

RELEASE IN FULL

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Subject: Tripoli fighting is "zero hour" - rebels (Reuters)

BENGHAZI (Reuters) - Opponents of Muammar Gaddafi in Tripoli have risen up in coordination with rebels encircling the capital, a senior official in the rebel National Transitional Council (NTC) said on Sunday.

"The zero hour has started. The rebels in Tripoli have risen up," said Abdel Hafiz Ghoga, vice-chairman of the NTC, based in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi.

"There is coordination with the rebels in Tripoli. This was a pre-set plan. They've been preparing for a while. There's coordination with the rebels approaching from the east, west and south."

Ghoga said NATO warplanes were launching raids to distract Gaddafi's forces. "The next hours are crucial. Many of their (pro-Gaddafi) brigades and their commanders have fled."

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