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## 'Gaddafi's son joins Libyan protesters'

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According to the reports, Saif al-Arab, Gaddafi's youngest son, who was sent by his father to cooperate with Libyan security forces in the massive crackdown on pro-democracy protesters joined forces with the demonstrators in the eastern city of Benghazi on Thursday.

Saif al-Arab, who is widely regarded as the most low-profile of Gaddafi's sons have also hinted that his father would commit suicide or flee to Latin America in the face of rising public outcry over his tyrannical rule.

Saif al-Arab is said to have had the backing of combat troops and had military equipment that was dispatched to the eastern parts of turmoil-hit Libya.

The move comes as several intelligence and military officials in the third largest city, al-Bayda have stepped down , while a major general in the eastern city of Tobruk has castigated Gaddafi's regime for its heavy-handed assault on protesters.

Major General Suleiman Mahmoud, the commander of the armed forces in Tobruk, has stated that he has resigned and now has sided with protesters, adding that soldiers and civilians are under fire from aircraft, and this was an important reason for him to join the people.

"We are on the side of the people...I was with him [Gaddafi] in the past but the situation has changed...he's a tyrant." Mahmoud told Al Jazeera, adding that the troops led by him had switched loyalties.

"We are supporting the Libyan people and the soldiers and civilians are hand in hand we are against any aggressions," he added.

At least 1,000 people have been killed in Tripoli by airstrikes conducted by the Libyan military in a desperate move meant to quell the popular uprising, according to some reports.

Meanwhile, a total of 130 Libyan soldiers have been executed for refusing to open fire on protesters.

Pro-democracy demonstrations inspired by the popular revolutions that deposed decades-long rulers in neighboring Egypt and Tunisia, have engulfed Libya since Feb 15.

Tens of thousands of people have continued to spill out into the streets of the eastern city of Benghazi and other major cities calling for the ouster of the 68-year-old Gaddafi.

Gaddafi, who came to power 41 years ago in a bloodless military coup, delivered a televised address on Tuesday in which he vowed to fight on to his "last drop of blood" and called on his supporters to take to the streets to confront the protesters.