Today we are still on standby and waiting for orders," said one commander, General Atiya Ali Tarhuni, earlier in the day.

Sami Saadi Abu Rweis, a fighter returning from Bani Walid with a wounded friend in tow, reported snipers everywhere.

"They are shooting at us from two kilometres away. Bani Walid is full of arms - every household has them.

"There is some type of treason going on. People pretended to be with the rebels but are really with Gaddafi."

Fighters released their frustration by firing their weapons into the air as rumours of betrayal spread like wildfire, raising tensions in the ranks.

"We need better organisation and cooperation from Bani Walid's residents," concluded Monem. He was hesitant to bring one hundred of his men based in the capital to a battle seemingly doomed to be a suicide mission, he added.

"You can bring 1000 men but without organisation nothing will go right."

[Nato launches renewed strikes in bid to help Libyan rebels' final assault - Telegraph](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8756220/Nato-launches-renewed-strikes-in-bid-to-help-Libyan-rebels-final-assault.html)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8756220/Nato-launches-renewed-strikes-in-bid-to-help-Libyan-rebels-final-assault.html>

• **Nato launches renewed strikes in bid to help Libyan rebels' final assault**

A renewed Nato intervention in Libya's civil war on Sunday night allowed rebel forces to drive their way towards Col Muammar Gaddafi's last two northern redoubts after days of fierce resistance.

- By [Richard Spencer](#), Tripoli, Ruth Sherlock near Bani Walid and Rob Crilly in Benghazi

11:43PM BST 11 Sep 2011

- Nato said it had struck a pro-Gaddafi tank, two armoured vehicles and a multiple rocket launcher in the town of Bani Walid – an attack called in as rebels were forced to call off an attack on Saturday evening.

As night fell on Sunday, rebels were in control of parts of the town and had seized the university.

Around Sirte, Col Gaddafi's birthplace and showpiece city where regime forces were also holding out, Nato destroyed a set of surface to air missile canisters, two tanks and two armed vehicles.

Rebels claimed Gaddafi forces there had taken 300 residents to a village on the approach to the city as human shields and were using them to prevent a further advance.

Fathi Baja, head of political affairs for the National Transitional Council, told reporters that the residents, including a number of known opponents of Gaddafi, had been taken to Qasr bu Hadi, about 10 miles to the east of the city.

- The two towns have defied rebel predictions of a swift victory that would consolidate the hold of the National Transitional Council over the populated northern seaboard of the country. Gaddafi troops and loyalist residents have fought back strongly, sniping and sending volleys of missiles at rebel forces as they try to move in.

In doing so they have covered the retreat of the Gaddafi clan and, it is believed, the leader himself to the south of the country where they are believed to be using reserves of cash and gold to be buying support in the hope of a fightback or at least a well-guarded escape.

Deadlines for the loyalists to surrender peacefully in return for guarantees of good treatment have come and gone in Bani Walid and Sirte.

But following the Nato attacks, rebels were able to force their way into Bani Walid last night, saying they were less than a mile from the centre and in control of the north of the town. A resident named Khalifa al-Talisi said: "There is still resistance from the central market. All other parts of Bani Walid have been liberated."

Gaddafi forces were still fighting on, scudding mortars towards rebel lines as night fell and at one stage forcing another retreat.

- The town is home to the Warfalla tribe, which was once loyal to Gaddafi but split in later years, and its most pro-Gaddafi elements fear retaliation if they surrender.

In Sirte surrender negotiations also failed because residents insisted the rebels could only enter if they came without weapons and demanded an amnesty for anyone guilty of crimes committed under the former regime.

- Many there fear a wave of revenge on a city that is closely associated with the Colonel and his inner circle. Evidence has emerged in the last week of similar destruction wreaked on Taworga, an intensely pro-Gaddafi town used as a base for the long siege of Misurata.

The Sunday Telegraph discovered the town had been forcibly emptied of residents by the victorious rebels and then comprehensively looted.

- On Saturday, the head of the transitional government, Mustafa Abdul Jalil, after finally arriving in Tripoli to take up his post as de facto president of the new Libya, tried to convince residents of both towns that they had nothing to fear.

"We try to extend our hands to show peace to our brothers there to let our troops enter these cities peacefully without fighting," he said.

However, he authorised an end to the latest ceasefire on the Sirte front, with rebels also progressing several miles closer to the city.

[World News: Rebels, NATO strike Gadhafi bastion - thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1052119)

<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1052119>

- Rebels, NATO strike Gadhafi bastion
- Published On Sat Sep 10 2011



- Calgarian Anas Ahmed Elhouderi returned to Libya to fight in the uprising. He's part of the column attacking Bani Walid.

