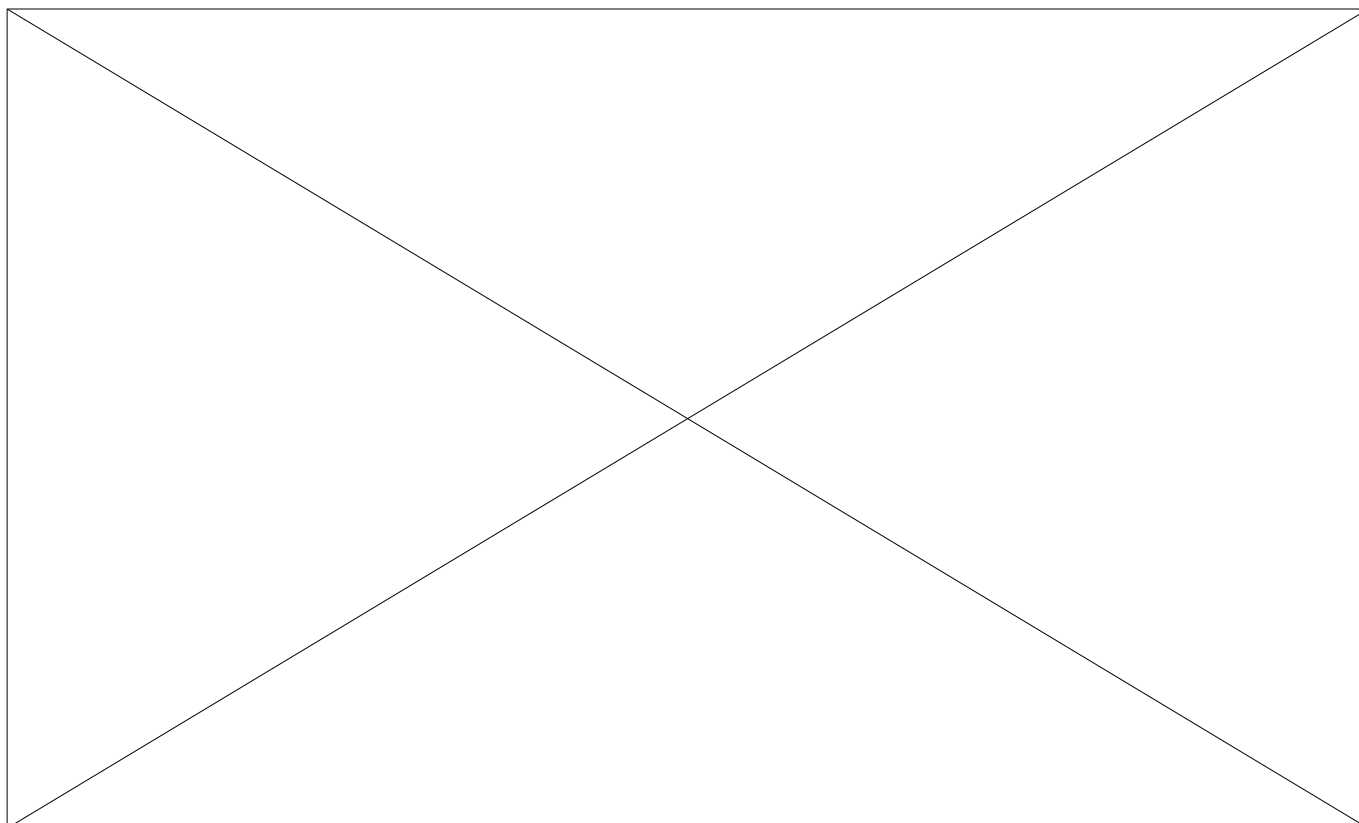




## Saif al-Islam Gaddafi arrested in Libya

**Officials say son of deceased Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi has been detained near Ubari in country's south.**

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Muammar Gaddafi's son and one-time heir apparent Saif al-Islam has been detained in the southern desert, Libya's interim justice minister and other officials have said.

Fighters from the western mountain city of Zintan announced his capture on Saturday as gunfire and car horns marked jubilation across the country at the arrest of the British-educated 39-year-old who a year ago seemed set to follow his father as Libya's leader.

Saif al-Islam and three armed companions were taken without a fight during the night, officials said. Gaddafi's son was reportedly not injured, unlike Gaddafi himself, who was killed last month after being captured by fighters in his home town of Sirte.

Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Raheem al-Keib officially announced the capture of Saif al-Islam Gaddafi during a news conference on Saturday evening, assuring Libyans and rest of the world he will face a fair trial.

"Because of this historic occasion, I would like to congratulate the men and women of Libya and the rebels of Libya, for their struggle, determination and heroism, which gave way to such victory," al-Keib said to a cheering audience.

### **'Proper justice'**

The prime minister also said he has confidence in Zintan authorities to take care of Saif al-Islam until he gets "proper justice" and a fair trial.

A man who appeared to be Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, but whose identity was unconfirmed, was flown by Libyan militiamen to the town of Zintan in the northwest of Libya on Saturday, a Reuters news agency correspondent, who was on the

plane, said.

The unidentified man wore traditional robes with a scarf pulled over his face. The man's thumb, index finger and another finger were heavily bandaged.

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi told Reuters that he was feeling fine. Asked by the correspondent if he was feeling all right, Gaddafi said simply: "Yes."

Reluctant to speak at length, Saif al-Islam was asked about bandages on the thumb and two fingers of his right hand.

"Air force, air force," he said. Asked if that meant a NATO air strike, he said: "Yes. One month ago."

Aides to Gaddafi had said his motorcade was caught by a NATO air strike as he tried to flee the pro-Gaddafi stronghold of Bani Walid on October 19, the day before his father was captured.

After the brief exchange with the heavily bearded prisoner, Libyan Reuters journalists who have met Saif al-Islam said they had no doubt that was indeed him, although he repeatedly declined to confirm his identity outright.



Saif al-Islam was flown by his captors to the town of Zintan where a large crowd greeted the airplane [Reuters]

So large was the crowd that greeted the Soviet-built cargo aircraft that flew in that his captors removed four other prisoners and other people from the plane, leaving Saif al-Islam on board on the tarmac.

The Zintan fighters who claimed to have captured Saif al-Islam said they planned to keep him detained in Zintan until there was an administration to hand him over to.

Abdurrahim El-Keib, the interim prime minister, is scheduled to form a government by Tuesday. The fate of Saif al-Islam, who Libyans want to try at home before possibly handing him over to the ICC, will be an early test of the fledgling government's authority.

Muammar Gaddafi's beating, abuse and ultimate death in the custody of former rebel fighters was an embarrassment to the previous transitional government. Officials in Tripoli said they were determined to handle his son's case in a more orderly manner.

### **'Tip-off'**

Wisam Dughaly, a fighter from the Khaled bin al-Waleed Brigade, said Saif al-Islam was seized in the wilderness near the oil town of Ubari.

"We got a tip he had been staying there for the last month. They couldn't get away because we had a good plan," Dughaly told Free Libya television, adding that Saif al-Islam had been using 4x4 vehicle to elude captors.

Dughaly continued: "He was not hurt and will be taken safely for trial so Libyans will be able to prosecute him and get back their money. "We will take him to Zintan for safekeeping to keep him alive until a government is formed and then we will hand him over as soon as possible."

He added that Saif al-Islam, once seen as a reformer who engineered his father's rapprochement with the West, appeared to have been hiding out in the desert since fleeing the tribal bastion of Bani Walid in October.

### **The Hague**

Acting justice minister Alagy said he was in talks with the ICC over how to deal with Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, either at home or The Hague, in the Netherlands.

He told Al Jazeera: "We Libyans do not oppose the presence of international monitors to monitor the trial procedures that will take place for the symbols of the former regime."

Other Libyan officials have said a trial in Libya should first address killings, repression and wholesale theft of public funds over the four decades of the elder Gaddafi's personal rule.

After that, the ICC might try him for alleged orders to kill unarmed demonstrators after February's revolt.

Moreno Ocampo, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, said he will travel to Libya next week for talks with the country's transitional government on where Seif al-Islam will be tried.

Ocampo said that national governments have the right to try their own citizens for war crimes. He is concerned however, that Gaddafi will be tried for the same charges he faces at the ICC.

"The good news is that Seif al-Islam is arrested, he is alive, and now he will face justice," Ocampo said in an interview Saturday in The Hague.

There was no word of the other official wanted by the ICC, former intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi.

Source: Al Jazeera and agencies



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