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ANNEX 9.25



AFRICA

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Libya unrest: Eyewitness accounts

Anti-government protesters in Tripoli have come under heavy gunfire, latest reports from the Libyan capital say.

Meanwhile, Libyan TV has shown pictures of Colonel Gaddafi addressing a large crowd in Tripoli's Green Square.

Two Tripoli residents, who wish to remain anonymous, describe the dramatic events in their city.

Souq al-Jomaa district, near Green Square

We went to prayers as it's Friday. As we were praying, the shooting started. People went out and they were shooting at them.

Many of my neighbours died today. My brother was hit by a bullet in his leg. The situation here is horrible. There are helicopters. The sky is raining with bullets.

People are just horrified. Gaddafi's supporters carrying heavy arms don't want the people to gather. They were just coming out in a crowd. They caused a massacre.

They started even shooting at whoever wanted to check what happened to the injured people. These people are not armed, they just came out from the mosque. They were just praying.

It was unbelievable. I had to run away.

We were trying to help a man and stop his bleeding. He was talking - he was OK. There are people lying on the street.

Nobody could take them. They were using ambulances to shoot at people - can you believe it? They were using anti-aircraft weapons. They were shooting continuously.

You'd think you are in a war zone. This is a civil area. People are not armed.

I am so shocked, about what happened today. The whole neighbourhood is terrified. They are shooting at civilians, just so that one person can stay in power. This is unbelievable.

Zawyet al Dahmani district

Many people are being killed right now in Tripoli - I just got a few phone calls from friends who witnessed people going out of mosques being shot at. I know one of the killed people - I was speaking to a friend, her brother-in-law got killed, I could hear screams.

This is happening in an area called Zawyet al dahmani.

Earlier I heard that around 500 protesters gathered in one part of Tripoli but they have directly been faced by a group of people who were not wearing army uniform and who were holding rifles and trying to stop the protest.

Also there was high security around all the mosques today because of the Friday prayers. I was speaking to someone I know earlier, who was telling me that a mosque in downtown Tripoli was surrounded by army cars and they heard gunshots outside.

I am scared to leave the house. I was planning to visit my parents, but they called me and told me not to go out because there's

heavy security on the main roads, stopping cars for checks.

We haven't left the house for six days, apart from going out to buy bread.

Now that they've opened Tripoli to the international media, they've made sure they cleaned everything up. I went out in the car and I saw messages on the walls, streets destroyed, bullet holes, blood...

Yesterday when I went out again, it looked like a completely different city. Everything was cleaned up so that Gaddafi's people can say: Look, nothing has happened, everything is fine.

It's very frustrating for me, I don't want the world to fall for this lie.

Mezrun Road, near Green Square

I went to a mosque today for Friday prayers, I chose it well on purpose, close to the city centre, to the Green Square, on Mezrun road. After we finished praying we went out chanting anti-regime slogans like "it's the end of Gaddafi".

It was a very big gathering, security forces fired ammunition in the air, not at us. Tear gas was fired directly to the crowd and hit someone in the leg. This is the only injury I witnessed.

There was an old man, who opened his shirt and pointed at his body to them saying: "Fire me, if you can!".

Three of the security forces went up to him. One kissed his head and said: "We don't want to harm any Libyan or non-Libyan. But we have orders to stop you where you are."

We didn't reach the green square, the tear gas was close to me. I started to choke and cough - we would get dispersed and every time we would come back together, they would spread us again.

That was not the case in east Tripoli - there's a big mosque in Arada, where mercenaries came out and shot live ammunition into the crowd. Many had fallen, I heard from friends.

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