Eastern Libya Fighting Claims 16 Lives, Wounds Dozens

Tripoli, December 23 (RHC)-- Clashes between pro-government forces and militants have left 16 people dead and dozens more wounded in Libya's eastern regions. Sources at the Benghazi Medical Center said it took in seven killed and 35 wounded during the clashes, while the al-Jala hospital said it received four corpses and 25 injured on Monday. The casualties were all from the pro-government side.

According to security forces, the fighting broke out in southern and central Benghazi. Farther east, in the port city of Derna, five soldiers were killed by gunmen who raided a checkpoint in the city's western suburb of Dahr al-Ahmar, said a military spokesman.

Libya plunged into chaos following the 2011 attacks by the U.S. and NATO that overthrew Col. Muammar Gaddafi. The ouster of Gaddafi gave rise to a patchwork of heavily-armed militias and deep political divisions.

The country has been witnessing numerous clashes between government forces and rival militia groups that refuse to lay down arms. The groups are now turning their guns on each other in an attempt to dominate politics and the country's vast oil resources.

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