

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2011 1:03 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: UPDATE: Libya air force jets in Malta, pilots seek asylum (AP)

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**From:** OpsNewsTicker@state.gov <OpsNewsTicker@state.gov>  
**To:** NEWS-NEA; NEWS-Mahogany; NEWS-EUR  
**Cc:** SES-O\_Shift-II; SES-O\_OS; SES-O\_CMS; SES-O\_Shift-III  
**Sent:** Mon Feb 21 12:37:02 2011  
**Subject:** UPDATE: Libya air force jets in Malta, pilots seek asylum (AP)

VALLETTA (AP) - Two Libyan air force jets have arrived in Malta and military officials say their pilots have asked for political asylum amid a bloody crackdown on anti-government protesters in Libya.

The two Mirage jets arrived Monday shortly after two civilian helicopters landed at the airport carrying seven people who said they were French.

A military source familiar with the situation said the jet pilots, Libyan air force colonels, were allowed to land after they communicated from the air that they wanted asylum. They had left from a base near Tripoli and had flown low over Libyan airspace to avoid detection.

The aircraft remain at Malta's airport while the pilots and helicopter passengers are being questioned by airport immigration officials.

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