- Jeremy Relph

Special to the Star

- NEAR BANI WALID, LIBYA—"We reached the outer walls of a military compound," lamented Anas Ahmed Elhouderi said, standing at rebel lines some five kilometres from Bani Walid. "For some reason we've been called back."

Like many rebel fighters, Elhouderi, a 22-year-old Calgary resident who returned to his native Libya about a month ago to join the uprising, was frustrated with the delays in forward movement as Libya's new authorities launched an assault Saturday on one of the last remaining bastions of ousted leader Moammar Gadhafi.

- Fighters poured into the desert town of Bani Walid, 150 kilometres southeast of Tripoli, after a deadline set by the National Transitional Council for Gadhafi strongholds to surrender by midday Saturday expired.

Elhouderi said there were clashes Friday night as hundreds of men loyal to the fugitive leader put up resistance. There was also fighting near Gadhafi's birthplace of Sirte, one of the other few holdout cities.

There were reports of two rebels dead and four wounded, though, in the confusion of battle, the numbers varied.

- Rebels have met with more resistance in Bani Walid than they had expected. Anti-Gaddafi fighters believe one or two of the ousted leader's sons may be holed up in the town. Some NTC officials have even suggested the ousted leader himself might be there.

Abdullah Kinshil, chief negotiator for the NTC, said there could be from 600 to 1,000 fighters holed up in the town, far more than the 150 they had previously estimated.

- "There are 30 to 40 very well-trained (fighters), mainly from the city," said Kinshil.

There were more clashes at dawn Saturday, with NATO planes circling overhead. Then, by midday, as negotiations for a peaceful surrender came to a halt, the NTC held an impromptu news conference out in the desert.

"They don't talk to us," Abdullah Kinshil, chief negotiator for the NTC, told reporters. "We don't exist in their eyes — it is a fight with NATO."

- Kinshil talked about the presence of Gadhafi brigades and mercenaries in the town. "We ask our citizens to stay away from them. Avoid anyone suspicious to avoid damage to you or your property."

It wasn't immediately clear how his warning would reach the town's residents, who've had only sporadic electricity and no cellphone coverage for days.

- Later Saturday afternoon, NTC fighters who had pulled back suddenly said they had fought to within 500 metres of the town centre.

"Field commanders have told us to retreat because NATO will be bombing soon," fighter Abdul Mulla Mohamed said, driving away in one of dozens of vehicles leaving town.

Witnesses said NATO aircraft struck at least seven times at loyalist positions around the town. Black plumes of smoke rose from surrounding areas as powerful explosions echoed across a valley in Bani Walid's northern outskirts.

- NATO confirmed its aircraft were flying missions over Bani Walid, but would not comment on airstrikes.

During the pause, Elhouderi, the Canadian fighter, described how the rebel column spent two days trekking through harsh desert scrub in its advance upon the city.

He hadn't slept for two days, he said. "I'm used to doing it from studying in university."

He graduated this summer with a bachelor of science from the University of Calgary, and plans to return to Canada for grad school.

The conversation with Elhouderi ended as snipers' bullets zipped through the desert air.

"I need to go back to where I'm needed," said Elhouderi as he headed back to the front line.

With files from Star wire services

[Libya fighters: We're battling in pro-Gadhafi town - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/libya-fighters-were-battling-pro-gadhafi-town-172226662.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libya-fighters-were-battling-pro-gadhafi-town-172226662.html>

• Libya fighters: We're battling in pro-Gadhafi town



By HADEEL AL-SHALCHI - Associated Press

- WISHTATA, Libya (AP) — Libyan fighters launched a two-pronged assault Friday on one of the last towns to resist the country's new rulers, clashing with Moammar Gadhafi's supporters inside Bani Walid as a weeklong standoff dissolved into street-to-street battles, the revolutionary forces said.

Libya's new rulers had set a Saturday deadline for Gadhafi loyalists in Bani Walid to surrender or face an offensive but decided to attack Friday evening after Gadhafi forces fired volleys of rockets at the fighters' positions around the town.

Abdullah Kenshil, the former rebels' chief negotiator, said the former rebels were fighting gunmen positioned in houses in the town and the hills that overlooked it.

Anti-Gadhafi forces were moving in from the east and south, and the fighters deepest inside Bani Walid were clashing with Gadhafi's men about a mile (2 kilometers) from the center of the town, Kenshil said.

Revolutionary forces also battled loyalists to the east of the Gadhafi stronghold of Sirte on the Mediterranean coast, but were forced to pull back after taking heavy casualties in close-quarters fighting, a spokesman said.

- Before the reported Friday evening assault on Bani Walid, Gadhafi holdouts in the city fired mortars and rockets toward the fighters' position in a desert dotted with green shrubs and white rocks, killing at least one and wounding several. Loud explosions were heard about six miles (10 kilometers) from the front line, followed by plumes of black smoke in the already hazy air. NATO planes circled above.

