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Breaking Ties: Libyan Rebel Coalition Splinters

By Jason Ditz On

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[Increasing tensions between the two largest factions remaining in Libya's National Transitional Council \(NTC\) seem to be boiling over](#), threatening the cohesion of the rebel movement and threatening to start a new civil war before Libya is completely finished with the first one.



The pro-reform demonstrators from early this year were all but removed from the picture by the time NATO insinuated itself into the war and decided the NTC should rule. What was left was a combination of seasoned Islamist fighters who have opposed Gadhafi for decades and a collection of defectors from the regime.

Rebel Prime Minister Mahmoud Jabril has been seen as the leader of the defectors, and is trying to position a new Libyan regime that will very much resemble the old regime, only without the Gadhafi family at the top of the ladder.

Jabril has been [publicly chastising the “political games”](#) played by the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists, claiming their refusal to back the integration of even more Gadhafi loyalists into the NTC is threatening the current war.

His key opponent is Abdulhakim Belhaj, who made headlines last week with the revelation of his [kidnapping and rendition by CIA officials into the hands of the Gadhafi regime](#). Those like Belhaj who suffered under the old regime don't particularly see former Gadhafi officials as a big enough break from the past.

Belhaj's very existence is a source of embarrassment for NATO, so while they have yet to actually side with a faction in the upcoming second civil war, it seems likely that they will choose the Gadhafi defectors. After all, the CIA and MI6 have years of history working with them.