THE National Transitional Council, Libya's interim government has put Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's blood-streaked body on display in a commercial freezer at a shopping centre in Misrata where it was transported from Sirte while Libyan authorities argued about where to bury the former leader.

Since Saturday, men, women and children lined up to view Col Gaddafi's body, which is laid out on a mattress on the floor of the empty vegetable freezer.

The body of his son Mutassim and that of former defence minister Abu Bakr Younis were also put on display, although they were covered with blankets so only their faces were visible. An NTC senior official Abdel-Basit al-Mzirig, who is also the deputy Justice Minister, said Col Gaddafi will be buried according to Islamic tradition, but his burial place would be kept secret.

Unconfirmed reports say Libya's interim government will hand Col Gaddafi's body to his relatives after consulting with them on the location of his burial, a senior government advisor said yesterday.

"The decision has been taken to hand him over to his extended family, because none of his immediate family are present at this moment," Ahmed Jibril, an advisor to the new Libya's interim premier Mahmud Jibril said.

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He however, declined to say when the transfer would take place.
"The NTC are in consultation with his family. It is for his family to decide where Gaddafi will be buried, in consultation with the NTC," he added.
However, since last week, Col Gaddafi's family and close associates have been negotiating with the NTC so that they get his body and bury it according to their Islamic religion.

An alleged post-mortem carried out on Col Gaddafi showed that he died from a gunshot wound to his head. The body has a bullet in the head and abdomen, a medical source told Reuters yesterday.
A doctor involved in an overnight autopsy on the former Libyan leader's body also told Reuters he had died from a gunshot wound.
"There are multiple injuries. There is a bullet in the abdomen and in the brain," the medical source said.

Col Gaddafi (69), who ruled Libya for 42 years, was killed last Thursday by members of the NTC rebel force with assistance from NATO under unclear circumstances, while he was fleeing from his hometown Sirte, which had fallen in rebel hands.

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Calls for a transparent probe into how Col Gaddafi met his death continue to be made with Britain's new Defence Secretary Philip Hammond saying the NTC's reputation had been "stained" by the killing of Col Gaddafi.

Hammond said the British government would like to see an investigation into the death of Col Gaddafi, who had been captured alive on Thursday.
"It's certainly not the way we do things, it's not the way we would have liked it to have happened," he told BBC television.

"We would have liked to see Col Gaddafi going on trial, ideally at the International Criminal Court, to answer for his misdeeds not only in Libya but of course the many acts of terrorism that he supported and perpetrated outside Libya, of which we in Britain have a disproportionately large number of victims.

"The fledgling Libyan government will understand that its reputation in the international community is a little bit stained by what happened," said Hammond.
Britain is one of the members of the NATO alliance that helped to oust Col Gaddafi.

Meanwhile, the NTC yesterday declared the country "liberated", three days after Col Gaddafi was captured and killed, paving the way for the formation of an interim government.
NTC leader Mustafa Abdel Jalil insisted Islamic Sharia law would prevail in "liberated" Libya.

Jalil said, "As an Islamic country, we adopted sharia as the principal law. Any law that violates sharia is null and void legally." - Times of India/The Telegraph/Reuters/ AFP/Guardian/The Herald.