

Global Powers Urge Libya to Sign UN-Brokered Peace Deal



Rome, December 14 (RHC)-- An international meeting calling for an immediate ceasefire across Libya has been held in Italy to urge Libyan political groups to sign a peace deal brokered by the United Nations.

On Sunday, representatives from 17 countries including Egypt, Germany, Russia, the U.S., Turkey, and China signed a joint statement calling for an immediate ceasefire and promising to cut off contacts with factions that do not sign the deal.

"We stand ready to support the implementation of the political agreement and underline our firm commitment to providing the Government of National Accord with full political backing and technical, economic, security and counter-terrorism assistance, as requested," the statement said.

Libya is run by two main rival factions. The country's capital Tripoli, is controlled by a political faction allied to powerful armed forces based in the city of Misrata which reinstated the previous parliament in the capital.

The internationally-recognized government of Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni is based in the eastern city of Bayda, with its elected parliament moved from the capital Tripoli to Tobruk.

The UN plan calls for the creation of that government within 40 days and it gives Libyans until early February to form a presidency council to appoint a cabinet and begin the process of moving the Tobruk-based parliament back to Tripoli.

The meeting was also attended by the country's two main rival factions and 15 officials representing different groups including armed ones fighting each other on the ground.

UN envoy Martin Kobler, who brokered the accord due to be signed on later this week, assured the international delegates that all of the Libyan factions that were present "represent the majority, the voice of the people of Libya," which is home to a wide range of rival militia groups.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who also attended the meeting, said he expected Libya's rival governments to sign the agreement on Wednesday to form a unity government, adding that the conflict there had "gone on too long" and the power vacuum had been "readily filled by extremists."

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