NATO says it is acting under a U.N. mandate to guarantee the safety of Libya's civilian population. Its bombing campaign has been crucial to the advance of Gadhafi's military opponents.

Daw Salaheen, the chief commander for the anti-Gadhafi forces' operation at Bani Walid, said his fighters responded with their own rocket fire, and advanced on the town.

"They are inside the city. They are fighting with snipers," Kenshil said. "They forced this on us and it was in self-defense."

He said three Gadhafi loyalists had been wounded and three killed, while the former rebels had one dead and four wounded. He said the former rebels had taken seven prisoners.

Kenshil said the former rebels believed that there were about 600 Gadhafi supporters in and around Bani Walid.

"Snipers are scattered over the hills and the rebels want to chase them," he said. "There is hand-to-hand combat. The population is afraid so we have to go and protect civilians."

Interpol said it had issued its top most-wanted alert for the arrest of Gadhafi, his son Seif al-Islam and the country's ex-chief of military intelligence. The three are sought by the International Criminal Court for alleged crimes against humanity, and there have been reports Seif al-Islam is in Bani Walid.

- The elder Gadhafi hasn't been seen in public for months and went underground after anti-regime fighters swept into Tripoli on Aug. 21. As the National Transitional Council tries to establish its authority in Libya, speculation about Gadhafi's whereabouts has centered on his hometown of Sirte, southern Sabha, and Bani Walid, 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli. Gadhafi loyalists in all three towns have been given until Saturday to surrender, or face an all-out battle.

Officials in the National Transitional Council — which is the closest thing to a government Libya has now but still has only shaky authority — had set a Saturday deadline for the city of 100,000 to surrender. They have hoped to negotiate a peaceful entry into the city, but talks with local leaders have gone nowhere.

Before the former rebels announced their offensive, the dozens of fighters deployed at checkpoints outside the city were clearly impatient to move in.

Osama al-Fassi helped unload ammunition from the back of a large truck with a sense of urgency. The bearded man in sand-colored fatigues said that with Gadhafi loyalists rocketing the front line, he didn't attach much importance to the political leaders' plans on when to move.

"We in the field decide when we enter the city with force," he said as he loaded wooden boxes of Russian manufactured ammunition into a pick up truck that was headed to the front. The truck was quickly filled with RPGs still in plastic wrapping, small mortar rockets, and metal boxes of ammunition.

Another fighter, Abdullah bin Tashi, ran from comrade to comrade, urging them to move toward the front line.

- "They've got mortars and (rockets) and they're rocketing us," he told one man. "Come on, you need to move forward, send your men to the front."

Asked if he needed to await order from chief commander Saleheen, he shouted: "Who is Daw? I don't recognize Daw."

A fighter who appeared dressed for a weekend outing in jeans, a blue button-down shirt and sunglasses walked from the front line, looking despondent.

"I lost a friend inside," he told reporters, choking on tears.

Ahmed Momen, a 23-year-old medic for the anti-Gadhafi forces at the front line, said casualties on his side in Friday's mortar and rocket exchanges included three injured and one dead

The anti-Gadhafi fighters said they had captured 10 Gadhafi fighters they suspected were spying on them. Dressed in fatigues, their hands tied behind their backs, the 10 were being held in two pickup trucks at the Wishtata checkpoint, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) from Bani Walid. An Associated Press photographer who saw the trucks said two of the 10 appeared to be dead.

Revolutionary troops also engaged loyalist forces around 35 miles (55 kilometers) to the east of Sirte, battling them with small arms after cautiously pushing toward the city.

- "They (loyalists) were well positioned behind the dunes, and we had to fall back," said Jalal el-Gallal, a spokesman for Libyan forces. "There were some casualties on our side, about 15 killed and wounded."

The seizure of the capital by the then-rebel fighters effectively ended nearly 42 years of Gadhafi's autocratic, violent and unpredictable rule. The new leaders now control most of the country, but as long as Gadhafi is on the loose, able to urge his followers on with messages from underground, they cannot claim total victory.

Mahmoud Shammam, a spokesman for Mahmoud Jibril, the head of the former rebels' acting Cabinet, said Gadhafi's inner circle has been broken up. Most of its members are under arrest or in the process of handing themselves over, Shammam said.

Moammar Gadhafi, Seif al-Islam and former military intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senoussi are the only people at large who matter, Shammam said in a telephone interview from Qatar.

In a statement Friday, Interpol Secretary General Ronald K. Noble called the red notices it issued to its 188 member countries Friday "a powerful tool" in helping lead to the capture of the Gadhafis and al-Senoussi. A red notice is the equivalent to being on the Lyon, France-based international police body's most-wanted list.

