

Video: Turkey Dives Into Libyan Conflict

By [South Front](#)

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*The Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) and Syrian militants supported by the Turkish military have achieved more gains in their battle against the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by **Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar**.*

GNA forces have captured the areas of Asabiah and Mazdah from the LNA and besieged the town of Tarhuna. On May 23, pro-Turkish sources even claimed that alleged Russian private military contractors operating on the side of the LNA were withdrawn from Tarhuna to Bani Walid and then were evacuated from the country. Earlier, the GNA claimed that a Russian military contractor was killed in the area of Salah ad-Din. On top of this, the LNA lost two Chinese-made Wing Loong II combat drones supplied by the UAE which crashed near Bani Walid and Qaryat. The total number of LNA fighters killed or injured in recent clashes in Libya's northwest, according to pro-GNA sources, is over 100.

However, clashes that erupted north of Tarhuna early on May 24 demonstrated that LNA forces are not going to surrender the town without a battle. Meanwhile, the number of Turkish-backed Syrian militants killed in Libya reportedly reached 311. Additionally, the LNA claimed that its forces had shot down 13 Turkish unmanned combat aerial vehicles during the last 3 days. According to the LNA spokesperson, Maj. Gen. Ahmed al-Mesmari, the army is now relocating its troops and preparing for a push to once again take an upper hand in the battle against Turkish-backed forces.

https://a4s8y4u2.stackpathcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_25_05_2020_ENG.mp4

The LNA also shared a video documenting Turkish actions to supply military equipment and deploy members of Syrian militant groups in Tripoli. The scale of the Turkish military involvement in the conflict grows on a daily basis. Just recently, Ankara reportedly deployed a MIM-23 Hawk medium-range air defense system and military specialists in the city of Misrata.

Turkish military actions are a cornerstone of the recent GNA successes on the ground. At the same time, the very same approach is instigating instability in the region. Egypt and the UAE, which support the LNA, see the Turkish expansion and the strengthening of the GNA as a direct threat to its vital interests. Cairo is also concerned that, if radical militant groups operating under the brand of the GNA reach the Egyptian-Libyan border, they will become a constant source of the terrorist threat in Egypt itself.

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