

Politics



UN FFM: Families of victims in Libya have waited far too long for justice

The UN Fact-finding Mission (FFM) has released a statement following its recent visit to Tripoli urging the Libyan authorities to take action to provide justice and redress to the vast number of victims suffering from longstanding violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The mission, established in June 2020, is investigating alleged violations committed in Libya since 2016.

“Victims and their families are impatient for authorities to provide timely information on investigations and ensure perpetrators are held accountable,” a readout by the FFM on Sunday said. Chair of the FFM, Mohammad Auajjar, said the families of these victims had waited far too long for justice.

The mission said its experts met during the 23 to 26 January visit to Tripoli with victims and victim’s representatives who provided testimony related to extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, human trafficking, internal displacement, the existence of mass graves, and morgues containing corpses that families do not have access to. According to the Human Rights Council, the FFM will submit its final report to the Council next March.

The mission renewed its call on individuals, groups, and organizations to provide new or supplementary information and documentation relevant to its mandate in relation to all acts of violence in Libya.

Politics



Protesters shut Green Stream gas pipeline from Libya to Italy

A group of graduates of oil colleges from the western region closed the gas pipeline linking (Mellitah to Italy) on Saturday because the recent employment lists issued by the National Oil Corporation (NOC) did not include them.

A source from the oil sector confirmed to The Libya Observer that gas quantities exported to Italy via the Green Stream pipeline decreased by half after the protesters stormed the main control room in Mellitah complex, adding that negotiations with the protesters who were demanding jobs in the oil sector were continuing in order to settle the issue.

The Mellitah Oil and Gas Complex Workers Union announced Saturday that a number of protesters stormed the complex’s gate, while the source said the protest was not taken seriously, despite the efforts and continuous communication with the administration to find a solution to this issue.

The NOC announced the appointment of hundreds of graduates in the oil sector to work in its companies, which sparked a wave of anger in different regions of the country, especially the western one that saw the lowest number of appointed graduates, prompting dozens of young people to protest.

The protests renewed Saturday following the visit of a high-level Italian delegation to Tripoli, headed by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. The visit saw the signing of an agreement worth 8 billion dollars between the NOC and the Italian company Eni aimed at increasing Libyan gas production to supply the local market in Libya as well as to ensure exports to Europe.

Politics



Libya, Ukraine discuss military cooperation

The director of the Libyan Defence Minister’s office, Jibril Al-Shteiwi, has received the Ukrainian military attache to Libya Andrei Bayuk at the ministry’s HQ in Tripoli to discuss military cooperation with a focus on sea and air borders security.

Al-Shteiwi praised the Libyan-Ukrainian ties and stressed the need to rebuild bridges of cooperation between the two countries, especially in the military field.

He indicated that many specialists in the Libyan army, including in the land, air, and naval forces, received their training in Ukraine.

According to Al-Shteiwi, the ministry is studying a deal with the Ukrainian side concerning the maintenance of some equipment needed by the Coast Guard and the air defence, indicating that the matter will be forwarded to Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah for approval after consideration.

Since the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war in February 2022, the Government of National Unity has been clear about its support for Ukraine, as it voted in favour of a UN draft resolution to suspend Russia’s membership in the United Nations Human Rights Council, making it the only Arab country to take such a position at the time.



Libyan PM in joint presser with Italy's PM: Stability leads to elections

The Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah said that stability can end the transitional periods and lead to fair and inclusive national elections, adding in a joint press conference with visiting Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni in Tripoli on Saturday that the Italian position is clear, represented in securing the situation in the Mediterranean and reducing tension.

Dbeibah added that he trusted Italy's ability to work for the stability of Libya, especially after Meloni's efforts to somehow unify the views of the countries concerned with supporting peace in Libya, adding that they had discussed the development of cooperation between Libya and Italy in the field of illegal immigration, economic cooperation, support for the efforts of the UN mission and UN envoy Abdoulaye Bathily, and

strengthening joint cooperation by activating the friendship treaty signed between Libya and Italy in 2008.

He also stressed the need to give the joint technical committees the opportunity to activate the bilateral memoranda of understanding, which would contribute to advancing development and construction projects, the peaceful political process and preventing war, with the support of the Italian side, underscoring the signing of an investment agreement in gas field between the National Oil Corporation and Eni as well as an agreement between the foreign ministers of the two countries to provide Libya with five marine boats for search and rescue operations.

Meanwhile, the Italian Prime Minister said that she hoped the Government of National Unity would commit to holding parliamentary and presidential elections as soon as possible within the framework of the United

Nations plan, stressing the need to confront the numbers of illegal immigration coming from Libya to Italy, which recently increased, pointing out that there are "external influences working to destabilize the situation in Libya," and stressing that Libya is a strategic partner for Italy.

"Italy will work to reconstruct Tripoli International Airport and the highway, among the infrastructure projects that Italy will participate in across Libya," Meloni said, referring to the discussion of the return of direct flights between the two countries and stressing the importance of working to combat illegal immigration and human trafficking.

"Despite the Libyan efforts, the numbers of legal entry into Italy from Libya are still high, and they have increased by 50%. We are committed to supporting Libya in managing this issue." She said.

Politics

Tajani says providing Libya with patrol boats is the right choice



Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani described the agreement to deliver five ships to Libya, funded by the European Union (EU), as the right option to address the immigration problem, according to Nova news agency.

The agency said that Tajani had indicated in a radio statement that "it is right to address the problem of migration according to a European strategy," pointing out that Italy needs to invest in Africa against climate change, terrorism, poverty and disease.

Tajani said that his country was in need for joint action at the European level to curb illegal immigration, whether on the Balkan route or the Mediterranean's.

The Italian FM's remarks come in response to European criticism of the gas agreement, which was signed last Saturday between Libyan National Oil Corporation and Italy's Eni during the visit of a high-level Italian delegation headed by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

Meanwhile, European human rights lawyer, Giulia Tranchina, called in a report with Human Rights Watch on Italy and the EU to suspend the support to Libya's coastguards, and ensure any future assistance is conditional upon Libyan authorities' tangible progress in relation to the respect of immigrants' rights and their access to justice. "Assisting Libya's coast guard, knowing that it will facilitate the return of thousands of people to serious human rights violations, makes Italy and the European Union complicit in such crimes." The lawyer claimed.

She criticized the Italian government for continuing to provide significant support to Libyan authorities despite countless reports by international human rights organisations, and repeated recommendations to suspend assistance, including by the UN Secretary-General, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, and Italian civil society.

She also mentioned that on January 28, 2023, Italian Prime Minister Meloni visited Libya to sign a major gas deal with the country and declared that Italy will provide the Libyan Coast Guard with five fully equipped boats.

Politics



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned on Tuesday the bombing of a mosque in Pakistan's Peshawar on Monday, which left many dead and wounded.

In a statement, the ministry offered Libya's deep condolences to Pakistan's government, people, and the families of the victims, wishing a speedy recovery for those injured in the attack.

It affirmed its rejection of all forms of violence, extremism, and terrorism, whatever the reasons and motives.

On Monday, a suicide bomber blew himself up inside a mosque packed with around 400 worshippers, killing at least 59 people and injuring as many as 170, many of them in critical condition, according to Reuters.

Authorities in Pakistan said an investigation is underway to reveal how the suicide bomber carried out the attack and whether there were other people involved.



Politics

Egyptian FM: Our support for consensus on constitutional basis for Libya elections ongoing

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry has reaffirmed that Egypt will continue efforts to communicate with the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) to achieve consensus on the constitutional basis for elections to end of the transitional period and lead the country to simultaneous parliamentary and presidential elections.

In a joint press conference with his Russian counterpart, Shoukry stressed the need to preserve the legal frameworks represented by the Libyan institutions, the Skhirat Agreement, and the subsequent Libyan-Libyan agreements, calling

for abstaining from dealing with institutions whose mandate had expired after failing to assume their responsibilities.

Shoukry indicated that efforts were made to coordinate between the members of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission to unify the military institution and prevent the return of military conflicts, stressing the importance of this mediation as being done within the framework of a Libyan-Libyan consensus.

He also reiterated that Egypt and Libya have shared borders, mutual interests, and thus Cairo's efforts lie in preserving national security and eliminating terror-

ism in cooperation with all regional and international partners.

Shoukry pointed out that he discussed with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov the situation in Libya and Egypt's efforts in Libya that lead to the end of the presence of foreign forces and militias, and restores the capabilities of the Libyan people, while Lavrov said that he hailed Egypt's efforts to organize the Libyan-Libyan dialogue on its territory, as well as to set the ground for a comprehensive settlement of Libyan crises.



Economy

Harouge Oil Company's production reached 45,000 bpd

Harouge Oil Company confirmed during its annual meeting chaired by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Oil Corporation, Farhat Bin Qadara, that the company has achieved a production record of 45,000 barrels per day (bpd).

The meeting was devoted to discussing the work program and the proposed budget for the current year, in addition to reviewing the general activity of the company during the past year, including the second phase of the Ghani oil field rehabilitation project and the proposal for the third phase.

For his part, Bin Qadara called on the company's officials to expedite the reconstruction of the Ghani field, stressing the importance of adhering to the measurement system related to the occupational safety of workers.

Economy

Libyan businesspersons' delegation to visit Palestine in early February



The Palestinian Minister of Economy, Khalid Osaily, said a Libyan delegation of businesspeople will visit the State of Palestine early next month in order to consolidate and strengthen economic cooperation relations and explore available investment opportunities.

The visit of the Libyan delegation is the first of its kind to Palestine and comes within the framework of the outcomes of the visit of Prime Minister Mohammed Eshtayyeh to Libya in February 2022, during which agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed in various political, diplomatic and economic issues, including work opportunities for Palestinian competencies in Libya.

The Palestinian Minister of Economy also indicated that the delegation's agenda is based on developing and strengthening cooperation relations between Palestinian businessmen and their Libyan counterparts, and seeking to establish investment partnerships between the two countries, in addition to field visits and meetings in a number of areas inside Palestine.



Economy

Dbeibah says gas deal with Eni was signed in 2008 and his government activated it

The Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah said the gas agreement between the National Oil Corporation (NOC) and Italy's Eni was signed in 2008 and his Government of National Unity (GNU) has only activated it after all these years.

The Libyan PM added on Wednesday in a cabinet meeting in Al-Jamail town that both sides of the agreement (Libya and Italy) had been affected by the delay and the decision to activate it was made after "marathonic negotiations".

Dbeibah also said that Libya is in need now more than ever for activating gas agreements and developing the sector because formal studies had shown that the delay in implementing the agree-

ment led to the shortage of gas production in Libya.

He indicated that if the gas deal was not implemented, Libya could turn into an importer rather than an exporter country by 2027. This deal will bring Libya 8 billion dollars, something the country hasn't seen in 25 years.

The NOC and Eni signed on January 28 a gas exploration and development agreement worth 8 billion dollars, which sparked sharp criticism, especially from the Ministry of Oil of the GNU that said the agreement was made in a manner that completely violates the legislation stipulated in oil and NOC laws.

Economy

Libyan Oil Ministry says NOC-Eni gas agreement is "unlawful"



The Ministry of Oil and Gas of the Government of National Unity said that the agreement signed between the National Oil Corporation (NOC) and the Italian company Eni violated the legal legislation stipulated in the oil sector's law and the law establishing the NOC.

The Ministry of Oil and Gas added in a statement on Sunday that according to the laws, this agreement required prior approval from the Ministry of Oil and Gas in order to increase the share percentage of the foreign partner and then refer it to the Council of Ministers for a decision.

"The NOC's unilateral decision to amend the agreements opens the way for other partners to say that any amendment can be made to what was previously agreed upon, without going through the procedures and legislation of the Libyan law." The statement reads.

It also called on the Chairman of the NOC to follow the legal mechanisms in this regard, and to send the technical and economic justifications upon which this amendment (for the signing of the agreement) was made to the Ministry of Oil and Gas.

On Saturday, the NOC signed a \$8 billion gas deal with the Italian company Eni to develop two gas blocks in the offshore area west of Tripoli. The deal included an amendment to the existing agreement concluded with the company in 2008, changing the agreed shares of production partners and increasing the share of the foreign partner to 37% instead of the current 30%, according to the statement.

Economy



Eni's CEO: We've signed important gas agreement with Libya's NOC

The CEO of the Italian company Eni, Claudio Descalzi, said that the "technical economic agreement" with the Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC) aimed to develop very large gas potentials in Libya, which when fully operational would provide more than 160,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day, and could be able to cover most electricity demands of Libya, and provide at least a third of the capacity of Italian energy needs as exports, according to the Italian news agency NOVA.

Descalzi explained that the \$8 billion project would not only develop Libyan oil resources, but also Libyan professional resources and companies, in addition to Italian companies that could come to work in Libya for Eni and NOC.

"This development leads to other major energy developments in both the offshore and onshore parts of Libya, with the potential to double existing gas production," he pointed out, saying they would not only develop gas, but also capture the carbon dioxide produced by these products and develop solar energy. He added that future projects to export not only gas but also electricity to Italy will be via the Green Stream gas pipeline.



