

Politics



Libyan PM, US Assistant Secretary of State support UN envoy's efforts to reach elections

Politics



US Assistant Secretary of State meets with Haftar, Aqila Saleh in Benghazi

The United States (US) Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Barbara Leaf, and a delegation headed by special envoy Richard Norland and Chargé d'affaires Leslie Ordman, arrived Monday in Benghazi and met with Khalifa Haftar to discuss the latest political developments and support for UNSMIL's efforts via coordination with High Council of State and House of Representatives to devise the necessary legislations to hold elections before the end of 2023, Haftar's office has reported.

Leaf also met with the Speaker of the House of Representatives Aqila Saleh who briefed her on the achieved work toward devising electoral laws, HoR spokesman Abdullah Blehiq said.

Blehiq said in a statement on his Facebook page that Saleh's meeting with the US delegation dealt with developments in the situation in Libya, and emphasized the necessity of holding presidential and parliamentary elections. He said the two sides reiterated the need to create good conditions on the ground for presidential and parliamentary elections.

During Saleh's meeting with the US delegation, Blehiq announced the names of the HoR members who were elected to represent the HoR in the joint "6+6" committee with the High Council of State, which will undertake the preparation of electoral laws in accordance with the 13th constitutional amendment approved by the HoR last February.

The Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah and the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Barbara Leaf, reiterated support for the efforts of the United Nations Mission to Libya that aim at holding elections, discussing in a meeting on Tuesday morning, in the presence of the US Special Envoy to Libya, Richard Norland, and US Chargé d'Affaires Leslie Ordman, the political developments in Libya and the importance of uniting international and local efforts.

The meeting came after another meeting Leaf held with the Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs Najla Al-Mangoush. While on Monday, she met with the Speaker of the HoR Aqila Saleh and Khalifa Haftar in Benghazi, where she discussed the activities of the Russian Wagner Group, stressing that it had "destabilizing and opportunistic role in Libya and the region."

A statement by the US embassy in Libya said that Leaf had discussed with Haftar the importance of supporting the initiative of the UN envoy Abdoulaye Bathily as it aimed at involving all Libyan institutions and political actors in defining a clear roadmap for elections by the end of this year.

Politics

UN envoy specifies tasks of high-level committee of his Libya initiative

The UN envoy to Libya Abdoulaye Bathily has defined the tasks of the high-level committee, which he proposed to form, according to his initiative of last February when he briefed the Security Council with the aim to hold elections this year.

On UNSMIL's Facebook page, Bathily said elections in Libya don't only need a constitutional and legal framework, but also require addressing several issues, saying that one of the tasks of the high-level committee is to provide a safe environment for elections, to ensure the freedom of movement of candidates during the electoral campaigns, and to provide an equal ground for free and honest competition of the candidates.

He also said the tasks included agreeing to accept election results, adopting a code of conduct that everyone would adhere to, approving a transparent and fair government spending mechanism, and addressing any arising political or procedural issues.

Bathily's initiative aims to focus on the possibility of developing a clear roadmap to hold elections by the end of 2023. The initiative depends on preparing the security and military tracks to ensure the safety of the environment surrounding elections. He also intends to establish a high-level steering committee in Libya, which will work to bring together the various Libyan stakeholders, including representatives of political institutions, prominent political figures and tribal leaders, civil society organizations, security actors, and representatives of women and youth.

Politics

Report unveils details of meeting between Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi and Russia's Wagner leaders

The investigative TV program on Al-Jazeera "Ma Khafiya Aadam (What's kept secret is greater)" has revealed an exclusive leaked copy of the Libyan Public Prosecution's document in the case of the Head of the Fund for the Protection of National Values in Russia, Maxim Shugaley, and his team, saying that they were active on Libyan soil and had carried out multiple tasks.

The document said the Russian team included Samer Seifan who holds Russian, Jordanian, and Peruvian citizenships. He was originally a surgeon and was Shugaley's private translator, and they all entered Libya under different covers.

