

Militants Seize Two Oil Fields in Central Libya



Tripoli, March 4 (RHC)-- Militants have taken control of at least two oil fields in central Libya, an oil industry spokesperson says. "Extremists took control of the al-Bahi and al-Mabrouk fields and are now heading to seize the al-Dahra field following the retreat of the force guarding these sites, due to lack of ammunition," Colonel Ali al-Hassi, the industry's security service spokesman, said on Tuesday.

Over the last few weeks, both oil fields, located some 500 kilometers (310 miles) east of the capital city Tripoli, have been forced to shut down over violence and complications at export terminals. During a similar attack on the oil fields in February, 11 people were killed and staff were forced to evacuate.

Earlier on Tuesday, Hassi said that an attack by militant warplanes on the major oil export terminal of al-Sidra was thwarted. "Two MiG airplanes took off from Sirte airport and tried to bomb al-Sidra, but anti-aircraft defenses forced them to drop their bombs on waste land without causing any casualties or damage," Hassi said. The city of Sirte is located about 200 kilometers (125 miles) west of al-Sidra.

In response to the air raids, jets belonging to the internationally recognized air force attacked Tripoli's militant-controlled Mitiga airport. The Tripoli-based General National Congress, backed by the Fajr Libya militias controlling the capital, are waging a war against the official Libyan army, supported by the Tobruk-based parliament, in the far east of the country.

The new Tripoli rulers have set up a rival parliament and government not recognized by the international community.

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