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Libyan Army Asks for Russian Military Support — Reports

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Kalashnikov Press Service

The head of the Libyan National Army, General Khalifa Haftar, has asked Moscow to provide his forces with weapons and military hardware, the Izvestia newspaper reported on Wednesday, citing an unidentified Russian diplomatic source.

Major world powers have been mulling the possibility of lifting the arms embargo against Libya in recent months. The request was made by the country's new internationally-recognized Government of National Accord under the guise of combating the Islamic State (IS). So far, the proposals have seen little movement, as the country and its army have yet to unite under a single umbrella.

According to the Russian source, Haftar's message was delivered by Libya's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Abdel al-Badri. The official was in Moscow to meet with Russia's special envoy to the Middle East, Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov. Haftar's forces have often clashed with the UN-backed government in Tripoli, further complicating the issue.

“Al-Badri was in Moscow for one day. During his talks with Bogdanov, they discussed lifting the arms embargo [against Libya] and beginning the supply of weapons,” the source told Izvestia.

“The Libyans asked not only for small arms weapons, but military hardware, including aircraft,” he said. “They also called upon Moscow to begin a military operation in Libya against IS similar to the one currently underway in Syria.”

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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