

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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Subject: Gaddafi defiant in call Syria TV says is from Libya (Reuters)

CAIRO (Reuters) - Former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, in a phone call a Syrian television station said was made from inside Libya, vowed on Thursday to defeat rebels who control most of the country.

He also said a Libyan military convoy that arrived in neighbouring Niger was "not the first", and gave no hint this might be a step towards him and his followers fleeing Libya.

Gaddafi, whose whereabouts are unknown, instead said in the brief live speech carried by Arrai TV that his forces would rally to defeat the rebels and NATO, which has attacked his military through air strikes.

"The youths are now ready to escalate the resistance against the 'rats' (rebels) in Tripoli and to finish off the mercenaries," Gaddafi said during the call, which the television station said was being made from within Libya.

"We will defeat NATO...and NATO is rejected by the Libyan people," he said.

Gaddafi said the Libyan military convoy, which French and Niger military sources said showed up in the northern Niger city of Agadez this week, was nothing exceptional.

"Columns of convoys drive into and out of Niger carrying goods and people inside and outside (of Libya) say Gaddafi is going to Niger," he said.

"This is not the first time that convoys drive in and out of Niger."

Gaddafi's spokesman has repeatedly said he is in Libya and remains in high spirits. Niger said he was not in the convoy.

Libya's ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) has sent envoys to Niger to try to stop Gaddafi and his entourage from evading justice by fleeing across a desert frontier toward friendly African states.

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