

# The West Prolongs the Existence of Gaddafi's Regime

Monday 6 June 2011, by [ATWI Muammar](#) (Date first published: 4 June 2011).

**This article is my [Gilbert Achcar] translation from the Arabic original published on June 2, 2011, in Beirut's *Al-Akhbar*, the only leftwing Arabic daily newspaper. It provides an insight into the thinking of the Libyan rebels, different from what some English-speaking figures of the Libyan opposition may say to Western sources, not to mention those Westerners who purport to speak in the name of the Libyan rebellion. — Gilbert Achcar**

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It is not possible to depict the present situation in Libya as one in which Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi remains in power to this day thanks to his military and security capabilities alone. The tribal factor itself is no longer a winning card in the regime's hands as it was at the beginning of the February 17<sup>th</sup> revolution. According to Abu-Bakr al-Farjani, the spokesman for the local council of the city of Sirt, which adheres to the oppositional Transitional National Council, NATO itself is progressing slowly in its military operations against Gaddafi's brigades in order to maintain him longer in power, and to increase thereby the price the opposition can be requested to pay to world powers and to the major companies that stand behind them.

The Libyan oppositionist who recently left Sirt (the stronghold of Gaddafi's tribe) says that "the regions that the regime's brigades dominate almost completely at present are Tripoli, Sirt and Sabha, but this domination does not mean that the tribes living in these regions totally support the regime." There are three major tribes in Libya — al-Warfalla, al-Magariha, and al-Farjan — but what we can assert now is that when it comes to the tribes, Gaddafi is supported only by al-Qadhadhfa, and especially the al-Quhus clan among them, whereas al-Magariha's support to the regime dwindled after Gaddafi's killing of the former minister of telecommunication, who used to be an influential member of the Revolutionary Committees [what stands for the ruling party in Gaddafi's regime], Saeed Rashid al-Megrahi. [According to opposition sources, Megrahi was killed on 21 February as he stormed the official headquarters in Tripoli along with other members of his tribe in protest against the bloody repression of the demonstrations that started a few days earlier; the sheikhs of the al-Magariha tribe reacted by stating their support to the revolution.] ...

In addition to NATO's procrastination in bringing the situation to an end, there are subjective factors that may be counted as part of the reasons why Gaddafi is still in power, namely his military and security force, his weapons, and his mercenaries. On these factors, al-Farjani said to al-Akhbar that [Gaddafi's son] Hannibal Muammar Gaddafi, the commander of the 32<sup>nd</sup> division and the man in charge of the Revolutionary Guard as well as the Republican Guard, is presently the strongest military figure in the regime, especially after the problems that occurred between his brothers Khamis and Sayf-ul-Islam, and he enjoys accordingly strong support from his father and the regime's men. ...

On the mercenaries, al-Farjani explained that the regime brought in a large number of Mauritians during the last period, and gave them Libyan citizenship in order to enroll them for fighting in the ranks of Libyan army. However, the regime seems to be in dire straits these days, according to what al-Farjani depicts. In the capital, which is under the regime's control, oppositionists every now and then fly balloons with the revolution's slogans inscribed on them, a fact that reflects changes on the ground. At the same time, the Colonel is offering concessions such as stating that he is willing to accept a ceasefire, for fear of the intervention of NATO's helicopters. ...

Despite his criticism of NATO's performance, the Libyan activist recognizes that its forces are moving forward, albeit slowly. From preventing the flight of the regime's planes to the use of US drones to that of "Apache" helicopters these last days, the situation is turning to the advantage of the opposition and the protection of civilians.

But the situation will not change rapidly if the rebels are not armed, as the poor communication between rebels in the Western provinces and the rebellion's stronghold in the East ... is not to the advantage of the opposition. Al-Farjani asserts that the rebels are now organized in a national army, and all other forces obey this army's orders. About the fear that the relation with the West might turn into one of dependence, the Libyan oppositionist insists that "the Palestinian cause is the number one cause for the rebels," and that their relation with America, or France, or Britain does not mean that they will abandon this cause, but "this relation is no more than one of interests, of an economic nature" in the sense that these countries' companies will get a priority in investing in the oil and gas sector in Libya. ...

It seems that the Libyan rebels' position is going through a difficult stage these days, torn between preserving their independence and footing the bill for the Western intervention without becoming dependent.

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## **P.S.**

\* From Muammar Atwi's ZSpace Page, Saturday, June 04, 2011

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<http://www.zcommunications.org/the-west-prolongs-the-existence-of-gaddafis-regime-by-muammar-atwi-1>