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Protesters control great part of Tripoli

afrol News, 25 February - Several Tripoli neighbourhoods have been in control of protesters today, during the largest mass protests in the city so far. The regime is only capable of occasional, deadly strikes against citizens.

Today saw the start of the grand battle for Tripoli, so far fought by tens of thousands of mostly unarmed protesters against a few army units still loyal to the Ghaddafi regime, supported by mercenaries and armed plain-cloth regime agents. The death toll is steadily rising as the remaining loyalists shoot indiscriminately at protesters.

Also currently, the battle is indecisive. Large groups of protesters dominate almost all parts of the city. Large protests flame up from nothing, with people streaming towards the protesting crowds when pioneer groups show that a square, a street or a neighbourhood is more or less safe.

Then, desperate armed units regroup, heading towards the protesters, using live



Protesters of all ages today defied the regime's terror in Tripoli

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ammunition and teargas. Protesters disappear as soon as they gather, now seeking new places to flock to.

In such a way, protesters have, for periods, dominated most parts of Tripoli, demonstrating their determination to stand up against the regime and their large numbers.

But there are also protesters that are armed and supported by security units that have shifted sides. These are able to engage in shorter fights, even at times attacking the central Tripoli Green Square, which is mostly dominated by a few hundred pro-Ghaddafi "protesters" and loyalist troops.



Tripoli protesters today, running away from gunshots

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Even Colonel Ghaddafi dared a short appearance on Green Square this afternoon, making yet another televised speech promising more blood spell. His appearance however was remarkably short, probably because the security situation did not allow for a longer speech.

Other parts of Tripoli, including the large Fashloom residential area, have been in the hands of protesters almost all day, with only occasional violent regime attacks sometimes dispersing protesters, killing several. But in Fashloom, protesters have received help from the "liberated" town Tajura, 14 kilometres east of Tripoli, including armed units.

Even Tripoli International Airport is now affected by these waves of fighting, with occasional, unconfirmed reports saying this key area has fallen to the protesters.

The increasing influx of non-Tripoli residents, supported by army and police units that have switched sides, is expected to strongly assist the protesters in Tripoli in the coming days. Preparations are being made in more and more cities and towns around Libya - as citizen control is consolidated - for a final attack on Tripoli.

And as the regime has been forced to focus on Tripoli today, protesters have been able to consolidate their control in most cities and towns outside Tripoli.

Importantly, Misrata - Libya's third city and located 200 kilometres east of Tripoli - yesterday was able to fight back a massive attack from a battalion loyal to the regime. Today, "liberated" Misrata has been calm, with citizens able to organise transitional authorities in cooperation with military and police forces now loyal to the revolution.

With the protesters now in firm control of strategically placed Misrata, consolidated eastern Libya now is able to send support to protesters in the west and even to Tripoli. Benghazi interim authorities today confirmed that a "march towards Tripoli" was being planned and organised. Military leaders in Benghazi also confirmed there was "a plan" to attack Tripoli. Benghazi youths keep recruiting for the upcoming battle.

Meanwhile, protesters in Tripoli keep up the pressure on the few remaining armed units loyal to the Ghaddafi regime, waiting for support from the rest of the country. When this aid comes, the final battle against the Ghaddafi regime will begin.

By staff writers

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A small group of pro-regime protesters in central Tripoli

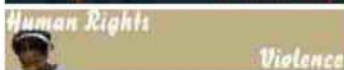
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