

Libyan rebels say ready for conditional ceasefire

By [Global Research](#)

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Global Research, April 01, 2011

Straits Times 1 April 2011

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A rebel fighter holds a RPG launcher in Benghazi. Libya's opposition has said they are ready for a ceasefire provided Muammar Gaddafi's forces end their assaults on rebel-held cities. — PHOTO: REUTERS

BENGHAZI - LIBYA'S opposition is ready for a ceasefire provided Muammar Gaddafi's forces end their assaults on rebel-held cities, Transitional National Council leader Mustafa Abdul Jalil said on Friday.

'We agree on a ceasefire on the condition that our brothers in the western cities have freedom of expression and also that the forces that are besieging the cities withdraw,' Mr Jalil told reporters after meeting Abdul Ilah Khatib, the UN special envoy to Libya.

Mr Khatib said the subject of a possible ceasefire between rebel fighters and forces loyal to embattled Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi had been broached during the discussions with the rebels leaders.

'Our main goal is to achieve a last ceasefire that will hold,' he said live on Al-Jazeera satellite channel.

Western powers are increasingly looking for a political rather than a military end to conflict in Libya, which erupted when pro-democracy protests were first launched in Benghazi, about 1000km east of Tripoli, on Feb 15.

Germany Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said in Beijing on Friday the situation in Libya could not be solved through 'military means' and called for a ceasefire. — AFP

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