Regarding his relationship with the founder of Wagner Group Yevgeny Prigozhin, Shugaley acknowledged in his interview with Al-Jazeera that he personally knew the founder of Wagner. Also, Prigozhin is mentioned repeatedly in the records of the Libyan Public Prosecution, and he was referred to by several names as well as described as one of "the biggest decision-makers in the Russian kitchen".

Confidential reports show that Shugaley was monitoring the field



and military situation in Libya and sending information to Moscow on a daily basis, and held a series of meetings with Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, with the aim of supporting him to run for the presidential elections. The documents show that three meetings took place between the Russian team and Saif Gaddafi, who according to Shugaley was not in detention at the time, denying that his team sought to influence the Libyan elections.

The investigation revealed that Shugaley and his team ran Libyan websites and opinion polls in favor of the return of Saif Gaddafi, and that Gaddafi informed the Russians of the readiness of runways in Bani Walid, Ghadames, Zintan and Tarhuna cities to receive their forces. Saif Gaddafi also handed over to Moscow, through Shugaley, secret documents related to international figures, in addition to documents that disclosed that French President Emmanuel Macron had received Libyan funds through intermediaries in 2017 as well as documents of money transfers to influential American and Ukrainian figures.

Politics



US pushes for new civil society law in Libya

The US Secretary of State assistant for Near Eastern Affairs, Barbara Leaf, urged during her meetings in Tripoli and Benghazi the rapid adoption of a modern civil society law that meets international best practices to replace Law 19, according to a statement by the US Embassy in Libya.

The embassy said in a tweet Tuesday that the US Secretary of State official "was encouraged to hear from leaders that civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations would be able to operate normally pending adoption of a new law."

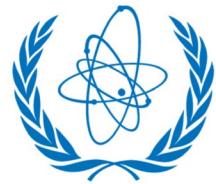
On Wednesday, Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah permitted local and foreign non-governmental organizations to continue their work in Libya, provided they correct their legal status.

He deemed the organizations' role as an important factor that ensures complementarity and exchange of roles with the state.

It may be worth noting that the Law Department of the Supreme Judicial Council issued, on March 8, an opinion declaring the illegitimacy of civil society institutions and NGOs in Libya, which the stakeholders rejected, insisting that such a decision was illegal and non-binding.

Politics

IAEA: Working to verify reports of recovering missed uranium barrels



IAEA
International Atomic Energy Agency

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it is working to verify reports that the drums of uranium declared missing by the UN nuclear watchdog had been found.

On Thursday, Forces affiliated with Khalif Haftar said the ten missing barrels were found about 5 km from the warehouse they were taken from in the southern key city of Sebha.

Khaled Mahjoub, head of a media unit for Haftar's forces, announced that the missing barrels had been recovered, though a separate video he sent showed workers counting 18.

He said the warehouse located near the Chadian border was sealed with red wax by the IAEA in 2020.

According to Al-Mahjoub, they agreed with the IAEA to keep the materials under guard, although he criticized the agency for its "failure" to provide them with protective clothes and masks.

He revealed that the deputy of the IAEA chief, Massimo Aparo, visited, last Wednesday, Haftar's forces HQ, where he informed them that they were aware of the missing barrels from the warehouse that had been breached from one side of its walls for likely to pull the uranium drums out.

He speculated that a group from Chad had raided the warehouse and taken the barrels hoping they might contain weapons or ammunition but had abandoned them, adding that they had safeguarded the material pending the agency's intervention.

On Wednesday, the IAEA said in a confidential statement to member states revealed by Reuters that it detected the missing uranium during a check at an unnamed site in Libya on Tuesday, which it had postponed last year because of the security situation.

Politics

UN Security Council hails Bathily's initiative to hold elections in Libya, warns of sanctions against obstructors



The UN Security Council reaffirmed Thursday UN strong commitment to what it described an inclusive, Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process, facilitated by the United Nations and supported by the international community.

In a statement, UNSC President reiterated 'strong support for the Libya people to determine who governs them through elections and to ensure this legitimate demand is heard through the political process'.

The Security Council's statement underlined 'the importance of an inclusive reconciliation process based on the principles of transitional justice and accountability'.

The statement hailed Bathily's initiative to launch a UN-facilitated, Libyan High-Level Panel for Elections (HLPE), in particular, that it is intended to complement progress made by other processes and bring together stakeholders.

It also underscored the importance of what it described as the 'participatory and representative process that includes representatives of political institutions and political figures, tribal leaders, civil society organizations, security actors, youth, and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women.'

The UN Security Council statement urged all stakeholders 'to engage fully, constructively, transparently, and in a spirit of compromise with the SRSG and to uphold guarantees concerning the independence and integrity of the inclusive electoral process, and

election results.'

It also underscored the importance of cooperation and constructive engagement between all relevant Libyan institutions in this regard.

It further emphasized the importance of providing a safe environment for civil society organizations to work freely and to protect them from threats and reprisals.

The Security Council underlined 'the importance of the principles of financial responsibility, anti-corruption and transparency in the context of elections.'

The statement underlined 'the importance of the Libyan authorities and institutions being both capable of, and accountable for, organizing elections in a neutral way across the country in 2023.' It also warned that 'individuals or entities who threaten the peace, stability or security of Libya, or obstruct or undermine the successful completion of its political transition, including by obstructing or undermining the elections, may be designated under Security Council sanctions.'

The statement called on the international community to fully support UN envoy and UNSMIL in the implementation of their mandate.

The statement also renewed UN Security Council strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya.

Economy



Italy wants to cut free from Russian gas

Italian Minister of Economic Development Adolfo Urso has stated that his country wants to cut free from Russian gas during the current year.

In a press statement to Radio 24, the Italian minister pointed out that Italy has reduced Russian gas imports to 16% in 2022 from 40% last year in 2021, after its new contracts with Libya and Algeria.

Urso added that there are no warnings about gas reserves in Italy, confirming the availability of gas, and there is an agreement on the gas price.

Economy

Minister of Labour discusses facilitating entry of Egyptian workers implementing Third Ring Road project

The Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation, Ali Al-Abed, has called for facilitating the entry of Egyptian workers working in the implementation of the Third Ring Road project in Tripoli, and the projects implemented by the Egyptian firms consortium.

This came during his meeting with the head of the Housing and Utilities Authority, the deputy head of the Passports and Nationality Department, and the labour attaché at the Libyan embassy in Cairo, in the presence of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation for Employment Affairs.

The meeting discussed ways to facilitate procedures that would contribute to the entry of workers, starting next week, given the importance of this strategic project.

Economy



Brega Company holds distribution companies responsible for the congestion at fuel stations

The Brega Oil Marketing Company has confirmed that the traffic congestion on fuel stations in Tripoli and western region is due to the refusal of the Highway Fuel Distribution company to collect and distribute allocated fuel internal disputes.

The director of operations at the Brega Oil Marketing Company in Tripoli, Hatem bin Shaaban, explained that this company covers about 70% of the fuel stations in the western region, stressing that they are working to resolve the congestion crisis as soon as possible and opening some fuel stations throughout the day (24 hours).

Economy



Libya's oil production reached 1.2 million bpd

The National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced, on Sunday, that the production of crude oil in the country reached 1.2 million barrels during the past 24 hours, and the production of condensate reached 55,000 barrels.

Last February, the Minister of Oil and Gas, Mohammed Aoun, said that the production of oil and gas in Libya will be increased by the end of the year if the security situation continues to improve in cooperation with international companies and their contribution in this field.

Economy



Ministry of Economy refers Consumer Protection Law to competent authorities

The Minister of Economy in the Government of National Unity, Mohammed Al-Huwaij, affirmed that the Ministry has referred the Consumer Protection Law to the competent authorities.

