

# Nato-backed 'charade' won't last: Gaddafi

*African Union recognises NTC*

AFP, Benghazi

Fugitive strongman Muammar Gaddafi denounced Libya's new leadership as a "charade" backed by Nato air strikes which will not last forever, in an audio message aired on television yesterday.

And the African Union has finally recognised Libya's National Transitional Council as the country's legitimate leadership yesterday.

The AU's reluctance to formally recognise Libya's new leadership had created a split on the continent, as about 20 nations had already established ties.

Gaddafi's remarks came ahead of the first talks between US President Barack Obama and Mustafa Abdel Jalil, the head of the National Transitional Council (NTC) -- now recognised as Libya's legitimate leaders.

"What is happening in Libya is a charade which can only take place thanks to the (Nato-led) air raids, which will not last forever," said Gaddafi, for decades an outlandish fixture at the annual UN General Assembly in New York with his tent and rambling speeches.

Gaddafi is believed to be hiding in Libya, although members of his family fled to Algeria and Niger after rebel fighters, backed by a Nato-led air war, overran Tripoli on August 23.

It was released after the new regime's forces said they captured the airport and a garrison in his southern redoubt of Sabha, and fighting raged in two of his northern



Muammar Gaddafi

strongholds.

The capture of the airport and garrison at Sabha, a strategic desert city 800 kilometres south of Tripoli, was announced early yesterday by Mohammed Wardugu, spokesman for the NTC's "Desert Shield Brigade."

NTC forces were set to take total control of the entire region "imminently," said Wardugu, brother of brigade commander Barka Wardugu.

He said NTC forces had also seized Gaddafi's intelligence chief in the Al-Kufra region in the deep southeast, General Belgacem Al-Abaaj, and forced more than 300 of his mercenaries to flee before detaining 150 loyalists.

Nato said it had targeted Sabha with air strikes on Monday, taking out two air missile systems, two radar defence facilities and three air missile facilities.

The Nato strikes around Sirte came as dozens of new regime fighters stormed the nearby town of Sultana, braving rocket and artillery attacks as they marched towards Gaddafi's hometown.

The column of fighters advancing on Sirte from the west was to join other NTC forces already at the gates of the city who have been fighting Gaddafi loyalists there since the weekend.

Fighting had also raged on Monday in Bani Walid when NTC fighters attacked the oasis town southeast of Tripoli where Gaddafi's son Seif al-Islam is believed held up, possibly with his father.

## PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD BID AT THE UN

Agencies

Palestinian officials are planning to submit their statehood bid at UN on September 23 to join the United Nations as a full member state. They will ask for international recognition on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as a capital.

Here is a guide to what is likely to happen and its significance.

**Palestinian Bid**

The Palestinians, as represented by the Palestinian Authority, have long sought to establish an independent, sovereign state in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza - occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six Day War.

Although Israel rejects the 1967 borders, there is a wide international acceptance that the pre-1967 frontiers should form the basis of a peace settlement.

Late last year, Palestinian officials began pursuing a new diplomatic strategy: asking individual countries to recognise an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders. Now they want the UN to admit them as a full member state. Currently the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) only has observer entity status.

**The process at UN**

There are clear procedures at the UN which begins its annual General Assembly General Debate in New York on 21 September.

In order for the Palestinians to be admitted as a member state, they would need the approval of 9 nations out of the 15-member UN Security Council and no veto from any of its permanent members to pass a decision. Any Council recommendation



for membership would then need a two-thirds majority vote in the 193-member General Assembly for final approval.

To start the process, Abbas has to submit a request to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. He has said he will do this after addressing the General Assembly on 23 September. Ban then needs to hand the application to the Security Council which would establish a committee.

However, the US has made clear it would wield its veto power. The UK and France would almost certainly abstain from voting. If as expected, the US vetoes, or the PLO decides to back down on its plan for full membership, it can submit a resolution to the General Assembly.

**The Possible Outcome**

A resolution could ask for support for the Palestinians to be admitted to the UN as a "non-member observer state", an upgrade from the PLO's current status as observer. This status

is held by the Vatican and has been held in the past by countries such as Switzerland.

This would have political implications and allow Palestinians to join UN agencies and become party to international treaties, such as the International Criminal Court, where they could take legal action to challenge the occupation of territory by Israel.

The Palestinians argue that admission of Palestine as a full member state at the UN would strengthen their hands in peace talks with Israel especially on the final status issues that divide them: the status of Jerusalem, the fate of the Jewish settlements, the precise location of the border, the right of return of Palestinian refugees, water and security.

**Reasons behind the bid and the timing**

The main reason is the impasse in peace talks. However, the Palestinians also argue that their UN plan fits with an agreed deadline. The Middle East Peace Quartet - the European Union, United States, Russia and UN - committed itself to the target of achieving a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict by September 2011. Last year, the US President Barack Obama also expressed a hope that this deadline would be met.

The Palestinian Authority Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, says that Palestinians have succeeded in building up state institutions and are ready for statehood. The World Bank and IMF have said the same.

