

The War in Libya: The Cease-Fire Initiative of Erdogan and Putin

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Presidents Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Vladimir Putin issued a joint statement in which called the Prime Minister of the Libyan Government of National Accord, Fayeze Sarraj, and the leader of the Libyan National Army, strongman Khalifa Haftar, for a cease-fire.

The counterparts took this initiative in different ways: Sarraj happily agreed, and Haftar did not respond so clearly.

On January 9, the Libyan National Army spokesperson, Major General Ahmed Al-Mismari, released a statement on the Turkish- Russian initiative. His speech contained unusual details worth analysing.

First of all, Al-Mismari said that the Libyan army supports the Russian President's proposal. It should be noted that the General did not mention Recep Erdogan during his speech.

The hostility of the spokesperson is clearly due to the fact that Turkey is actually participating in the Libyan civil war. The Turkish parliament approved sending Turkish troops to Libya to support the GNA in Tripoli, and Turkey has been deploying its forces in the African country. In addition, earlier, Ankara repeatedly supplied arms and military equipment to Sarraj, including drones in violation of international sanctions, as evidenced by a leak from documents between the Libyan Central Bank and the Turkish military company SSTEK. It is known that the GNA spent more than \$ 600 million on the illegal purchase of arms and military equipment from Turkey.

Furthermore, Al-Mesmari indicated that the Libyan National Army would continue the military operation to liberate Tripoli from the terrorists anyway. Thus, he made it clear that Sarraj's government is not politically independent because it cooperates with illegal armed groups and therefore can not participate in a political settlement in Libya.

The Libyan National Army's response to the Turkish and Russian leaders' proposal demonstrated the real position of the Libyan Army regarding the settlement of the Libyan conflict. Despite respecting the initiative of the Russian authority, Haftar clarified that retreat is not possible as long as the capital is controlled by a group of criminals and terrorist groups led by the National Accord Government.

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