[Gadhafi loyalists fire rockets from desert bastion - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/gadhafi-loyalists-fire-rockets-desert-bastion-102222977.html;_ylt=Asv177ajrvGpGpDRfztkGVvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTRhOWR0NW FqBGNjb2RIA3ZzaGFyZWFnMgRtaXQDVG9wU3Rvcnkj-;_ylg=X3oDMTFwZTltMWVnBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZW Nlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAN3b3JsZARwdANzZW N0aW9ucwR0ZXN0Aw-;_ylv=3)

http://news.yahoo.com/gadhafi-loyalists-fire-rockets-desert-bastion-102222977.html;_ylt=Asv177ajrvGpGpDRfztkGVvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTRhOWR0NW FqBGNjb2RIA3ZzaGFyZWFnMgRtaXQDVG9wU3Rvcnkj-;_ylg=X3oDMTFwZTltMWVnBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZW Nlbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAN3b3JsZARwdANzZW N0aW9ucwR0ZXN0Aw-;_ylv=3

• Gadhafi loyalists fire rockets from desert bastion



By HADEEL AL-SHALCHI - Associated Press | AP

- WADI DINAR, Libya (AP) — Moammar Gadhafi's loyalists fired at least 10 rockets from inside one of his last strongholds Thursday, hours after the ousted Libyan leader urged his fighters to crush opponents he ridiculed as "germs, rats and scumbags."

Former rebels have massed outside the desert town of Bani Walid for days waiting for orders to take the town, but

the rocket fire marked an escalation in the standoff, which could reach a climax when a deadline for surrender negotiations runs out this weekend.

The high cost of bringing down Gadhafi's nearly 42-year-rule over the oil-rich nation, meanwhile, came into sharper relief, as the country's interim health minister announced that at least 30,000 people were killed and 50,000 wounded during the six-month civil war.

Though they overran the capital last month, drove Gadhafi into hiding and run a leadership council that is the closest thing to a Libyan government, the fighters cannot claim victory until the remaining handful of loyalist strongholds are under their control and — most importantly — Gadhafi is captured.

Reporters with the forces chasing remaining Gadhafi loyalists heard at least 10 loud explosions along the desert front line at Bani Walid, a dusty town of 100,000 some 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli. The barrage followed a close-quarters gunfight in the same area between a patrol of fighters and several loyalist youths in a civilian car. One of the Gadhafi gunmen was killed.

Smoke billowed from where the rockets landed in Wadi Dinar, about 12 miles (20 kilometers) outside Bani Walid. The former rebels said the projectiles fired were Grad rockets.

- Bani Walid has emerged as a focus in the fight against pro-Gadhafi holdouts since officials have said a number of prominent regime loyalists, including Gadhafi's son and one-time heir apparent, Seif al-Islam, are believed to be inside.

From hiding hours earlier, Gadhafi denied rumors he had fled Libya, vowed never to leave the land of his ancestors and exhorted followers to keep fighting. The message was broadcast on a pro-Gadhafi satellite TV channel based in Syria.

Gadhafi hasn't been seen in public for months. Finding him would help seal the new rulers' hold on the country and likely trigger the collapse of the remaining regime loyalists.

In Thursday's five-minute audio message, aired on Al-Rai TV, a man who sounded like Gadhafi denounced reports that he had fled to neighboring Niger and claimed he was still in Libya. He called those who ousted him "a bunch of mercenaries, thugs and traitors."

"We are ready to start the fight in Tripoli and everywhere else, and rise up against them," he said. "All of these germs, rats and scumbags, they are not Libyans, ask anyone. They have cooperated with NATO."

Niger officials have said senior members of Gadhafi's regime led by his own security chief crossed from Libya on Tuesday. Niger said the group of 13 people did not include Gadhafi, and U.S. officials have said they have no reason to believe Gadhafi is not in Libya. But reports of the apparent defection of some of his top aides — and rumors that it involved a large number of senior soldiers who left with money and gold — were believed to have undermined morale among Gadhafi loyalists.

- Gadhafi tried to counter what he called a propaganda war, telling followers in the message broadcast Thursday: "They are trying to demoralize you."

"Gadhafi won't leave the land of his ancestors," he said, referring to himself in the third person, a rhetorical habit.

The authenticity of the recording could not be verified but the voice and style strongly resembled those of Gadhafi, who has used the TV channel in the past.

Libya's interim health minister, Naji Barakat, said Wednesday that at least 30,000 people were killed and 50,000 wounded in the war. The figures, though incomplete, were based on body counts from some areas and estimates from others, Barakat said.

Libya has just over 6 million people, and if the figure provided by Barakat is confirmed, it would be a measure of the high price Libyans paid to oust Gadhafi. It may take several more weeks to get a complete count, Barakat told The Associated Press.