This came during his meeting with the President of the Libyan Federation of Consumer Protection Associations, Ahmed Al-Kurdi, at the Ministry HQ.

Al-Huwaij confirmed that the ministry submitted a proposal regarding the establishment of a Consumer Protection Authority, pointing to the importance of the role of the regulatory agencies to protect consumer rights and follow up on the local market, especially before the month of Ramadan.

Economy



Spain to take part in Tripoli International Fair

Director General of the Tripoli International Fair, Islam Jaafar, discussed with the commercial attaché at the Spanish Embassy in Libya, Margarita Bilbao, on Thursday arrangements for Spain's participation in the 49th session of the Tripoli International Fair.

The two sides reviewed the form of Spanish participation in the event and the floor space allocated for the Spanish companies in the exhibition, which will kick off next May.

Talks also covered aspects of cooperation and ways to enhance the relations between Libya and Spain.

Opinions



The race to grab the election file

By Abdullah Alkabir,
a Libyan political writer and

UN Security Council's statement supporting UN envoy's initiative was slightly delayed, but it was finally released confirming Bathily's plan to form a High-Level Panel for Elections, in order to finalize the outcome of the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS), regarding the legal basis for elections.

Release of the statement with consent of all Security Council members, without objection of neither Russia nor France, means the wording of the statement was acceptable and satisfactory to all. SC Members must reach consensus despite their different positions and conflicting interests, especially between the US and Britain on the one hand, and Russia on the other, as well as the French position which is different from the rest of its Western allies, in order for the Security Council not to lose its role in addressing international issues. This necessitates that Security Council members reach a minimum degree of consensus, at the very least, before voting to avoid the veto.

The statement was disappointing for both the HoR and the HCS-except for some representatives and members of both houses-and for political and military parties that do not want elections, and seek to extend the transitional period, as the statement directly provides for elections.

It neither referred to the unification of the executive authority nor the formation of a new government, or unification of institutions and the naming of new personalities for sovereign positions, which are the starting point for the presidents of the two houses, as well as for some political figures, who organized several forums to market a proposal for a political solution that guarantees success of elections, by forming a unified government to supervise them.

However, such proposal did not resonate with the effective international actors, who realize that opening this door means continuing obstruction, as forming a new government will not be easy in light of this fierce competition, and then the path to elections will be difficult, because any new government will not differ from its predecessors in seizing the opportunity to continue in power as long as possible.

The race between the HoR and HCS alliance on the one hand, and the UN envoy and his initiative on the other, is still at its early

stage. The two chambers seek to continue their dominance over the election file, and to bridge any gap that other parties may infiltrate through. Therefore, they rushed to submit the constitutional amendment, and they are now working on finalizing election laws through a joint committee, in a bid to abort Bathily's plan, and to abrogate the issue of the High-Level Panel for Elections. Meanwhile, the latter (Bathily) continues on his way towards activating his initiative through several meetings, with active local and regional parties. The last of which brought together leaders of security services and groups with the Military Committee, to discuss security plans to secure the elections. In any case, it will be difficult for the two chambers to pass their vision in full, because consensus on the Constitutional Amendment No. 13 has not been achieved at the HCS, and therefore it may not access the joint committee on election laws, due to the presence of a large bloc objecting to the constitutional amendment, and even if it participated in the work of the committee it may not agree on controversial issues, so it is not possible to thwart the Bathily's plan, which will start from where the two councils end. Even what the international community has accepted from them, considering it a progress that can be built upon, the HLPE may amend, and delete. The clause of the 13th constitutional amendment, that abrogates the elections altogether, if the presidential elections fail, cannot be accepted, because the cancellation of the elections, and prolonging the current entities would shatter the hopes for change, and might prompt reoccurrence of armed conflict.

