

PUBLIC

ANNEX 9.68



» Print

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, use the Reprints tool at the top of any article or visit: www.reutersreprints.com.

Gaddafi's son appointed to key post: report

Fri, Oct 16 2009

RABAT (Reuters) - The son of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi has been named coordinator of a grouping of tribal, political and business leaders, a Libyan paper said on Friday -- making him the second most powerful figure in the country.

The exact powers Saif al-Islam will exercise are not clear, but the appointment as head of the "Popular Leaderships," if confirmed, is likely to convince many observers that he is being groomed as successor to his father.

Political sources in Tripoli said they expected Saif, seen as a reformist, to propose a new constitution to be voted on by the parliament-like General People's Congress. Libya has had no constitution since 1977 and political parties are banned.

The grouping has approved Saif al-Islam's appointment, the Oea newspaper said. Libyan media reported earlier this month Gaddafi had asked for Saif al-Islam to be given a senior post.

A statement said he would be given "all the power prerogatives to carry out his role toward building the Libya of the future," the newspaper reported.

On October 6, Gaddafi told a meeting that "Saif al-Islam is a faithful man and loves Libya."

His son should take a post with no term limit, he said. "Saif needs a position that allows him to pursue his role in carrying out his program to further Libya's interests," he added.

Gaddafi said Saif would cure Libya of widespread corruption and other social woes, arguing that state structures had failed to do so.

Saif has detailed over the past three years an agenda named Libya's Future, pledging to invest \$70 billion to upgrade neglected infrastructure and to encourage Libyans to build a freer civic society with an independent judiciary and media.

He won widespread sympathy among Libyans when he assailed leading figures in the government as "fat cats."

Gaddafi, who chairs the African Union and holds the titles of "King of African Kings" and "the Internationalist Leader," has said he does not want to be distracted from his role on the world stage by domestic issues.

"SUCCESSION SIGNAL"

Analysts and opposition groups in exile say Gaddafi has anointed Saif as successor and wants to prevent opposition from inside his powerful clan before he leaves the political stage.

Saif, 36, has in the past repeatedly dismissed the succession scenario.

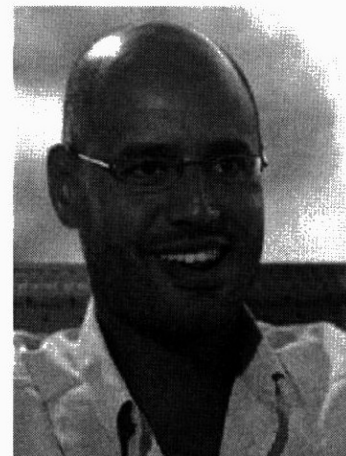
His father's most trusted envoy, he is credited with having helped convince the British and U.S. governments that his father was keen to end Libya's isolation by abandoning his program to develop weapons of mass destruction.

Tripoli scrapped the program in 2003 and has increasingly improved ties with the West. Gaddafi travelled to the United States last month for the first time in four decades to attend the U.N. General Assembly.

Saif chairs the Gaddafi Foundation charity but has held no official post in government before. His brothers hold key positions in the military, security apparatus and economy.

Ahmed Bouchaah, of Libya's exiled Muslim Brotherhood opposition group, was quoted on a website as saying: "Gaddafi's proposal is the clearest official signal to put Saif on the path of succeeding his father."

(Reporting by Lamine Ghanmi; editing by Andrew Roche)



© Thomson Reuters 2011. All rights reserved. Users may download and print extracts of content from this website for their own personal and non-commercial use only. Republication or redistribution of Thomson Reuters content, including by framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Thomson Reuters. Thomson Reuters and its logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of the Thomson Reuters group of companies around the world.

Thomson Reuters journalists are subject to an Editorial Handbook which requires fair presentation and disclosure of relevant interests.

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to colleagues, clients or customers, use the Reprints tool at the top of any article or visit: www.reutersreprints.com.

