

Politics



Military leaders' meeting in Tripoli sees agreement on forming a joint force

UNSMIL said on Monday that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) met in Tripoli in the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, and chiefs of staff of the military, Mohammed Al-Haddad and his eastern counterpart Abdelrazik Al-Nathori, and security units in the western, eastern, and southern regions.

UNSMIL said the discussion focused on the role of the military and security institutions in providing a conducive environment for advancing the political process and holding free and fair elections during 2023.

The meeting in Tripoli emphasized that the dialogue should be Libyan-Libyan and inside Libya, rejecting any foreign interference in Libyan affairs and reiterating full commitment to the outcomes of the dialogues between the military and security commanders that were decided during their first and second meetings held respectively in Tunis and

Tripoli.

The discussion reiterated rejection of fighting and all forms of violence throughout the entirety of Libya's territory, stressing the continuation of work towards unifying the military institutions through the Chiefs of Staff; unifying the security institutions; and the rest of state institutions.

It also reaffirmed the need for forming a unified government for all Libyan state institutions, in addition to increasing efforts to address the challenges facing displaced people and those affected by fighting and wars.

The attendees reiterated the need for the completion of national reconciliation and reparation efforts, commitment to pursue elections and the need for the House of Representatives and the High Council of State to complete their tasks.

According to the UNSMIL, the attendees agreed to hold the next meeting during the month of Ramadan in Benghazi.

The meeting of the military leaders was preceded by another meeting of security and military leaders chaired by the Interior Minister, Emad Al-Trabelsi, and included representatives of the Government of National Unity, members of the 5+5 JMC, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Bathily, and military leaders from eastern and western Libya.

The meeting discussed uniting efforts to organize elections, and to establish mechanisms for communication between security and military units, according to the Ministry of Interior of the Government of National Unity.

The delegation of the military, which arrived in Tripoli on Sunday afternoon, included the Chief of Staff of Haftar's forces Al-Nathori, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior in Bashagha's government, Faraj Gayem, the director of Khalifa Haftar's office, Khairy Al-Tamimi, members of the JMC.

Politics



Turkey: Normalizing ties with Egypt is vital for Libya

The spokesman for the Turkish Presidency, Ibrahim Kalin, says that the stable development of Turkish-Egyptian relations not only benefits the two countries but is of the utmost importance for Libya and the entire region.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu's recent visit to Egypt was important and fruitful," Kalin told Anadolu Agency on Sunday.

According to the Turkish official, Cavusoglu discussed in Cairo regional issues and the eastern Mediterranean file. They also appointed ambassadors after a hiatus of nearly ten years.

Following his visit to Cairo last Monday, Cavusoglu said the agreements between Libya and Turkey, including the marine memorandum of understanding, do not threaten Egypt, just as Cairo's deal with Greece was not against Ankara.

Regarding military cooperation with Libya, the top Turkish diplomat made it clear that his country is not in competition with Egypt in the Libyan arena, confirming that they agreed to continue close consultation and cooperation on Libya.

Politics



IAEA confirms finding almost all missing uranium in Libya

The International Atomic Energy Agency informed member states that most of the roughly 2.5 tons of natural uranium ore concentrate (UOC) recently declared missing from a site in Libya have been found at that site, according to Reuters.

The International Atomic Energy Agency informed member states in a similar confidential statement on March 15 first reported by Reuters that 10 drums containing the UOC had gone missing from a Libyan site not under government control.

Reuters reported that while the amount of fissile material is less than that required for a nuclear bomb, and would need to go through processes known as conversion and enrichment to be usable in one, the IAEA said at the time that losing it "may present a radiological risk, as well as nuclear security concerns". Following eastern Libyan forces' statement last week that they had found the drums of UOC near the warehouse they were taken from in southern Libya, the IAEA carried out an inspection on Tuesday and found that only "a relatively small amount of UOC was still unaccounted for," Friday's IAEA statement said. "During the (inspection), Agency inspectors observed that drums that had not been present at the declared location at the time of the previous (inspection) had since been brought back and left in close proximity to the declared location. Agency inspectors confirmed that these drums contained UOC and witnessed their transfer back to within the declared location for storage." The statement added.

Politics



Bathily refers to alternatives if relevant bodies fail to act

The head of the UN Support Mission In Libya (UNSMIL), Abdoulaye Bathily, said on Friday that he will seek other alternatives if the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) fail to agree on electoral laws in a timely manner.

Reuters quoted him as saying he would not accept moves to derail a march to elections and that the two councils must deliver the voting laws promptly.