The American move and its potential repercussions

By Abdullah Alkabir, a Libyan political writer and commentator

Opinions

The growing American interest in the Libyan crisis is directly linked to Ukraine war developments. The intensity of the war, and the progress made by the Russian forces recently, have raised the degree of US interest in Libya to a new level.

The most prominent manifestations of this, were the visit by the CIA Director, William Burns to Tripoli and Benghazi on January 12th. It was followed by US Chargé d'Affaires to Libya, Leslie Ordeman's meeting with Khalifa Haftar. He was accompanied by deputy commander of the US Air Force AFRICOM, Gen. John D. Lamontagne.

Then, Ordeman's meeting with Aqila Saleh, Speaker of the House of Representatives in Tobruk, and the presence of US security and political figures at the last meeting of the 5 + 5 Military Committee in Sirte, in the presence of the UN envoy to Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily.

This American move brought the Libyan crisis back, to top news headlines, and ended the state of stalemate locally and regionally, as parties to the crisis and their allies sensed that Washington was going to the end to make the political change required to protect its interests and those of its allies, and this requires isolating the Wagner groups in Libya, and preventing them from threatening Europe, or disrupting energy market by using the Libyan oil card.

A political settlement between the parties to the crisis to come to agreement on the necessary legal procedures to conduct the elections was and still is an American objective. During the past two years, the US ambassador and special envoy, Richard Norland, has been following developments in this file, without tangible results except for maintaining the level of conflict to a minimum, and avoiding a relapse to military confrontation.

However, this shift in American interest, with the visit of its high ranking security official and former diplomat who held many position, and with extensive experience in the Libyan file, and the dependence of President Biden's administration on him in many difficult tasks across the world, means that there is a potential threat to US national security and security of its European allies emerging from the Libyan gate, that needs more than just ending the state of division, and unifying the country politically through elections to renew the legitimacy of Parliament and form a unified government.

Return of the Military Committee to resume its meetings after a break that lasted about four months, and its support from the United Nations and some international powers, confirms that there is a determination to crown the efforts of the Committee by forming military units from the east and west, which will be the nucleus of the unified military institution, and it will take over the protection of oil fields and wells, and perhaps a military confrontation with Wagner groups if necessary, with the USA and its allies provid-

ing the necessary support, similar to the confrontations of Al-Bunyan Al-Marsous forces with Daesh in 2016, and this scenario will turn Libya into another zone of conflict between Russia and Western countries.

Although, press reports commenting on Burns' visit, underscored that the US administration's intention is to limit the influence of Wagner, and behind it Russia, in Libya, the possibility of the confrontation escalating to the point of a military clash does not seem strong, given the focus of military efforts on Ukraine as the current battle ground. Moreover, about half of Wagner forces were withdrawn from Libya, and driven to front lines of the Ukrainian war, and what remains of them cannot hold on for long, especially if supplies they were getting from Haftar's forces were cut off, after the US government classified them as a criminal organization, and imposed sanctions on them. Haftar, being an American citizen, will have to stop dealing with them, so it is more likely that he will implement some measures that will limit their movement, and end any potential threat to the expected political transition, or to oil production and flow.

The regional response to the American moves came quickly with the meeting of the head of Egyptian intelligence and the official in charge of the Libyan file, Abbas Kamel, with Aqila Saleh and Menfi, to settle any differences between them and prepare for the next developments. Meanwhile, Turkish intelligence Chief, Hakan Fidan, met with leaders of Libya's western region, Dbeibah, Al-Mishri, Al-Lafi and Al-Kabir, in a picture that clearly reflects rapid return of the map of local alliances, to its regional bases due to the Egyptian-Turkish competition over Libya.

The repercussions of the American moves will continue to develop at all levels, with the beginning of preparations for the alternative to the House of Representatives and the High Council of State (HCS), to assume the task of providing the legal basis for elections.

Local political entities and figures have no intention of leaving the scene, and the countries involved in the conflict will seek to preserve their gains, and the race towards reserving a position in the next stage already started.