The economic costs have also been high for the oil-exporting nation.

- In Tripoli Thursday, the new governor of Libya's central bank told reporters the former regime sold about 20 percent — or 29 tons — of the country's gold reserves to cover salaries during the uprising. Qassim Azzuz also said none of the bank's roughly \$115 billion in assets "went missing or were stolen" during the uprising. He said the figures did not include still unknown sums of money accumulated by Gadhafi and his family, which were held outside the local banking sector.

Besides Bani Walid, the former rebels are still battling loyalists in two other Gadhafi strongholds, Gadhafi's Mediterranean hometown of Sirte and Sabha, deep in the southern desert.

NATO warplanes, which have aided the rebels since March under a U.N. mandate to protect civilians, are continuing to strike.

In London Thursday, Major Gen. Nick Pope, a Defense Ministry spokesman, said British fighter aircraft under NATO authority spotted concentrations of Gadhafi forces in and around Sirte.

"The RAF (Royal Air Force) aircraft mounted a series of precision attacks ... and successfully destroyed four main battle tanks, three armored personnel carriers, a self-propelled gun, two other armored vehicles and an artillery piece," Pope said.

NATO added that its overnight bombing targets included five armored vehicles near Sirte and 18 surface-to-air missile systems near the desert town of Waddan, 300 kilometers (about 180 miles) south of Sirte on the way to Sabha.

[Libyan convoy enters Niger, Kadhafi rumoured aboard - AFP](http://news.yahoo.com/libyan-convoy-enters-niger-kadhafi-rumoured-aboard-070915609.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libyan-convoy-enters-niger-kadhafi-rumoured-aboard-070915609.html>; _ylt=Am2TDR6_KdHDeQxavrYkhRj8aQ8F; _ylu=X3oDMTROam5hajZxBGNjb2RIA2dtcHRvcDIwMHBvb2xyZXN0BG1pdANO; _ylg=X3oDMTM1cTF2ZzEzBGluGwDdXMEbGFuZwNibi1cwrRwc3RhaWQDZWZjMzFkYjMtMDU5MS0zNTE2LTlhZWUtMDE1YTDiMjFhMmFk

• Libyan convoy enters Niger, Kadhafi rumoured aboard



By [Deborah Pasmantier](#) | [AFP](#)

- A Libyan military convoy with Moamer Kadhafi rumoured aboard has crossed into Niger, a military source said, as new regime fighters were poised to strike at one of the toppled strongman's last bastions.

Kadhafi's spokesman, Moussa Ibrahim, however, insisted the fugitive dictator is in top health and planning his country's defence, and that he and his sons were ready to fight to the death, though he gave no clue of their whereabouts.

- "I saw an exceptionally large and rare convoy of several dozen vehicles enter Agadez from Arlit... and go towards Niamey" late Monday, the Niger military source said, referring to the northern Niger city of Agadez.

"There are persistent rumours that Kadhafi or one of his sons are travelling in the convoy," the source added.

A journalist from a private radio station in Agadez said he saw "a convoy of several dozen vehicles crossing the city and heading towards Niamey", the Niger capital.

Another Nigerien government source earlier said prominent regime officials had fled across the border on Sunday. They included Kadhafi's internal security chief Mansour Daw, who was earlier reported to be in the loyalist stronghold Bani Walid with at least two of the fallen strongman's sons.

Anti-Kadhafi fighters were ready on Tuesday to strike at Bani Walid, an oasis town southeast of Tripoli, at the slightest provocation.

- Kamal Hodeisa, a Libyan defence ministry official, told AFP in Tripoli that anti-Kadhafi fighters would "move if there is an act of aggression by Kadhafi's forces against our rebels inside Bani Walid or if they attack civilians.

"There is debate among rebels whether to go forward or to stay but I think in the end they will respect the deadline," he said, referring to a truce until September 10 to try to negotiate the surrender of the last Kadhafi strongholds.

Abdullah Keshshil, the chief negotiator for Libya's new government, said civilians were being held hostage in the centre of the town, in administrative buildings and in five or six nearby villages.

"Kadhafi's soldiers have also closed the gates of the town and are not letting families leave," he said. "That worries us, we don't want to kill civilians in the attack."

Negotiations for the surrender of Bani Walid, southeast of Tripoli, broke down late Sunday but there was little movement on that front on Monday despite concerns that local families could be held as human shields.

Operational commander Abdulrazzak Naduri told journalists at Shishan, north of Bani Walid, that the National Transitional Council (NTC) does not "want any more bloodshed."

- Kadhafi spokesman Ibrahim insisted however that the toppled leader was busy planning to re-take Libya.

Kadhafi is "in excellent health and planning and organising Libya's defence," Ibrahim told Syria's Al-Arabiya television channel on Monday.

