
UN SECURITY COUNCIL CALLS FOR 'LASTING CEASEFIRE' IN LIBYA

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The UN Security Council on Wednesday (12 February) adopted a resolution calling for a lasting ceasefire in war-torn Libya, where a fragile truce has been in place since January.

The text, drafted by Britain, was approved by 14 votes out of 15, with Russia abstaining.

It was subject to weeks of wrangling, reflecting deep international divisions over Libya despite world leaders recently agreeing to end all foreign interference in the country and to uphold a weapons embargo.

The resolution affirmed the need for a lasting ceasefire in Libya at the earliest opportunity, without pre-conditions.

It also expressed concern over the growing involvement of mercenaries in Libya.

Russia had pushed to replace the word mercenaries with foreign terrorist fighters, but was unsuccessful.

Libya, Africa's most oil-rich nation, has been mired in chaos since the 2011 NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

Since April 2019, the UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) has fought back against an offensive by military commander Khalifa Haftar, who is supported by Russia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

Russia plays games for fun in Libya

Taking advantage of the weakness and divisions of the EU, and the lack of interest of the US, Russia plays games for fun in Libya, expending little effort, but potentially obtaining important dividends, analysts said at an event in Brussels on Wednesday (26 April).

A fragile ceasefire was established on 12 January and at an international summit in Berlin a week later, world leaders agreed to end all foreign interference in Libya and to uphold a weapons embargo.

But there are still near-daily clashes near Tripoli and arms continue to flow into the country.

Moscow is accused of sending several thousand mercenaries from the private Russian security

company Wagner to support Haftar, who controls much of the south and east of Libya. Russia denies any involvement.

During negotiations, the United States demanded the Wagner group be clearly identified in the text, diplomats told AFP, before accepting the sole mention of mercenaries.

The deputy US ambassador to the UN, Cherith Norman Chalet, lamented after the vote that the Council was not united.

Its also very unfortunate that foreign mercenaries, including from the Kremlin-linked Wagner group, are making an inclusive political solution harder to achieve, she said.

Russias UN ambassador, Vasily Nebenzia, said his country abstained because of doubts in Moscow about the possibility of enforcing the resolution when the warring parties had not yet agreed to the terms of the ceasefire.

More talks on horizon

The resolution called for continued negotiations by the joint military commission set up in January between the two sides, with the goal of achieving a permanent ceasefire.

This would include a monitoring system, a separation of forces and confidence-building measures.

The commissions Geneva meeting ended Saturday without a resolution, but the UN proposed resuming talks from 18 February.

The resolution also called on UN Secretary-General António Guterres to submit proposals for monitoring the ceasefire as soon as possible, when a ceasefire is agreed by the Libyan parties.

It also called on regional organizations, notably the African Union, League of Arab States and European Union to collaborate in order to support the UN in its search for a political solution and supervision of a ceasefire.

More than 1,000 people have died in the clashes between Haftar and the GNA, while another 140,000 have been displaced, according to the UN.

Kaynak/Source: