

# Fresh clashes erupt in Tripoli

Reuters, Tripoli

Gunfights broke out in the Libyan capital Tripoli yesterday between dozens of supporters of deposed leader Muammar Gaddafi and forces of the new government.

It was the first sign of armed resistance to the NTC in the city since its rebel brigades seized the capital and ended 42 years of one-man rule in August. Though the battles were small and casualties seemed light, it raised concerns the interim government could face an insurgency by Gaddafi loyalists.

Hundreds of National Transitional Council (NTC) fighters in pick-up trucks shouting "Allahu Akbar" careered toward the Abu Salim neighborhood, a center of support for Gaddafi and the two sides exchanged automatic and heavy machinegun fire.

Local people told a Reuters correspondent at the scene that a group of up to 50 armed men had appeared in Abu Salim earlier in the day and had chanted pro-Gaddafi slogans. NTC men said fighting also broke out in three

other nearby neighborhoods.

"Gaddafi told them in a message last night to rise up after Friday prayers," said one NTC fighter, Abdullah. "That's why these few people have come out and are causing this problem."

The former leader has released a number of audio recordings calling on loyalists to fight back: "I urge all Libyan people to go out and march in their millions in all the squares, in all the cities and villages and oases," he said earlier this month.

"Go peacefully... be courageous, rise up, go to the streets, raise our green flags to the skies."

NTC fighters dragged one man out of an apartment block in Abu Salim, a traditional bastion of support for Gaddafi. As he was kicked and punched, one of the NTC men plunged a knife into the prisoner's back. It was unclear if it was a fatal blow.

The captured man had been armed with a rocket-propelled grenade, said NTC fighters, whose forces have been criticized by human rights groups for their treatment of prisoners.



Members of Occupy Wall Street face off with police during a celebration march after learning that they can stay on Zuccotti Park in New York yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

# Wall Street sit-in goes global today

Reuters, London

For an October revolution, dress warm. That's the word going out - politely - on the Web to rally street protests today around the globe from New Zealand to Alaska via London, Frankfurt, Washington and, of course, New York, where the past month's Occupy Wall Street movement has inspired a worldwide wave of anger at banks and financiers.

How many will show up, let alone stay to camp out to disrupt city centres for days, or months, to come, is anyone's guess. The hundreds at Manhattan's Zuccotti Park were calling for back-up on Friday, fearing imminent eviction. Rome expects tens of thousands at a national protest of more traditional stamp.

Few other police forces expect more than a few thousand to turn out on the day for what is billed as an exercise in social media-spread, Arab Spring-inspired, grassroots democracy with an emphasis on peaceful, homespun debate, as seen among Madrid's "indignados" in June or at the current Wall Street park sit-in.

Blogs and Facebook pages devoted to "October 15" - #O15 on Twitter -

abound with exhortations to keep the peace, bring an open mind, a sleeping bag, food and warm clothing; in Britain, "Occupy London Stock Exchange" is at pains to stress it does not plan to actually, well, occupy the stock exchange.

That may turn off those with a taste for the kind of anarchic violence seen in London in August, at anti-capitalism protests of the past decade and at some rallies against spending cuts in Europe this year. But, as Karlin Younger of consultancy Control Risks said: "When there's a protest by an organization that's very grassroots, you can't be sure who will show up."

Concrete demands are few from those who proclaim "We are the 99 percent," other than a general sense that the other 1 percent - the "greedy and corrupt" rich, and especially banks - should pay more, and that elected governments are not listening.

"It's time for us to unite; it's time for them to listen; people of the world, rise up!" proclaims the Web site United for #GlobalChange. "We are not goods in the hands of politicians and bankers who do not represent us... We will peacefully demonstrate, talk and orga-

nize until we make it happen."

By doing so peacefully, many hope for a wider political impact, by amplifying the chord their ideas strike with millions of voters in wealthy countries who feel ever more squeezed by the global financial crisis while the rich seem to get richer.

"I've been waiting for this protest for a long time, since 2008," said Daniel Schreiber, 28, an editor in Berlin. "I was always wondering why people aren't outraged and why nothing has happened and finally, three years later, it's happening."

Quite what is happening, though, is hard to say. The biggest turnouts are expected where local conditions are most acute.

Italian police are preparing for tens of thousands to march in Rome against austerity measures planned by the beleaguered government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

Yet in crisis-ravaged Athens, where big protests have seen violence at times of late, a sense of fatigue and futility may limit numbers today. In Madrid, where thousands of young "indignados," or "angry ones," camped out for weeks, many also feel

the movement has run out of steam since the summer.

