

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 6, 2019

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

As members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, we write to express our concerns regarding the conflict in Libya. We are alarmed by the ongoing military offensive in Tripoli by Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan National Army (LNA), the immediate threats to civilians, and the likelihood of a protracted conflict that will further destabilize the region. At this critical moment in the conflict, we urge the administration to address confusion over U.S. policy in Libya by clearly rejecting the military offensive and bolstering the UN-led peace process.

Haftar launched his attack on Tripoli on April 4, days before a United Nations national conference to set a timeline for a political transition and elections. Instead of political participation and negotiations, Haftar chose to continue a military campaign.

We are concerned that the current clashes are recreating the same security vacuum in Libya that ISIS exploited in 2014 when it established its most powerful affiliate outside of Syria and Iraq. The fighting is distracting Libyan counterterrorism partners and threatens our ability to identify and eliminate ISIS threats. We have already seen ISIS carry out six attacks since the conflict started. The best way to prevent further terrorist risks is to reach a ceasefire and return to a political process.

As a result of the fighting, more than 560 people have been killed, 2,800 injured, and more than 82,000 people have been forced to flee their homes. There are more than 3,000 detained refugees and migrants trapped in detention centers inside combat zones at grave risk. The United Nations has recorded violations of international humanitarian law, including indiscriminate shelling of civilian neighborhoods and militia attacks against detained refugees and health workers trying to treat the wounded.

In addition, we are alarmed that the war could also jeopardize Libya's vital oil production and exports. In previous conflicts, Libyan armed groups have seized and shut down vulnerable oil facilities. They have also tried to illegally sell oil outside of the recognized authority of the National Oil Corporation under the GNA in Tripoli. Aside from harming Libya's economy and the well-being of its citizens, such disruptions could negatively affect prices on the global market.

As you stated on April 7, "There is no military solution to Libya's conflict." The further importation of increasingly sophisticated arms by both sides of this conflict will only result in greater instability, threats to oil facilities and vital civilian infrastructure, and human suffering for the Libyan people.

Unfortunately, a generic read-out of President Trump's phone call with Haftar on April 15 has led to perceived uncertainty regarding the U.S. position. Libyan armed actors are now using that confusion over U.S. policy as justification to continue the conflict, further jeopardizing prospects for a political settlement and threatening regional stability. We therefore request that you publicly clarify that the U.S. opposes a military solution in Libya and that the U.S. condemns all actors undermining stability and perpetuating violence. We further urge you to call for a ceasefire and work with international partners to ensure its implementation, publicly reaffirm support for the U.N.-led peace talks, and exert U.S. diplomatic pressure to encourage a return to negotiations. The U.S. must exercise leadership to prevent further deterioration.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson  
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



Ann Wagner  
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress



Abigail Spanberger  
Member of Congress



David Trone  
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress




Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez  
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Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress



Colin Allred  
Member of Congress