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Russian Army Officials Visit Libya After Haftar Invite

By AFP

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Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-bek Yevkurov (left) arriving in Libya. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Russian military officials including Moscow's deputy defense minister arrived in Libya on Tuesday after receiving an invite from pro-Moscow military strongman Khalifa Haftar.

Haftar, who backs the country's eastern administration, is close to Russia's private Wagner mercenary group, whose troops guard military and oil infrastructure in the country.

"This is the first official visit of a Russian military delegation to Libya," Moscow's Defense Ministry said.

It said the visit, led by Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-bek Yevkurov, was organized after talks with Libya at the Army-2023 expo and Moscow Conference on International Security earlier this month.

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"During the visit, it is planned to discuss prospects for cooperation in combating international terrorism and other issues of joint action," it added.

The meeting came amid renewed focus on Russia's activities in Africa, after Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin announced in a video published Monday that his group was making the continent "freer."

Wagner maintains a strong military presence in Africa, where it has partnered with several nations, including Mali and the Central African Republic.

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