There are indications that there is an international consensus to bypass the House of Representatives and the HCS after their repeated failure, and the UN mission began preparation for a new political dialogue forum, which would establish a constitutional basis and electoral laws, pending announcement during a briefing by the UN envoy Abdoulaye Bathily to the UN Security Council session by mid-February.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Libya Observer

Health



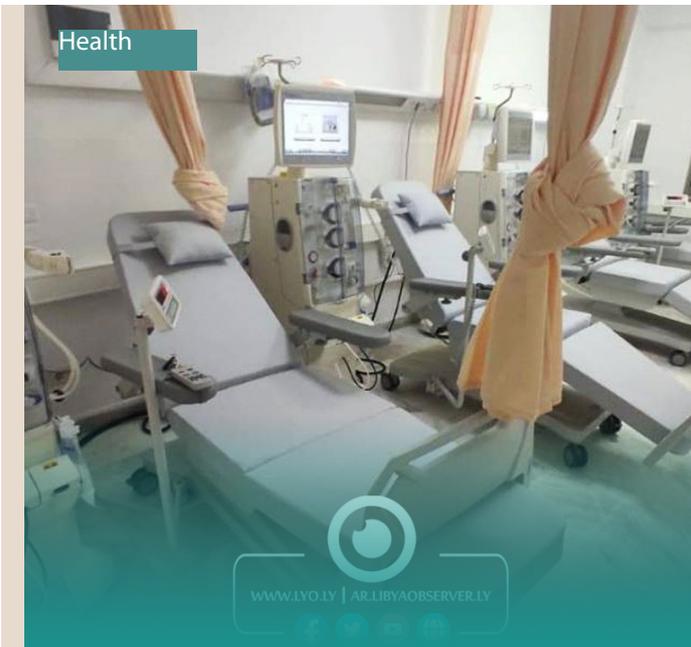
Zawia Medical Centre reopens surgery department after development work

The Zawia Medical Centre reopened on Monday the operations department after ongoing maintenance and development work. The centre held a ceremony to mark the event in the presence of several officials from the Health Ministry, including the Undersecretary of the Health Ministry for Medical Centres Affairs, Tawfiq Al-Darsi, and the dignitaries of Zawia city.

According to the Health Ministry, the department now includes three units that provide Orthopedic Surgeries and emergency operations.

Al-Darsi said the centre will open more departments soon, as the Health Ministry referred many stalled projects to the Ministry of Planning for authorization.

Health



Gharyan Hospital opens new dialysis department

The Gharyan Teaching Hospital opened a new dialysis department on Saturday with a capacity of 55 beds.

The hospital's media office said the department is equipped with the latest technology devices.

The new section includes an integrated recovery room and a laboratory, besides a water purification plant and a workshop for maintenance.

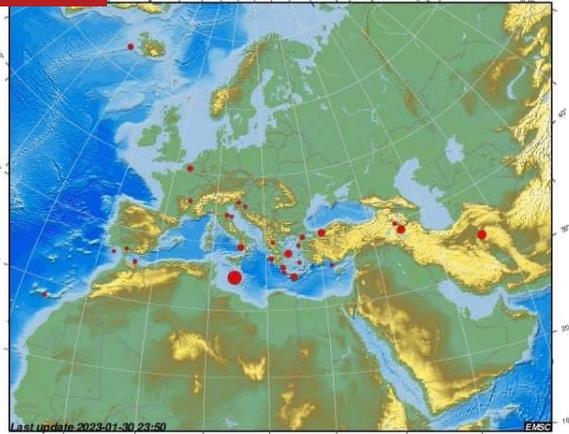
The hospital's director, Khaled Zuwait, said the new equipment would enhance the hospital's capacity and help them provide the patients with better services.

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Science



Seismic activity reported off the Libyan coast

Seismic activity has been recorded off the Libyan coast, Libya's Centre for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences said on Tuesday.

According to the centre, the activity erupted on the border of a rift between two African and European/Asian plates.

The centre said its team used seismic data collected from relevant international organizations as Libya's seismological network stopped providing service years ago. On January 18, global monitoring stations recorded a 5.1 magnitude tremor in the middle of the Mediterranean at a shallow depth of 10 km below the surface.

The quake did not cause any damage, but a weak shaking was felt in several parts of coastal cities west of Libya, including Tripoli, located 245 km from the epicenter.

Sports



Libya receives Italian invitation to take part in international shooting championship

The Libyan Shooting Federation has received an invitation from its Italian counterpart to participate in the (Green Cup) International Shooting Championship.

The Green Cup, supervised by the International Shooting Federation (ISSF), includes the disciplines of Trap, Para Trap, and Skeet.

The event will take place at the Umbriaverde shooting range in Todi, Italy, starting from the 19th of June until the 2nd of July, 2023.

It may be worth noting that the value of the prize money in the International Shooting Championship (Green Cup) is about 58,000 euros.

At another level, the LSF said that the Libyan international champion in the 10-meter pistol shooting, Mohammed bin Dallah, will represent Libya in the Arab and World Championships in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, next February.

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