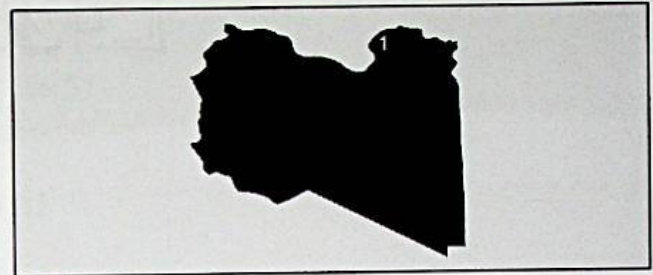


Summary: Defense Minister warns of coup attempt by certain senior Libyan Army officers; Political blocs allegedly reach consensus to remove Prime Minister Ali Zaidan; Preparations ongoing for Rome conference on international assistance to Libya; Violent attacks against state symbols persist in eastern Libya



Defense Minister Warns of Coup Attempt By Certain Senior Libyan Army Officers

Defense Minister Abdullah al-Thini announced that Military Intelligence learned of plans by certain senior Libyan Army officers to stage a coup. According to al-Thini, the officers seek to replace Prime Minister Ali Zaidan's government and the General National Congress (GNC) with an Egyptian-style military governing council. The Defense Minister's revelations come at a time of heightened tension in Libya, as many fear that the dispute over the GNC term extension—pitting the National Forces Alliance and Zintani militias against the Justice and Construction Party and Misratan militias—might turn violent. Although violence between Zintani militias and Misratan militias remains a possibility, it is highly unlikely that the weak and divided Libyan Army will be able to successfully stage a coup.

Based on media reports in: al-Watan al-Libiyya, Libya al-Mustakbal, Libya for the Free, Libya Herald

Political Blocs Allegedly Reach Consensus to Remove Prime Minister Ali Zaidan

General National Congress (GNC) spokesman Omar Humeidan claimed that major political blocs in the elected body reached consensus to remove Prime Minister Ali Zaidan. According to Humeidan, the political blocs plan to replace the Premier with a non-partisan figure with expertise in security affairs. Humeidan also stated that four main contenders for the Premiership have emerged amongst ongoing politicking in the GNC. Prime Minister Zaidan immediately denounced Humeidan, stating that the spokesman's remarks did not reflect the entire membership of the GNC. Although it remains unclear if Humeidan's claim is true, the most powerful force in the GNC—the Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction Party—has been trying to remove the Premier from office for months.

Based on media reports in: Libya al-Hurra, Libya al-Mustakbal, Libya for the Free, Libya Herald

Preparations Ongoing for Rome Conference on International Assistance to Libya

Officials from 25 countries and five international organizations held a preparatory meeting for the conference on international assistance to Libya that will be held in Rome on 6 March. Libya and its international partners will make decisions related to assistance programs in the fields of security, transitional justice, and rule of law at the conference. During the preparatory meeting, Italian representatives reaffirmed their commitment to providing Libya with assistance to support its internal stability and transition to democracy. Sources indicate the Libyan government seeks to procure additional assistance at the conference in the form of new training programs for security forces.

Based on media reports in: Libya Herald