"We are still powerful," he said, adding that the sons of the fugitive dictator "had assumed their role in the defence of and sacrifice for" their country. He however did not name them.

Pledging "a fight to the death or until victory," Ibrahim, who is thought to be in Bani Walid, said: "We will fight and resist for Libya and for all Arabs."

Branding the new rulers "NATO agents," he accused them of "committing crimes, above all rape, murder and looting."

He said: "Libya will never fall and the worthy tribes are defending and will continue to defend each of the free town and recapture those that have been raped."

Local officials said most senior figures had fled Bani Walid with Kadhafi's most prominent son, Seif al-Islam, who according to Naduri left a few days before for Sabha, further south, that is still in the hands of regime loyalists.

- Two other sons of Kadhafi, Saadi and Mutassim, were also reported to be in Bani Walid and it is suspected that the strongman himself crossed through the oasis town although it is unclear when.

No clashes were reported on Monday in Kadhafi's hometown of Sirte or the southern oases of Sabha and Al-Jufra.

China meanwhile denied reports of offering Kadhafi arms at the fall end of his regime. In Beijing, the foreign ministry acknowledged Libyan officials had visited in July for talks with "interested companies" but insisted no arms contracts had been signed nor any direct or indirect exports made.

"Chinese companies did not sign arms sales contracts and they did not export military products to Libya," spokeswoman Jiang Yu told journalists, adding her country "does not allow any actions that contravene UN resolutions."

Citing secret documents it had obtained, The Globe and Mail reported that state-controlled Chinese arms companies were ready to sell weapons and ammunition worth at least \$200 million to Kadhafi in late July.

Britain on Monday re-established its diplomatic mission in Tripoli.

The UN Security Council is on Friday to discuss the launch of a wide-ranging mission to Libya to help tackle police reform, justice and election preparations, a UN diplomat told AFP on Monday.

[Libya rebels to enter pro-Gaddafi town after deal: report - Reuters](http://news.yahoo.com/libya-rebels-enter-pro-gaddafi-town-deal-report-052142629.html;_ylt=Ar68mNYXjUU4lpjmDhqhTExvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNycTdsaHM3BG1pdANKdW1ib3Ryb24gV29ybGRTRgRwa2cDODY-;_ylg=X3oDMTFwZTltMWVnBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZWNIbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAN3b3JsZARwdANzZWNOaW9ucwROZXN0Aw-;_ylv=3)

http://news.yahoo.com/libya-rebels-enter-pro-gaddafi-town-deal-report-052142629.html;_ylt=Ar68mNYXjUU4lpjmDhqhTExvaA8F;_ylu=X3oDMTNycTdsaHM3BG1pdANKdW1ib3Ryb24gV29ybGRTRgRwa2cDODY-;_ylg=X3oDMTFwZTltMWVnBGludGwDdXMEbGFuZWNIbi11cwRwc3RhaWQDBHBzdGNhdAN3b3JsZARwdANzZWNOaW9ucwROZXN0Aw-;_ylv=3

• Libya rebels to enter pro-Gaddafi town after deal: report



REUTERS

By Erika Solomon | Reuters

- DUBAI (Reuters) - Libyan forces plan to enter the pro-Gaddafi desert town of Bani Walid on Tuesday after reaching a deal with delegates from the town to avoid fighting, Al Jazeera television said.

The pan-Arab news channel, citing the anti-Gaddafi forces, said the fighters were expected to enter the city after the deal is formalized, which would likely be around midday.

Bani Walid, which lies 150 km (90 miles) south of Tripoli, had refused to surrender to forces loyal to the National Transitional Council (NTC), giving rise to expectations there would be another round of fighting to rout forces loyal to Libya's longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi.

On-and-off talks involving Bani Walid's tribal elders had previously been unable to reach a breakthrough. A deal was finally reached in the early hours of Tuesday morning, Al Jazeera said, after a number of Gaddafi supporters left the besieged town.

With anti-Gaddafi forces massed around the town for days, the face-off had been seen as an important indicator of the NTC's ability to put tribal divisions aside and negotiate a peaceful handover, or risk a sliding back into bloodshed.

The town is a stronghold for the powerful Warfalla tribe of about one million people, which had remained loyal to the

ousted regime.

[Libya rebels hold off on attacking Gadhafi bastion - AP](http://news.yahoo.com/libya-rebels-hold-off-attacking-gadhafi-bastion-190845565.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libya-rebels-hold-off-attacking-gadhafi-bastion-190845565.html>

• Libya rebels hold off on attacking Gadhafi bastion



By HADEEL AL-SHALCHI - Associated Press | AP

- TARHOUNA, Libya (AP) — Thousands of rebel fighters closed in around one of Libya's last pro-Gadhafi strongholds Monday, but held back on a final assault in hopes of avoiding a bloody battle for the town of Bani Walid.