A long Saturday of rallies may start in New Zealand, where the Occupy Auckland Facebook page provides links recommending "suitable clothing... a sleeping bag, a tent, food" -- but, in a family-friendly spirit, strictly no drugs or alcohol.

Asian authorities and businesses may have less to fear, since most of their economies are still growing strongly.

Tracking across the time zones, through towns large and small ("Occupy Norwich!" reads a website from the picturesque English city), the New York example has also prompted calls for similar occupations in dozens of US cities from today.

But some analysts do see a potential for political change.

Jeff Madrick, a prominent economics writer, speaks warmly of the serious and reasonable debate he found at Zuccotti Park. Revolutions may be rare, but the protests could push lawmakers to act on some of the demands, he said last week: "It may begin to change public opinion enough to give Congress, people in Washington, the courage of their own convictions."



## Italy PM wins confidence vote

Reuters, Rome

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi won a vote of confidence yesterday, giving his struggling center-right government a new, but probably short, lease of life.

Berlusconi, who said before the vote that the country would be thrown into economic and social catastrophe if his government collapsed now, won the vote 316 for and 301 against.

The result was in doubt until the last minute and even some center-right members expressed uncertainty and showed nervousness before the vote on whether the government would pull through.

The situation was so tense that some in the center-right went into last-minute horse-trading meetings with Berlusconi, who is trying to contain a rebellion in his coalition.

There was even doubt until the last minute if the quorum making the vote valid existed since most of the opposition boycotted the first round of the vote.

One coalition parliamentarian, Francesco Nucara, told the chamber he was voting to save the government for the good of the country but openly expressed dissent with the way Berlusconi was running the center-right and his choice of ministers.

The prime minister's administration has been plagued by scandals, economic stagnation and intense pressure from financial markets.

Berlusconi was forced to call for the vote on Tuesday.

## UN warns of possible civil war in Syria

Reuters, Amman

The United Nations top human rights official called yesterday for international action to protect Syria's civilians, saying its "ruthless repression" of anti-government protesters could drive the country into full-blown civil war.

The death toll in the crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations that began in March against President Bashar al-Assad now exceeds 3,000, including at least 187 children, said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay.

At least 100 people had been killed in the last 10 days alone.

"The onus is on all members of the international community to take protective action in a collective manner, before the continual ruthless repression and killings drive the country into a full-blown civil war," Pillay, a former UN war crimes judge, said in a statement.

"As more members of the military refuse to attack civilians and change sides, the crisis is already showing worrying signs of descending into an armed struggle," she added.

The United States and Europe have imposed a sanctions on Syrian oil exports and several businesses, and pushed -- so far in vain -- for U.N. sanctions.

Thousands had been injured and arrested by Syrian forces, including many tortured in custody, Pillay said. "Family members inside and outside the country have been targeted for harassment, intimidation, threats and beatings."

Syria blames the violence on foreign-backed armed groups who it says have killed 1,100 people. Authorities have barred most foreign media, making it difficult to verify accounts by activists and officials.

## Oct 21 the doomsday!

TIME ONLINE

The end of the world is close. Doomsday prophet Harold Camping is once more predicting an apocalypse, and apparently we don't have long left. The 90-year-old California radio mogul has pointed to October 21 on the calendar, by which date he reckons it will "probably" all be over.

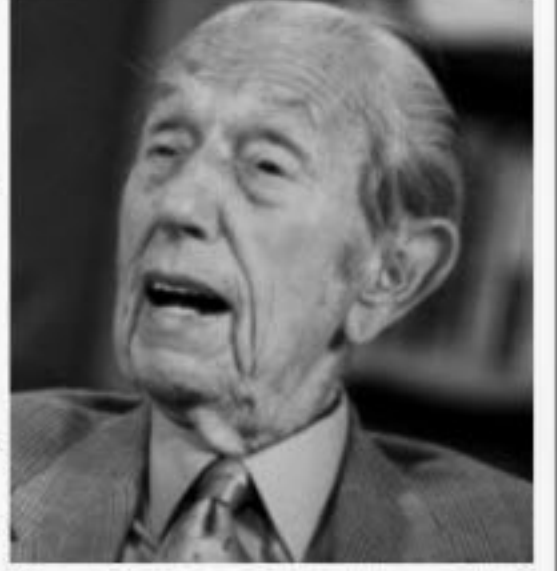
But this time around he is not warning of souls burning up and ascensions to heaven from the sidewalks of Manhattan. Instead Camping, the owner of the Family Radio Network, believes it will be a much quieter affair.

"I really am beginning to think as I restudied these matters that there's going to be no big display of any kind. The end is going to come very, very quietly, probably within the next month. It will happen, that is, by October 21," he stated in a recent radio recording.

