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## Italy holds Palermo political peace conference for Libya ahead of election deadline | Foreign Brief

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Photo: Reuters/Brian Snyder

Italy's two-day Libyan peace conference begins today in Palermo, roughly one month ahead of the ambitious election deadline arranged by France.

As the Libyan civil war drags on, two primary power-bases have [emerged](#). The UN-supported government in Tripoli, led

by Fayez al-Sarraj, is backed by Rome for its control over the transport of oil to Europe. General Khalifa Haftar's rebel forces, which control much of the east, is backed by Russia, Egypt and, most notably, France.

Paris has recently stepped up its influence in the region, hosting a peace conference [earlier](#) this year and framing itself as the primary negotiator. Such forward action in a once Italian colony is seen as an affront by Rome. As such, today's conference likely has more to do with an internal EU rivalry than actual peace progress.

However, tangible benefits to the region may still arise if Italy is able to bring together enough players. Though [Haftar](#) is likely to boycott today's conference, getting both him and al-Sarraj to the table in the future would be seen as a major success—potentially building on September's ceasefire. Even if progress is made today, however, do not expect it to be enough for a comprehensive election come December 10.

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