The standoff came as rebel leaders in Tripoli said Libya's transition to democratic rule would begin with a "declaration of liberation" that was unlikely to come before Gadhafi's forces last strongholds were defeated and the fugitive former dictator had been captured.

The declaration would mark the start of an eight-month deadline for Libya's transitional council to arrange the vote for a national assembly, and eventually to a constitution and general elections.

"When the clock starts ticking on those eight months remains to be seen," rebel spokesman Jalal el-Gallal said, adding it wasn't yet clear how liberation would be defined.

Special U.N. envoy Ian Martin, meanwhile, said the United Nations was helping the rebel leadership prepare for its elections, stressing the country faces immense political hurdles after nearly 42 years of dictatorial rule.

"The U.N. is certainly ready to move very fast to bring in the electoral expertise that can assist the authorities," he said at a news conference in Tripoli with Ahmed Darrad, the interior minister.

- The rebels most immediate concern is Bani Walid, a desert town some 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli, where they say a small but heavily armed force of pro-Gadhafi fighters — at least some of them high-ranking members of his ousted regime — have taken up defensive positions.

The loyalists are spreading fear in the town to keep other residents from surrendering, the rebels say, telling people the rebels will rape their wives and daughters.

The regime loyalists "know if they hand themselves in, they will be punished. They are trying hard to mess things up, to drag other people with them into a battle," said rebel Col. Abdullah Hussein Salem.

Most of the country has welcomed the uprising that swept Gadhafi from power, though rebel forces — backed by NATO airstrikes — have yet to capture loyalist bastions like Bani Walid, Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte and the isolated southern town of Sabha.

Gadhafi has been on the run since losing control of his capital last month, though the rebels say at least two of his sons had been in Bani Walid in recent days. Moussa Ibrahim, Gadhafi's spokesman and one of his key aides, was still believed to be in the town, rebel officials said.

- Talks broke down over the weekend after Ibrahim insisted the rebels put down their weapons before entering the town.

The rebels have extended to Saturday a deadline for the surrender of Sirte and other loyalist areas, though some rebel officials have said they could attack Bani Walid sooner because it has so many prominent loyalists.

For the most part, though, the rebels are urging patience, saying they want to avoid a bitter inter-tribal fight that could create lasting divisions.

"We won't go inside Bani Walid unless the Warfala tribe invites us," said rebel commander Ismail al-Gitani, referring to the town's main tribe. "The Warfala have to lead us into Bani Walid. Hopefully no one will be shot. We don't want to use our weapons. But if the Gadhafi loyalists shoot at us, of course we will return fire."

The Warfala are believed to be about 1-million strong, one-sixth of Libya's population.

Rebel commanders have said they were willing to hold more talks about the town's surrender, though apparently no negotiations were held Monday. Rebel negotiator Abdullah Kanshil added that the rebels were talking to individual families in the town about their urgent needs for water and food.

A field hospital with ten doctors also has been set up about 40 miles (60 kilometers) from Bani Walid.

"Our families in Bani Walid asked us to start this hospital just in case fighting breaks out," said Abdel Baset el-Beib, a doctor.

[Libyan rebels poised to assault Gadhafi stronghold - Yahoo! News](http://news.yahoo.com/libyan-rebels-poised-assault-gadhafi-stronghold-205744365.html)

<http://news.yahoo.com/libyan-rebels-poised-assault-gadhafi-stronghold-205744365.html>

- Libyan rebels poised to assault Gadhafi stronghold
- By HADEEL AL-SHALCHI - Associated Press
- TARHOUNA, Libya (AP) — Rebel fighters were poised Saturday to assault one of the last strongholds of loyalist fighters in Libya, giving residents of Bani Walid one final night to choose between surrender and an all-out attack.

Thousands of fighters were moving toward the town from three sides, according to a senior rebel official from the area, Mahmoud Abdel-Aziz, who is also involved in the surrender talks. Some fighters had pushed to within six miles (10 kilometers) of the town, but stopped to avoid being accidentally targeted in NATO airstrikes.

"If they don't raise the rebel flag tomorrow, we will enter with force," said Abdel-Razak al-Nathori, a rebel who commands one of the brigades advancing on the town.

The Libyan regime crumbled after rebels seized Tripoli, the capital, in a weeklong August battle that came six months after the civil war began in February. Since Tripoli's fall, rebel fighters have been advancing toward a number of key loyalist targets, including Bani Walid, Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte and the southern loyalist stronghold of Sabha.