"Of course, if they don't do it, they will be accountable to the Libyan people, to the international community, to the regional leaders who are supporting them in this process," he added.

Responding to a question on the alternatives, the UN envoy said, "we will talk about that when the time comes."

Last month, the UN envoy announced a new initiative prompting the joint HoR and HCS committee to approve clear electoral laws in June in order for a national vote to go ahead this year.

Politics

Dbeibah: Stable conditions in Tripoli strengthened efforts towards unity

The stable conditions in Tripoli have galvanized local and international efforts to unify the military and security establishment, says Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

"This climate of stability also contributed to the progress of our preparations for achieving national elections, according to fair and impartial laws that end the transitional stages," the PM said in a tweet he shared on his account Sunday.

Dbeibah's remarks came following a security meeting in Tripoli Sunday, which brought together senior figures from the west and east camps.

He said that elections would achieve a peaceful solution to the division and wars that threaten the country and community cohesion.

"Our constants are clear; yes to the civil state, no to the military state, yes to elections, no to extension, yes to peace, no to wars."

Under the 5 + 5 Joint Military Committee, military leaders affiliated with Dbeibah's government and the rival authorities in the east met in Tripoli Sunday for UN-led talks over unifying the military and security institutions.

Sunday's session was a follow-up to a meeting held in Tunisia the past few days under the auspices of Bathily, who said it was to "bridge the views of the two parties and a prelude to unifying the security and military forces."



Economy

Government approves NOC plan for 2023 - 2027

The Supreme Council for Energy Affairs approved the National Oil Corporation's plan for 2023-2027 during a regular meeting on Wednesday.

The council affirmed its support for the NOC and the alternative energy project, stressing its readiness to facilitate procedures and remove all obstacles the project may face.

Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah headed the council's third regular meeting held at the NOC's HQ in the presence of the council's members and NOC experts. A statement by the PM's office said the group discussed several issues, inter alia, the plan to raise production to two million barrels per day, the Corporation's estimated budget, the carbon dioxide emissions for facilities (A and E), and procedures to start activating the alternative energy file.

Dbeibah underscored that supporting the National Oil Corporation and its programs is a priority for all state institutions.

He stressed the need to embark on the alternative energy project as it "has become an urgent necessity that cannot be delayed further."

The PM also suggested inviting international companies to participate in the project, to benefit from their expertise and ensure diligent implementation within an adopted timetable.



Economy

Oil Budget Follow-up Committee reviews plan to increase Libya's oil production to 2 million bpd

The Oil Budget Follow-up Committee discussed, in its second meeting of the current year, the National Oil Corporation's (NOC) operational and development plan, which aims to raise production to two million barrels per day, with the aim of reviewing the plan and referring it to the High Council of Energy for discussion and approval.

Hokoometna platform indicated that the meeting saw discussions on the development spending of the NOC's budget.

The head of the committee, Mohammed Al-Zaidani, confirmed that the government was working through the committee and the relevant ministries to support the NOC's programs, with the aim of stabilizing and increasing production.

The Chairman of the NOC, Farhat Bengdara, gave a presentation and explained the features of the development plan for 2023, which would aim to increase oil and gas production, and enhance cooperation with international companies in the field of exploration.

The meeting reiterated the necessity of issuing a quarter-year's report for disclosure and transparency of all expenditures in the oil sector, as well as for announcing the executive steps for operational and exploratory projects.



Economy

FAO: 300,000 Libyans need aid in 2023

Food price inflation continued to rise at high levels in most North African countries, but Libya was the only exception due to continued subsidies on consumer goods, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

In its quarterly report, released on Tuesday, FAO said that subsidies for consumer goods and other basic foodstuffs prevented a significant price rise during the last quarter of last year in Libya, compared to Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania.

The organization estimated the humanitarian needs in Libya during 2023 at about 300 thousand people, less than (4% of the population), compared to 800 thousand people (10% of the population) last year.

According to the organization's data, the total cereal production in North Africa for the year 2022 stood at 33 million tons; 10% less than the previous five years, while the wheat crop was the most affected, as it decreased to 16.6 million tons, 20% less than the average, according to FAO.

It also estimated that grain import needs in the region will reach 51 million tons in 2022-23, an increase of 2% from the average in order to compensate for the decline in production, while part of these imports will also go to state reserves, to better prepare for any future supply disruptions.

Politics



Dbeibah follows up on foods' prices with Ministry of Economy officials

The Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah made an inspection visit to the Ministry of Economy and Trade on Monday to follow up on the workflow in the ministry and its emergency room regarding the general level of prices during the month of Ramadan.

