

Battles rage in Libya; Gaddafi loyalists launch counter-attack

By [Global Research](#)

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Global Research Editor's Note

What is occurring in Libya is a carefully planned armed insurrection rather than a peaceful protest movement as in Tunisia and Egypt.

There are indications that the armed militia groups are supported by the US.

The objective is not democratization but “humanitarian intervention” and regime change, with a view to eventually installing a pro-US government as well as taking control of one of the World’s largest oil producers.

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Death toll in fighting for Zawiyah 23

Friday February 25, 2011 (1123 PST)

BENGHAZI: Forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi launched a counter-attack on Thursday, fighting gun battles with rebels who have threatened the Libyan leader by seizing important towns close to the capital.

The opposition were already in control of major centres in the east, including the regional capital Benghazi, and reports that the towns of Misrata and Zuara in the west had also fallen brought the tide of rebellion closer to Gaddafi’s power base.

Gaddafi loyalists attacked anti-government militias controlling Misrata, Libya’s third-biggest city, and killed several people in fighting near the city’s airport.

Soldiers were reported along the roads approaching Tripoli, and fighting broke out in the town of Zawiyah, an oil terminal just 50 kilometres west of Tripoli. Witnesses said people in civilian clothes, who appeared to be pro and anti-Gaddafi forces, were firing at each other in the streets.

“Twenty-three people have been killed and 44 wounded in the Libyan town of Zawiyah after clashes on Thursday between opponents of Gaddafi and forces loyal to him,” Libya’s Quryna

newspaper said.

Quoting medical sources, the newspaper said “intense exchange of fire” was preventing people wounded in the clashes from reaching hospitals. It also said some men were removing their wounded relatives from hospitals for fear of them falling into the hands of what it called security battalions, in an apparent reference to Gaddafi loyalists

“It is chaotic there. There are people with guns and swords,” said Mohamed Jaber, who passed through Zawiyah on his way to Tunisia on Thursday.

Anti-government militias were in control of Zuara, about 120 kilometres west of Tripoli, Egyptian construction workers who fled into Tunisia told Reuters on Thursday.

There was no sign of police or military and the town was controlled by “popular committees” armed with automatic weapons.

“The people are in control. Police stations have been burned and we didn’t see any police or army in the past few days,” Egyptian labourer Ahmed Osman said.

A Reuters correspondent was shown about a dozen people being held in a court building who residents said were “mercenaries” backing Gaddafi. Some were said to be African and others from southern Libya.

“They have been interrogated, and they are being kept safe, and they are fed well,” said Imam Bugaighis, 50, a university lecturer now helping organise committees to run the city, adding that they would be tried according to the law, but the collapse of institutions of state meant the timing was not clear

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