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## African Union Won't Recognize Libya's Rebels as Govt

By Jason Ditz

August 26, 2011

In comments today, South African President [Jacob Zuma](#) announced that the African Union is not recognizing the Benghazi rebel council as the new government, calling instead for an immediate ceasefire as AU officials urge an [inclusive transitional government](#) to be put in place.



The calls were rejected by rebel officials, however, with the rebel Justice Minister Mohammed al-Alagi [insisting that the rebels “are now the legal authority”](#) in the country whether the African Union likes it or not.

The rebels certainly have NATO’s support for this claim, but their ability to unite Libya is something else entirely. They managed to get some support in the east, piggybacking on pro-democracy rallies, but after an ugly civil war, the eastern-dominated government isn’t likely to sit well in western cities, particularly in a nation where politics center so strongly around local allegiances.

The African Union’s position could complicate Western efforts to release frozen Gadhafi assets to the rebel force as well, with South Africa [already pushing to keep the funding aimed](#) at NGOs instead of the would-be government.