Recent Arab uprisings also appear to have energised Palestinian public opinion.

## Abbas to seek UNSC vote first

*Warns of 'difficult' times after UN bid*

AGENCIES

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas wants to press ahead with a vote on full UN membership of a Palestinian state at the Security Council before exploring other options, top official said Monday.

"Politically he wants to try the Security Council first," Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath told reporters, adding that "afterwards all options are open" referring to a possible request for enhanced observer status before the full UN General Assembly.

Abbas told UN secretary general that he would formally submit a bid for the United Nations to recognize the state of Palestine as a full member of the world body on Friday.

The Palestinian leader also warned of "very difficult" times after Palestinians seek UN membership this week.

Abbas admitted he has been under international pressure over the Palestinian bid, which he intends to submit to UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Friday after addressing the General Assembly.

"The Palestinian people and their leadership will pass through very difficult times after the Palestinian approach to the United Nations through the Security Council to seek full membership for the Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital," he told reporters.

The United States provides slightly more than \$500 million a year to the Palestinian Authority. Of that, \$200 million goes straight into the Palestinian budget which makes up 15% of Palestinian Authority's \$1.3 billion budget.

Sources said US Congress is mulling to cut these "Economic Support Funds" which will make the already cash strapped Palestinians more vulnerable unless the MidEast come forward and step up financial support.

The 15 members of the UN Security Council will have to vote on the application. But the United States has already said it will impose its veto, risking a high-stakes showdown at the United Nations -- despite previous calls from Obama for the implementation of a Palestinian state.

## Pakistani gunmen kill 29 Shias

AFP, Quetta

Gunmen shot dead 26 Pakistani Shia Muslim pilgrims travelling to Iran yesterday, the deadliest attack on the minority community in Pakistan for more than a year, officials said.

In a brutal assault, gunmen ordered pilgrims off their bus, lined them up and assassinated them in a hail of gunfire in Mastung, a district 50 kilometres south of Quetta, the capital of the southwest Baluchistan province.

"The attackers stopped the bus and forced the pilgrims to get off, lined them up and then opened fire," local deputy commissioner Saeed Imrani told AFP.

An hour after the first attack, unidentified gunmen killed another three Shias on the outskirts of Quetta whom police said were relatives of victims of the first incident en route to collect their bodies.

"Armed men ambushed their car. Three of them were killed and one was wounded. They were going to take the dead bodies," Hamid Shakil, a senior police officer in Quetta told AFP by telephone.

Baluchistan has increasingly become a flashpoint for sectarian violence between Pakistan's majority Sunni Muslims and minority Shias.

## Suicide attack, bomb kill 13 in Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

A Taliban suicide bomber flattened the home of a senior counter-terrorism officer in Karachi Monday, killing eight people, as an attack on a market in Pakistan's northwest claimed five more victims.

Senior Superintendent Aslam Khan escaped unhurt, but his home was destroyed and he said he knew he was the target, telling AFP that he had been threatened by the al-Qaeda-allied Pakistani Taliban.

The Islamist militant group claimed responsibility for the attack and said Khan had been targeted for arresting, torturing and killing Taliban members.

It was the worst Islamist militant attack in Karachi, a city of 18 million, for months.

Separately, a motorcycle bomb late Monday killed at least five people and wounded 28 others at a busy market.

### SIKKIM QUAKE

# Search on for trapped victims

*Death toll in India, Nepal climbs to 83*

AFP, Gangtok

Rescue teams blasted their way through rockfalls yesterday as they closed in on the remote epicentre of a Himalayan earthquake that killed 83 people in India, Nepal and Tibet.

More than 5,000 troops, including army engineers using explosives, cleared a route to Mangan, a town near the main impact zone of Sunday's 6.9-magnitude quake on the border between India's northeastern Sikkim state and Nepal.

"The road to Mangan is open," Indian Home Secretary RK Singh told reporters in New Delhi.

But officials in the region said it could still take another two days to access isolated villages further north which aerial photos suggested had been badly damaged.

Convoys of vehicles carrying rescue workers, medical teams and emergency supplies left the Sikkim capital Gangtok at daybreak Tuesday.

But progress was tortuously slow over the narrow, badly damaged roads more often frequented by groups of adventurous tourists heading for Himalayan trekking trails.

After covering just a short section of the 60-kilometre route to the worst-affected districts of Mangan and Sangthan, the convoys came to a halt near the town of Phingla, where the path was blocked by a huge rockfall.

As army engineers drilled holes for explosives to blow apart the largest boulders, rescuers waited in frustration along with distraught locals trying to get through to relatives -- unsure whether they were alive or dead.



PHOTO: AFP

**Indian Army personnel and Border Roads Organisation (BRO) workers clear a landslide at Phengla on the outskirts of Gangtok yesterday, after a 6.9-magnitude earthquake hit the region on September 18.**

Those who did attempt walking around the rockfall were stopped by soldiers for security reasons.

Eventually the way was cleared, and the convoys moved slowly on despite the threat of fresh landslides.

