



[Libya's Eastern-Based Government Aligned with Renegade Military Commander Haftar Resigns](#)

Libya's eastern-based government has resigned after days of civilian protests over deteriorating living conditions. The Tobruk-based government, aligned with renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar, submitted their resignations late on Sunday evening. Over the past few days, thousands of Libyans have taken to the streets in eastern cities under Haftar's control to protest against poor living conditions. In Benghazi, al-Marj, and other cities across eastern Libya, shortages of electricity and water, among other basic necessities brought people into the streets to voice their displeasure with the government. In turn, military forces loyal to Haftar violently suppressed the demonstrations, killing one and injuring several others. Libya's eastern-based government is not internationally recognized, and has been engaged in a bloody conflict against the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord, which is viewed as Libya's legitimate ruling body.

Late on Sunday evening, Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani submitted his government's resignation to Aguila Saleh, speaker of the Tobruk-based House of Representatives. Now, the House of Representatives will weigh whether to accept or reject the resignation. The eastern government, aligned with warlord Khalifa Haftar, controls the vast majority of Libya's oil reserves and has blockaded the facilities since January, which has led to an economic crisis. The blockade is estimated to have cost Libya billions of dollars in oil revenue, which has led to shortages of many commodities throughout the country. In several Libyan cities such as Benghazi, al-Marj, and al-Bayda, protests have grown over the economic conditions and corresponding shortages of vital materials.

In recent weeks, protests across Libya grew as commodities became increasingly rare and violence continued. A few weeks ago, similar protests broke out in cities under the control of the Government of National Accord. In these demonstrations, which occurred in Tripoli and elsewhere, governmental corruption and power shortages were the subject of protesters' anger. Regardless of the location within Libya of the protests, they have been put down with force by the ruling authorities. Both the Government of National Accord and the eastern-based government have been accused of committing human rights violations during the suppression of protests. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has called for an immediate lift of the oil blockade which elicited the protests and subsequent violence.

The outbreak of protests in eastern Libya poses an additional problem for Khalifa Haftar, who has seen much of his support evaporate in recent months. Haftar's offensive against the capital of Tripoli was roundly defeated, and his forces were forced to withdraw in disarray. Additionally, during the retreat, his Libyan National Army was accused of war crimes when mass graves and random land mines were uncovered by forces loyal to the internationally recognized government. Haftar has also seen some of his foreign patrons, namely Russia, cool their support for him in the Libyan conflict, and push him to enter into peace talks with the Government of National Accord. The disintegration of Haftar's momentum could prove to be a positive for Libya and lead to peace after years of instability.