

Moammar Gadhafi Found Dead in Libya's Revolt

Although details are unclear, deposed Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi has been captured and killed, Libya confirms.

"We have been waiting for this moment for a long time. Moammar Gadhafi has been killed," Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril, the number two in administration, said to a news conference.

According to the Associated Press, Libya's Information Minister Mahmoud Shammam said Gadhafi was killed Thursday when revolutionary forces overtook his hometown, Sirte, the last major bastion of resistance two months after the fall of the regime.

"Our people in Sirte saw the body," Shammam told AP. "Revolutionaries say Gadhafi was in a convoy and that they attacked the convoy."

Abdel Majid Mlegta, a military official, told Reuters that Gadhafi was taken at dawn on Thursday as he tried to escape in a convoy that NATO warplanes blasted.

"There was a lot of firing against his group and he died," Mlegta said.

Libyan television station Al-Ahrar reported the capture and death on Thursday, and Al-Jazeera TV showed footage of a man who could be Gadhafi lying dead or severely wounded, bleeding from the head.

Libyan television reports conflict with Mlegta's story, showing images of troops surrounding two large drain pipes under a highway where it said Gadhafi was found.

NATO confirmed that its aircraft fired a convoy near Sirte earlier, but would not say if Gadhafi had been a passenger.

"We are checking and assessing the situation," a NATO official said. "Clearly these are very significant developments, which will take time to confirm. If it is true, then this is truly a historic day for the people of Libya."

People in the streets of Tripoli started celebrating after hearing the news of Gadhafi's death, blaring horns and firing celebratory gunshots in the air.

Reuters reports that the capture of Sirte means Libya's ruling National Transitional Council must now start to forge a new democratic system, which it said it would begin after the city had fallen.

Rebel forces seized Libya's capital two months ago, and Gadhafi has remained in hiding ever since. Some members of his family fled to Algeria in August, but the dictator's whereabouts remained unknown.

Gadhafi, who led Libya for 42 years, is wanted by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, for crimes against humanity.

The White House on Thursday morning said little about developments while it waited for official confirmation from Libya.

Even before official U.S. confirmation, Arizona Sen. John McCain hailed "an end to the first phase of the Libyan revolution." The top Republican on the Armed Services Committee said in a statement that the U.S. and Europe "must now deepen our support of the Libyan people."