A break in the monsoon weather allowed a resumption of helicopter flights which had been grounded most of Monday by heavy rains and low cloud.

Small medical teams with doctors and paramedics were air-lifted into Mangan, and food packages were dropped on some outlying villages.

The death toll from building collapses and landslides in Sikkim stood at 50, but

Home Secretary Singh warned the number could rise as emergency workers pressed on towards the epicentre.

Around 300 people have been admitted to hospitals across the state.

Hundreds of Gangtok residents spent a second night out in the open, too frightened to sleep in homes badly damaged by the quake.

In Nepal, eight people were killed and hundreds of homes destroyed or damaged in the east of the country, where rescuers faced the same problems as their Indian counterparts with rains and mudslides blocking the only highway.

## US preparing for post-Assad Syria: Report

AFP, Washington

The United States is increasingly convinced Syrian President Bashar al-Assad will be overthrown and is preparing for a possibly violent aftermath, the New York Times reported yesterday.

The newspaper said Washington is quietly working with Turkey to plan for a post-Assad future that could see Syria's various ethnic groups battle for control of the country, potentially destabilising neighbouring states.

The Times said intelligence officials and diplomats in the Middle East, Europe and the United States increasingly believe Assad will not be able to quash the months-long revolt against his family's four-decade-long rule.

At least 2,600 people, mostly civilians, have been killed since the protest against Assad started on March 15.

## Japan defence hit by cyber attack

BBC ONLINE

Japan's top weapons maker confirmed yesterday that it was the victim of a cyber attack reportedly targeting data on missiles, submarines and nuclear power plants.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) said viruses were found on more than 80 of its servers and computers last month.

The government said it was not aware of any leak of sensitive information.

But the defence ministry has demanded MHI carry out a full investigation. Officials were angered after learning of the breach from local media reports.

Speaking at a news conference yesterday, Japan's defence minister Yasuo Ichikawa said the cyber attackers had not succeeded in accessing any important information but MHI would be instructed "to undertake a review of their information control systems".

The online attacks - which are believed to be the first of their kind against Japan's defence industry - originated outside the company's computer network, MHI said.

Neither the Japanese government nor MHI have said who may be responsible.

A report in one Japanese newspaper said Chinese language script was detected in the attack against MHI. But China rebuffed suggestions it could be behind the attacks.

## Turkish capital rocked by blast, 3 killed

AFP, Ankara

A powerful bomb attack killed three people and injured at least 15 in the centre of the Turkish capital Ankara yesterday, interior minister said.

"Three citizens were killed and 15 were injured, five of whom are in critical condition," Interior Minister Idris Naim Sahin said in televised remarks.

What caused the blast was not immediately clear but Sahin said "there is a high possibility that it was a terrorist attack."

The blast, which occurred near the Cankaya district administration office, blew out windows of shops and offices in the surrounding area, damaged cars and started a fire which was later put out by firefighters at the scene, media reports said.

## FLOODS IN CHINA Mass evacuations as death toll rises to 70

HAFF, Beijing

Nearly 1.7 million people have been forced to abandon their homes and dozens more have died in heavy flooding across large parts of China, the government said yesterday.

Torrential rains have swamped parts of northern, central and southwest China, causing serious flooding in several provinces and forcing mass evacuations, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said in a statement.

Officials in the southwestern province of Sichuan ordered more than 600,000 people to evacuate as major tributaries to the Yangtze -- China's longest river -- exceeded danger levels, the Xinhua news agency said.

In all, 1.66 million people across the country have been forced to leave their homes, according to the civil affairs ministry, which put the total deaths at 70, with another 32 missing.

More than 120,000 houses have collapsed and economic losses from damaged houses, crops and land are estimated to have reached 26.09 billion yuan (\$4.08 billion), it added.

Emergency workers have been dispatched to the affected areas with thousands of tents, cots, blankets and clothing, the ministry said, adding that forecasts showed the seasonal rains were nearing an end.

China is hit by big downpours every summer. Last year saw the nation's worst flooding in a decade, leaving more than 4,300 people dead or missing.



## Request For Proposals on Promoting Media Relations

Katalyst, a pro-poor market development project implemented under Ministry of Commerce (MOC) by Swisscontact and GIZ International Services and funded by a donor consortium, requests proposals from interested consulting firms and other relevant entities for implementing the following assignment:

**Assignment: Promoting Media Relations among Upazilla BMOs in selected locations**

This intervention involves conducting multiple training sessions on media relations for groups of Upazilla Business Membership Organization (UZBMO) members. The contracted organization is expected to acquire corporate sponsorship for the events.

Organizations are to submit their respective proposals consisting of separate technical and financial bid (in separate envelopes) for the assignment by **5.00 pm October 9, 2011**. Each proposal should be structured and submitted on the respective Terms of Reference (Promoting Media Relations among UZBMOs) that can be collected from the website [http://www.katalyst.com.bd/abtus\\_procurement.php](http://www.katalyst.com.bd/abtus_procurement.php)