

Haftar forces say they hit Misrata air base

Author:

Tue, 2019-08-06 21:28

TRIPOLI: Forces loyal to Libyan strongman Khalifa Haftar said they launched air strikes early Tuesday against an air base in third city Misrata held by government loyalists.

“Our air force carried out several raids against the Misrata air base, targeting anti-air defenses as well as a Turkish aircraft transporting ammunition, drones and missiles,” Haftar’s self-styled Libyan National Army said in a statement on its Facebook page.

Pro-Haftar television channel Libya Al-Hadath said a Turkish Ilyushin aircraft “was destroyed as it landed at the Misrata base.”

It aired footage, which could not be independently verified, of the alleged strikes.

Forces loyal to the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) did not immediately confirm or deny the reported attack.

Haftar forces launched an offensive in April to wrest Tripoli from the GNA.

Many of the government’s best equipped and most seasoned fighters come from Misrata, which is east of the Libyan capital.

Tuesday’s airstrikes came a day after the GNA and a local official reported the death of at least 42 people in a raid targeting a town hall meeting in southern Libya.

Dozens more were wounded in Sunday night’s attack which the GNA said was carried out by Haftar forces.

UN envoy Ghassan Salame has repeatedly denounced an escalation of violence between the two camps and called for negotiations.

Last week he proposed a cease-fire for Eid Al-Adha, due to start on Aug. 10.

The World Health Organization says the battle for Tripoli has left nearly 1,100 people dead and wounded more than 5,750, while forcing more than 100,000 civilians to flee their homes.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Khalifa Haftar](#)

[Libya](#)

[Tripoli](#)

[GNA](#)

Air strike on south Libyan town kills at least 43Libya government forces say
repel Haftar attack on Tripoli

[US sanctions Lebanese businessman for Hezbollah support](#)

Tue, 2019-08-06 19:53

BEIRUT: The US Treasury has added Lebanese businessman Fadi Hussein Serhan to a list of sanctioned foreign nationals for providing material support to Hezbollah.

The US government has accused Serhan of aiding the militant group through his Beirut electronics store.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Hezbollah](#)

[US Treasury Department](#)

Hezbollah accused of evicting mum, kids from home for criticizing party members
US puts sanctions on Hezbollah leader suspected of masterminding Buenos Aires 1994 attack

[China 'might escort ships' in Gulf under US proposal](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1565097741335255900

Tue, 2019-08-06 12:47

DUBAI: China might escort Chinese commercial vessels in Gulf waters under a US proposal for a maritime coalition to secure oil shipping lanes following attacks on tankers, its envoy to the United Arab Emirates said on Tuesday.

"If there happens to be a very unsafe situation we will consider having our navy escort our commercial vessels," Ambassador Ni Jian told Reuters in Abu Dhabi.

"We are studying the US proposal on Gulf escort arrangements," China's embassy later said in a text message.

Washington is lobbying other nations to join a maritime security coalition at a time of heightened tensions with Iran, which the United States has blamed for explosive blasts on tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, a charge Tehran denies.

President Donald Trump said in a June 24 tweet that China, Japan and other countries "should be protecting their own ships" in the Gulf region, where the US Navy's Fifth Fleet is based in Bahrain.

It was not clear if Washington had made an official request to Beijing, which has had to tread softly in the Middle East due to its close energy ties with both Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The United States has struggled to gain support for the coalition from European and Asian allies, who fear it would further stoke tensions with Iran.

So far only Britain has officially said it would join the mission to protect merchant ships after Iran seized a British-flagged vessel.

Tension has mounted since Trump last year quit a 2015 nuclear pact under which Iran agreed to curtail its atomic program in return for relief from economic sanctions crippling its economy.

France, Britain and Germany, which with Russia and China are party to the agreement, have tried to rescue the deal and reduce tensions.

China has traditionally played a small role in Middle East conflicts or diplomacy despite its reliance on regional oil, but has increased its profile under President Xi Jinping.

"We have the position that all disputes should be sorted by peaceful means and by political discussions, not ... military actions," Ambassador Ni said. Iran says securing the Strait, the world's most important oil artery, should be left to Tehran and other regional countries.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia, who support US policy against regional foe Iran, have called on the international community to safeguard maritime trade and security of global oil supplies.

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan met President Xi during a visit to Beijing last month during which the two sides signed a military and defense cooperation deal.

The ambassador said the agreement could lead to cooperation on tackling terrorism and intelligence sharing, adding that further discussions would take place.

China, which has a military base in Djibouti, has participated in regional escort missions in the Gulf of Aden and off the Somali coast as part of a United Nations Security Council anti-piracy mandate.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iran tensions](#)

[Strait of Hormuz](#)

Germany will not join coalition to protect shipping in the Strait of Hormuz
UK to join US-led maritime security mission in Gulf

[UK to join US-led maritime security mission in Gulf](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1565018011349519400

Mon, 2019-08-05 14:38

LONDON: Britain said on Monday it was joining a US-led maritime security mission in the Gulf to protect merchant vessels traveling through the Strait of Hormuz.

Last month, Iran's Revolutionary Guards seized a British tanker, Stena Impero, near the Strait of Hormuz for alleged marine violations after Britain

seized an Iranian oil tanker near Gibraltar, accusing it of violating sanctions on Syria.

“We look forward to working alongside the US and others to find an international solution to the problems in the Strait of Hormuz,” Defense Minister Ben Wallace told reporters.

Foreign minister Dominic Raab said Britain remained committed to working with Iran to maintain the 2015 nuclear deal agreed with Tehran in return for an easing of sanctions.

A British security source said the focus of the new mission would be protecting the security of shipping and Britain would not be joining US sanctions against Iran.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Strait of Hormuz](#)

[British Navy](#)

Iran seizes third foreign tanker in Arabian Gulf UK FM to Iran: There will be no tanker swap

[Syria army to resume military operations in Idlib](#)

Mon, 2019-08-05 15:51

AMMAN: The Syrian army said Monday it was resuming military operations in a Russian-led campaign in northwest Syria that has uprooted tens of thousands and killed hundreds, blaming Turkey for not abiding by its commitments under a truce deal.

Syrian state media said Thursday the ceasefire would depend on militants fulfilling a Russian-Turkish deal that tried last year to create an Idlib buffer zone.

"The agreement to a truce was conditional. This did not happen. We resume our military operations against terrorist organisations," said the army statement.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Idlib](#)

[Syria](#)