

# *Clashes Between Libyan Rival Militia Groups Kill 31*

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Tripoli, September 3 (RHC)-- Clashes between rival militia groups in Libya's eastern city of Benghazi have killed 31 people from both sides.

Security officials said on Tuesday that the fighting broke out late on Monday, with forces and fighter jets belonging to renegade Gen. Khalifa Haftar striking positions of militiamen from the so-called Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council.

During the hours-long clashes, which were concentrated around Benghazi's Benina airport, Haftar's side reportedly lost 20 fighters while the militiamen had 11 killed.

The clashes come as Libya is witnessing one of its worst spasms of violence since the U.S. and NATO backed ouster of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. Skirmishes in recent months have mostly engulfed the capital Tripoli and also Benghazi, the country's second-largest city.

The militias in control of the capital, operating under an umbrella group called the Fajr (Dawn) of Libya, have also seized the US embassy compound.

Recent fighting between armed groups has prompted almost all foreign diplomats and thousands of residents to flee Tripoli. Rival militiamen, who refuse to lay down arms, are fighting for total rule over the North African country, and the army has been unable to curb the widespread lawlessness.

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