# Norway Ends Bombing Raids on Lybia

Friday, 29 July 2011

Norway will fly its last combat mission in Libya on Saturday, two days before the official end of its role in the Nato-led air war, an alliance official told AFP.

Norway, one of eight Nato members that have conducted air strikes in the four-month-old operation, was the first to set an end-date for its participation when it decided last month to withdraw on August 01.

"The last day Norwegian aircraft will fly is on July 30," the Nato official said.

"We appreciate and respect the decisions of all contributing nations to provide what they can to the mission," the official said. "Norway has done a great deal but, at the end of the day, the mission continues."

Norway originally deployed six F-16 fighters to the mission before reducing it to four last month. The government explained that its small air force could not sustain a large air contribution for a long period of time.

Only eight of Nato's 28 member states have flown bombing missions since the alliance took command of the operation on March 31: Norway, Britain, France, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Italy and the United States.

London has increased its contribution by adding four Tornado jets, effectively making up for the loss of the Norwegian planes.

Nato officials say Norway's departure will not affect the tempo of air operations, which have averaged more than 100 sorties per day including around 50 missions aimed at hitting targets.

The Scandinavian country, beset by a bombing and shooting spree committed by a confessed far-right extremist, will continue its involvement in the operation with 10 officers posted at the Libya air command centre based in Italy.