



[U.S. Calls for Foreign Fighters to Leave Libya as the U.N. Announces Candidates for the Transitional Government](#)

In recent days, the United States has added to the chorus of voices calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign forces from Libya. Meanwhile, Libyan delegates at United Nations-backed talks in Switzerland held the first round of voting this week to select officials for the transitional government which will oversee the country until national elections at the end of this year in late December 2021. The 75 participants at the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum cast their initial ballots on a list of agreed-upon candidates, and with none meeting the required threshold of 70% of votes, the process has now moved to a second round of voting. Delegates at the forum have until Friday to select from the candidates vying for the position of interim prime minister and for the three-person presidency council. In addition to leading Libya for the time being, the transitional government will also prepare the country for the upcoming national elections at the end of this year.

Over the past few weeks, the United Nations has strongly urged the broader international community to implement and monitor the October 2020 ceasefire agreement which called for foreign forces to leave Libya within three months. U.N. chief and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has stated that this is critical in order to ensure the success of the incoming transitional government. The move would also help to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground and facilitate the providing of basic aid for those who are in need. According to the terms outlined in the ceasefire agreement signed by Libya's warring parties, all foreign forces were required to withdraw by a recent Saturday deadline.

The instability in Libya poses a threat to neighboring countries such as Egypt and Tunisia, with many scholars pointing to the fragile nature of the Libyan state as it is currently constructed. During the recent conflict between the internationally-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA), led by renegade warlord Khalifa Haftar, the country has had a significant split between its eastern and western regions. The east has been controlled by Haftar's forces and backed by the external regimes in Egypt, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates, while the west has been maintained by the GNA and supported by one of its main backers, Turkey. Given this notable division, some analysts express concern that Libya is more susceptible to the risk of terrorism and continued violence unless a degree of stability is established via a transitional government.

According to estimates from the United Nations, over 20,000 foreign troops and mercenaries have ignored the deadline to pull out of Libya. Regardless of the ongoing political negotiations, foreign leaders in Ankara and Moscow are positioning themselves to defend their interests in Libya. Convincing major powers to leave Libya will be a significant task for the Libyan authorities when negotiations over who will be named to the government are concluded. Unidentified sources within the American intelligence community have said that there is no motivation or intent from Russia or Turkey to withdraw their troops from Libya, regardless of the United Nations resolutions. The United Nations has encouraged all countries to withdraw their fighters from Libya, warning that their continued presence could have a significant impact on the prospect of peace in the country.