

Video: Thousands of Turkish Proxy Fighters Flood into Libya Amid Berlin Peace Talks

By [South Front](#)

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Turkey is increasing its military involvement in the Libyan conflict. After officially sending its military advisers and officers to support the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), Turkey set up air defense systems near Mitiga Airport. The airport hosts warplanes of the GNA Air Force, and Turkish-supplied Bayraktar TB2 combat drones. According to photos and videos available online, the deployed Turkish systems included the MIM-23 Hawk, the ACV-30 Korkut SPAAG, and the AN/MPQ-64 Sentinel 3D radar.

Since the start of the advance of the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar on Tripoli in April 2019, Mitiga Airport repeatedly became a target of airstrikes. These strikes led to notable losses in GNA military aircraft. The Turkish move is apparently aimed at securing operations from Mitiga Airport. Despite this, the facility still remains too close to the frontline and thus any aircraft deployed there remains in a constant danger.

Meanwhile, the number of members of Turkish-backed Syrian militant groups deployed in Libya reportedly grew to 2,400. According to reports, 1,700 more Syrian fighters are now passing training in military camps in Turkey before being deployed to fight on the side of the GNA. The total number of Turkish proxies in Libya remains unconfirmed. However, photos and videos appearing online indicate that hundreds of Turkish-backed fighters arrive Libya via planes on a regular basis.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_20_01_2020.mp4

On January 18, the Benghazi-based government allied with the LNA blocked oil exports at ports under his control, slashing output by more than a half. According to Libya's National Oil Corp., oil output will fall by about 800,000 barrels a day, costing \$55 million daily. The corporation declared Force Majeure, which can allow Libya, which holds Africa's largest-proven oil reserves, to legally suspend delivery contracts. The LNA says that the ports were closed in response to 'demands of the Libyan nation' that stands against the GNA-requested Turkish intervention.

The move came ahead the Berlin conference demonstrated to international players the LNA readiness to provide own course regardless the possible cost. The conference took place on January 19 involving top delegations from the GNA, the LNA, as well as global and regional players, including the USA, Turkey, the UAE, Egypt, Russia, France, Italy and Germany.

The participants of the Berlin conference declared their support the ceasefire between the GNA, the LNA, declared their commitment to a political solution of the conflict. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that the warring sides in Libya's conflict agreed to respect an arms embargo and not to provide the varying sides with military support. The

representatives of the Libyan conflict agreed to form a five-by-five military commission that should work on resolving the existing tensions. The document on Libya will have to be approved by the UN Security Council. This makes the Libyan peace process dependent on other geopolitical issues.

On top of that, the unconditional ceasefire goes against interests of the LNA, which has an upper hand in an open military confrontation with the GNA. Haftar may regret that he agreed to participate in the Berlin negotiations format, where he faced a joint pressure from Western powers involved in the conflict.

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