- Relatives of Gadhafi and close associates are still believed to be in Bani Walid, including a Gadhafi cousin, Ahmed Ibrahim, said Abdel-Baset Naama, a rebel official. At least two of the former dictator's sons have recently been in the town, rebels say, and some believe Gadhafi himself may be hiding in Bani Walid — a bastion of Gadhafi support because it had benefited in recent years from the regime's patronage system.

"The people of Bani Walid want the rebels, but associates of Gadhafi are still inside," Naama said.

Abdel-Aziz said he had met a delegation of Bani Walid tribal elders Saturday, and they told him that they were not willing to give up.

"We have given the people of Bani Walid many chances," he said.

- Al-Nathori said one of Gadhafi's sons, Muatassim, was in Bani Walid on Saturday, apparently to persuade tribal leaders to remain loyal to the crumbling regime. Another Gadhafi son, Seif al-Islam, was also there at some point but fled, said al-Nathori, speaking in the town of Tarhouna, about halfway between Tripoli and Bani Walid.

Still, the rebels say they have been negotiating with tribal elders in the town, trying to get them to surrender.

The town, located some 90 miles (140 kilometers) southeast of Tripoli, is a base of the 1-million-strong Warfala tribe, one-sixth of Libya's population. In an audio message Thursday, Gadhafi said the Warfala would be among the tribes that would defend him to the death.

- But Bani Walid also has a history of opposition to Gadhafi. Western diplomats in Libya and opposition leaders abroad reported in 1993 that the air force had put down an uprising by army units in Misrata and Bani Walid. They said many officers were executed and arrested.
- In other developments Saturday, the rebels' deputy prime minister, Ali Tarhouni, said production at two major oil fields would resume Sept. 12 or 13. Libya's economic future could hinge on the performance of its lucrative oil and gas sectors, whose production ground to a halt during the insurgency against Gadhafi.
- Foreign oil companies with interests in Libya have already put out feelers with rebel officials on resuming work.

At least five foreign oil and gas companies are back in Libya to work on resuscitating production, a Libyan official said Friday. Advance teams are trying to assess damage and restart facilities, said Aref Ali Nayed, a member of the rebel-led government's so-called stabilization team.

- In the capital, residents tried to return to their prewar routines on Saturday, the first full work day since the fall of the regime, the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and a three-day holiday that ended Friday.

In the Tripoli suburb of Tajoura, a coffee shop was crowded with men picking up takeout espresso and cappuccino on the way to work. Nearby, a policeman in a light blue shirt directed increasingly congested traffic, another sign of a return to normalcy.

But the capital is still suffering from water shortages as a result of attacks by Gadhafi loyalists on a remote desert pumping station. Long lines formed at bakeries and gas stations, but the price of fuel is slowly dropping as more supplies arrive.

[Libya: civil war poised to resume - Telegraph](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8738642/Libya-civil-war-poised-to-resume.html)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8738642/Libya-civil-war-poised-to-resume.html>

• **Libya: civil war poised to resume**

Libya's civil war was poised to resume as an ultimatum to two key cities to surrender to rebel forces ran out.

- By [Richard Spencer](#), Ruth Sherlock in Tripoli

8:09PM BST 02 Sep 2011

- Rebel troops were on their way to reinforce front lines near Bani Walid, south of Tripoli, where Saif al-Islam and Muatassim Gaddafi, two of the former dictator's sons, were said to be leading last-ditch defences.

Leaders of the [Libyan](#) rebel National Transitional Council (NTC) have been negotiating with tribal leaders in the town to surrender peacefully.

But *The Daily Telegraph* has been told that a refusal to offer immunity to local Gaddafi volunteers accused of crimes carried out in his name stood in the way of an agreement.

In any case, the 500-600 Gaddafi fighters the rebels believe to be in the town would not be bound by an agreement made by local leaders and Saif al-Islam, along with his father, has issued public statements promising to fight on.

After the last Gaddafi forces fled Tripoli last weekend, led by Gaddafi and at least two of his children who were all spotted in southern Tripoli on Friday of last week, major fighting reached a halt.

- The NTC gave the last three major Gaddafi strongholds, Bani Walid, Sirte on the coast, and Sabha in the southern desert, until today to surrender.

The ultimatum to Sirte, where a major battle has been expected for weeks, was extended to give local leaders more time to persuade their followers to change sides.

That did not apply to Bani Walid, Dr Mahmoud Abdul Aziz, NTC member for the town, said. He believed the rebel forces would be welcomed into the town, adding: "Believe me, the people there are ready to receive us, and we will attack very soon."

On Thursday, Col Abdulrazzaq al-Nadouli, deputy commander of rebel forces in the town of Tarhouna, near the front line, said his troops were just 40 miles from Bani Walid. Rebel forces are also moving on Sirte. They were 30 miles away to the east in Wadi Hawarah, a rebel spokesman said.

Elsewhere, the NTC promised life would start returning to normal from today.