Visits by US officials to Libya are endless, as elections are a phasal goal that leads to curtailing the Russian influence in Libya as far as the US administration is concerned, and in light of this insistence, with full support for Bathily's initiative, it will be difficult for HoR and HCS to keep the keys to the political solution in their hands. Then, the race will end by entrusting the finalization of the path towards elections to the High-Level Panel for Elections, under direct supervision of the UN mission.

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

Ministry of Health studies importing medical supplies from Palestine

Deputy Prime Minister/ Minister of Health Ramadan Abu Janah received a Palestinian delegation on Sunday to discuss co-operation in the health sector between Libya and Palestine. The meeting included the Palestinian Ambassador to Libya, Muhammad Rahal, a delegation from the Palestinian Chamber of Commerce and businessmen, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, Muhammad Al-Raed, and senior officials from the Ministry of Health.

Discussions focused on drug exports and authorizing Palestinian medical companies to export supplies to Libya.

Abu Janah expressed readiness to cooperate with the Palestinian side through the procedures and laws in force in Libya.

In a separate meeting on Sunday, a Libyan and Palestinian delegation agreed to form an economic committee to supervise and organize bilateral meetings to raise the level of trade exchange between the two countries.

Health



Eye Hospital opens one of the major operation departments in the region

The Eye Hospital reopened the operations department after more than a decade of suspension.

As part of one of the top facilities in the region, the department works to spare the locals seeking overseas treatment the high costs and the cumbersome journey by providing patients access to the highest quality care.

To mark the department's opening, several senior officials toured the facility for a firsthand look at the new equipment and technology.

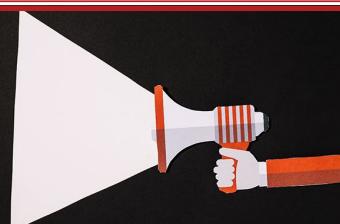
The delegation included Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, the head of the Audit Bureau, Khaled Shakshak, and Minister of Health, Ramadan Abu Junah.

Commenting on the opening of the department, PM Dbeibah said the country has a sound infrastructure and qualified cadres, and what it needs is a clear vision and strong will to promote this sector. "Patients seeking medical care in this field abroad is declining, and this presents a title of success for the Cornea Transplant Authority and the Eye Hospital," the PM added.

The Eye Hospital Director, Dr. Rania Al-Khawja, said the facility is considered one of the largest specialized departments in the Arab region and will contribute significantly to localizing treatment at home.

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Sports



Al-Akhdar beats South Africa's Gallants 4-1 at CAF Confederation Cup

Libya's Al-Akhdar football club won 4-1 against South Africa's Gallants on Sunday at Benina Martyrs Stadium in Benghazi (Anas Werfalli scored the first goal, Ary Papel the second and third and Talha Rezeg the fourth. M. Mvelase scored for Gallants) as part of the first group's matches of CAF Confederation Cup. The win is the first for Al-Akhdar and thus it needs now another win to go through to the next round.

The 4-1 win is a duplicate score for the first game between the two teams, since Gallants won 4-1 in the first leg match in South Africa. The game in Benghazi got delayed for 4 hours as Gallants' arrived late at the airport, from which they set off immediately to the stadium.

Now Al-Akhdar has five points in the last place of the group with Saint Eloi Lupopo which is the third and is only three points behind the second. The club will travel to Algeria to play the last decisive game against USM Alger. Only a win will see the Libyan team going through to the next round.

Sports



Al-Ahly Benghazi wins Libya Volleyball Cup

Al-Ahly Benghazi team has won the Libya Volleyball Cup for the fourth time in its history, after defeating Swehli three sets to one at the Misrata Great Hall court

Al-Ahly Benghazi imposed its control and defeated Al-Swehli days after achieving the eleventh league title in its history.

Al-Ahly Benghazi had won the title in 1989, 2010, and 2018.

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Photo of the Week



Tripoli Weather Forecast



TODAY

23°

14°

TUE



19°/12°

WED



20°/12°

THU



22°/14°

FRI



25°/16°

SAT



30°/13°

SUN



24°/11°



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