

**RELEASE IN FULL**

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**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 25, 2012 8:20 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Libya Islamists destroy Sufi shrines, library - military (Reuters)

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**From:** OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov]  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 25, 2012 07:41 AM  
**To:** NEWS-Mahogany  
**Subject:** Libya Islamists destroy Sufi shrines, library - military (Reuters)

ZLITAN (Reuters) - Conservative Islamists blew up the tomb of a 15th century Sufi scholar and burned down a library in the Libyan city of Zlitan, a military official said on Saturday, the latest attacks on sites in the region branded idolatrous by some sects.

The attackers used bombs and a bulldozer to destroy a complex of shrines that included the tomb of Abdel Salam al-Asmar on Friday and ruined thousands of books at the Asmari Mosque library, said witnesses and Zlitan military council official Omar Ali.

Hardliners, many of them emboldened by the Arab Spring revolts, have targeted a number of sites belonging to Islam's mystical Sufi tradition in Libya, Egypt and Mali over the past year.

The assaults have also recalled the 2001 dynamiting by the Taliban of two 6th-century statues of Buddha carved into a cliff in Bamiyan in central Afghanistan.

Friday's attacks followed two days of clashes between tribal factions in Zlitan which killed two people and injured 18, according to military council counts.

"The extremist Salafis took advantage (of the fact) that security officials were busy calming down the clashes and they desecrated the shrine," Ali told Reuters, referring to conservative Muslims who see many Sufi sites as idolatrous.

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