



### [U.N. Says Opposing Sides in the Libyan Conflict Agree to Restart Ceasefire Talks](#)

Earlier this week, the United Nations announced that Libya's warring parties have agreed to restart ceasefire talks. Renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan National Army (LNA) forces have been waging an offensive since April of 2019 on the capital city of Tripoli, where the internationally-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) is based. Delegates from the rival sides will conduct the ceasefire talks through video calls because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. A previous attempt to negotiate a ceasefire in Moscow back in January failed after Haftar left without signing. The United Nations has blamed foreign intervention for prolonging the Libyan conflict and preventing a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) released a statement welcoming the agreement between the two sides to resume ceasefire talks. On Twitter, they stated that "The United Nations Mission welcomes the parties in Libya accepting the resumption of the Joint Military Commission 5+5 talks...It is hoped that all national and international parties involved in the Libyan issue will respond to the calls of the Libyan people to end the war and that the 5+5 negotiations will lay the groundwork for the final ceasefire." UNSMIL added that a lasting ceasefire agreement is particularly important at this time to ensure that a focus can be placed on addressing the serious and ongoing threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus has infected over 150 people in Libya, but the numbers are believed to be significantly higher as testing there is extremely limited. The potential impact of a major outbreak would likely be severe considering the current conflict and the state of the nation's healthcare system. Lastly, UNSMIL also called on countries who are fueling the conflict to halt all forms of military support.

In recent weeks, the GNA has driven the LNA out of several areas in the northwest part of the country and recaptured some strategic positions, however the LNA did claim that they retook some ground prior to the agreement to resume ceasefire discussions. In another major development last week, the United States military announced that Russia had covertly sent fighter jets to Libya in order to aid Haftar's LNA forces. The United Arab Emirates has also airlifted weapons to Haftar despite committing to respecting a U.N. arms embargo at a conference earlier this year in Berlin. Two previous ceasefires had been agreed upon this year, but in both cases fighting between the two sides continued. Frustrations over this prompted former U.N. Special Envoy for Libya Ghassan Salame to resign from his post back in March, citing health concerns from the stressful nature of the job.

On Tuesday, the United Nations expressed that it expects "things to get moving in the next few days" regarding this latest round of ceasefire negotiations. U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric stated that acting U.N. envoy Stephanie Williams and the Libyan mission remain in direct contact with both the GNA and the LNA in order to figure out the next steps and logistics surrounding the talks.