

## Video: Turkish Forces Lick Wounds After Airstrikes Hit Their Base in Libya

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*After a short break, the military confrontation between the Libyan National Army mainly backed up by Egypt and the UAE and the Turkish-backed Government of National Accord has once again entered an open phase.*

On July 5, aircraft of the Libyan National Army conducted nine pinpoint airstrikes on the Turkish-operated al-Watiya Air Base in western Libya. According to the LNA, the strikes destroyed a Hawk air-defense system, several radars and a KORAL electronic warfare system. The Hawk system and other equipment were deployed to the base by the Turkish military in early July.

Turkish state media confirmed the incident saying that the strikes “targeted some of the base’s equipment, which was recently brought in to reinforce the base, including an air-defense system”. Pro-Turkish sources claimed that the airstrikes were carried out not by the LNA, but rather by the Egyptian or UAE Air Force. According to them, the warplanes took off from Egypt’s Sidi Barrani Air Base. However, according to the LNA, the strikes were delivered by its aircraft deployed in Libya. Commenting on the situation, the GNA said that it would respond at the “right place and at the right time.”

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While the GNA in fact has no resources to conduct extensive airstrikes deep inside the territory controlled by the LNA, Ankara will have to respond to this attack in some way if it really wants to demonstrate that Turkey is committed to achieving a military victory (or at least a partial military victory) in the conflict in Libya.

At least 5,250 Syrian militants out of 15,300 originally deployed in Libya have returned to Syria, according to the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The SOHR claimed that 300 Syrian child soldiers are still fighting in Libya. All of them range in ages between 14 and 18. Most of them were recruited by the Turkish-backed al-Sultan Murad Division. It’s interesting to note that the numbers provided by the SOHR mostly fit other sources that argue that about 10,000 Turkish-backed Syrian militants are currently deployed in Libya.

Therefore, Ankara is apparently set to continue its offensive operations by the hands of the GNA and Syrian groups in the countryside of Sirte. This strategic port city is now the main priority of Turkish-led forces.

On the other hand, if Turkey continues escalating the conflict, it may force Egypt and the UAE, the main backers of the LNA, to provide direct military support to the LNA and directly

intervene in the conflict. In this case, the Libyan 'civil war' will officially turn into a war between Turkey and the UAE-Egypt bloc.

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