Camping became infamous earlier this year for incorrectly heralding the arrival of the Rapture on May 21. Followers across the U.S. spent millions on advertising campaigns warning people of the eventual non-event.

Despite admitting that he was "flabbergasted" that the world still existed, Camping insisted his erroneous warning had in fact been correct - but that only a spiritual "Judgment Day" had occurred.

Nonetheless, reports suggest Camping didn't take the whole episode too well and suffered a stroke in June. But he has made a partial recovery since and is now back to broadcasting until Oct 21, of course.



Harold Camping

## G20 to discuss Euro debt crisis

BBC ONLINE

Finance ministers from the G20 group of nations were scheduled to meet in Paris yesterday to continue efforts to find a solution to the debt crisis in the eurozone.

While Greece remains the central focus, fears remain that the crisis could spread to other highly indebted eurozone countries such as Spain and Italy, and exposed European banks.

Greece needs its next bailout loan next month to avoid defaulting on its debt.

Spain was hit by a further credit rating cut on Thursday. Standard & Poor's reduced Spain's long term rating by one notch, citing weak growth and high levels of private-sector debt.

It came a week after fellow credit rating agency Fitch also cut Spain's rating.

On Thursday, Fitch also downgraded the creditworthiness of UK banks Lloyds and RBS, and also Switzerland's UBS.

The euro rose as high as \$1.3828 against the dollar in Friday trading, on optimism ahead of the meeting of G20 finance ministers.

However, analysts caution that any major decisions on tackling the eurozone debt crisis will not be announced until the meeting of European Union (EU) leaders on 23 October.

These are expected to include an agreement on increasing the funding and powers of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), the fund set up to help national governments in financial difficulty.



## UK defence secretary quits

BBC ONLINE

Defence Secretary Liam Fox resigned yesterday after a week of allegations over his working relationship with friend and self-styled adviser Adam Werritty.

Fox was being investigated amid claims he broke the ministerial code.

In a letter to David Cameron, Fox said he had "mistakenly allowed" personal and professional responsibilities to be "blurred".

In response, the prime minister said he was very sorry for Fox's departure but "understood his reasons".

Fox has been under pressure since it emerged that Werritty, a lobbyist, had met the defence secretary on 18 foreign trips despite having no official role, and had been handing out business cards suggesting he was an adviser to Fox.

## ROW OVER ALLEGED KILLING PLOT Iran to face toughest sanctions: Obama

Reuters, Washington

President Barack Obama warned Iran on Thursday it would face the toughest possible sanctions for an alleged plot to kill the Saudi ambassador in Washington, as Treasury officials eyed action against the Iranian central bank.

Saudi Arabia on Thursday accused Iran of fomenting instability but pledged a "measured response" over the alleged conspiracy that has heightened tensions between OPEC's two top oil producers.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, on a visit to Austria, said that the evidence showed "Iran is responsible" for the suspected assassination plan and said Tehran had tried to "meddle" in the affairs of Arab states before.

In Washington, Obama told a news conference that the United States would not take any options off the table in dealing with Iran, a phrase US officials regularly use toward Tehran that is diplomatic code for the possibility of military action.

"This is part of a pattern of dangerous and reckless behaviour by the Iranian government," Obama said in his first public comments on the affair.

US authorities on Tuesday said they had broken up a plot by two men linked to Iran's security agencies to assassinate Saudi Ambassador Adel al-Jubeir. One was arrested last month while the other was believed to be in Iran.

Iran called the accusations a fabrication designed to create tensions in its relations with its neighbours, already under strain over its nuclear program.

## Fans queue for Steve Jobs' last iPhone

Reuters, Tokyo/London

Apple Inc's new iPhone went on sale in stores across the globe yesterday, prompting thousands to queue around city blocks to snap up the final gadget unveiled during Steve Jobs' life.

Queues wound down the street in Sydney, Tokyo, London, Paris and Munich as fans gathered to get their hands on the iPhone 4S, ahead of later store sales in North America.

"I am a fan, a big fan. I want something to remember Steve Jobs by," said Haruko Shiraishi, waiting patiently with her Yorkshire terrier Miu Miu at the end of an eight block queue in Tokyo's smart Ginza shopping district.

The new model looks



People wait in long-queue to grab a new iPhone in Tokyo yesterday.

## THREAT TO TAJ MAHAL India SC seeks UP govt's response

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday took suo motu cognisance of media reports that the historic Taj Mahal in Agra might collapse by next five years and sought the response from Indian federal and Uttar Pradesh state governments on the reported threat to the 17th century monument of love.

A bench of justices D K Jain and A R Dave issued notices to Uttar Pradesh government, the Archaeological Survey of India and Indian Ministry of Environment and Forest and asked them to file their response within two weeks.

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