The room officials submitted the report on the work confirming the availability of all commodities at affordable prices except for meat whose price needs a

number of measures to be taken by the Ministry of Economy, the National Center for Animal Health and the Ministry of Agriculture.

The meeting also reviewed the Ministry of Economy and Trade's proposals regarding amending some provisions in joint-stock companies, facilitating and regulating export procedures for local industries, addressing the tax and customs system, what contributes to supporting

the private sector and its workers, and forming a working group from the Ministries of Economy, Planning, Finance and the National Council for Economic Development to submit a proposal to the Prime Minister's office.

Dbeibah also stressed the need to follow up the trademark file, publish it in the Official Gazette and address problems with the Ministry of Justice, hailing the efforts of the emergency room to follow up the

Economy

NOC aims for fuel self-sufficiency in light of soaring global oil prices

Operations to install an oil refinery in the south will begin within 36 months, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) chief, Farhat Bingadara, has confirmed.

The contract with the US Honeywell company was to increase the production capacity of the refineries in Zawiya and to find solutions for the Ras Lanuf refinery, Bingadara was quoted by the NOC as saying.

"We aspire to reach a stage of self-sufficiency in fuels and stop importing from abroad due to the high cost," he added.

According to the NOC head, Honeywell will implement smart technology solutions in oil and gas facilities, such as condensation, recycling, converting gas emissions into commodities, or forwarding them to power stations.

As one of the main pillars in the oil sector, the NOC places great interest in refineries, Bingadara noted.

On Sunday, Zallaf Libyan Oil & Gas company signed an agreement to start constructing the South Refinery project with the American Honeywell UOP consortium.

The NOC said the step comes to alleviate the suffering of the southern community, resolve the fuel shortage crisis there, and create a spatial development in the south.

Economy



Ministry of Industry discusses the return of Chinese companies to work from Libya

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Industry, Mustafa Al-Samo, has discussed with representatives of a number of Chinese companies, their return to work from Libya and create partnerships with the public and private sectors.

Al-Samo confirmed Libya's readiness for the return of Chinese companies, within the framework of the ministry's plan to activate the industrial sector by attracting local companies, banks and foreign companies, according to a statement by the Ministry of Industry.

Opinions



Has Bathily started activating the alternative options?

By **Abdullah Alkibir**,
a Libyan political writer and

The meeting of security and military leaders and figures from east and west of the country in Tripoli, under the auspices of the UN envoy, about two weeks after a previous meeting in Tunis, is a remarkable development in the Libyan crisis. The 5 + 5 Military Committee participated in the two meetings, which will make it an essential pillar in any rapprochement at the security and military levels between the East and West camps.

It is no secret that the recent visits by American officials, the latest of which is by the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Barbara Leaf, are the real engine for all current political developments. Figures close to Haftar arrived in Tripoli, to discuss with their counterparts in the west of the country, securing elections, using a joint force that is to be formed from all parts of the country. Haftar would not have allowed such an engagement in normal circumstances, and without US pressure, but the Libyan file has become one of the American priorities, as a natural result of developments of the war in Ukraine.

Although not much to be achieved and outcome will be limited, or superficial at best, as it is not expected to see profound results on the ground from such meetings. The final outcome will not exceed what the 5 + 5 Military Committee has achieved so far. Like forming a joint force to secure the south, and to remove or limit the influence of the dominant militias there, which means Haftar will lose vital positions that generate money for his militias, such as smuggling crossing points, fuel stations, as well as the oil fields that he used to extort the Tripoli authorities. But, will Haftar allow a force from the West, which until recently was hostile to him and destroyed his dreams of controlling the capital, to participate in securing the south, thus weakening his influence and control?

Some reports indicate that Haftar has accepted the formation of this force to only secure the elections, that is, it has nothing to do with the south, but if the American pressure continues, and such a force is indeed formed, there are no guarantees that it will not be directed to the south to confront the Wagner groups, and this should raise Haftar's concern, as the war continues in

Ukraine. The file of Russian influence in Libya, through the Wagner Groups, will remain high on US list of priorities. Furthermore, the fact-finding committee's threat to refer a list of names of human rights violators and perpetrators of war crimes in Libya to the International Criminal Court means the coming weeks and months entail vast areas of concern that await Haftar and some of his sons and militia leaders.

No doubt, communication at this level has broken a thick barrier between two poles that were recently on the line of armed confrontation, and it will have direct repercussions on the active political parties in the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS). Signs of readiness to secure elections with a joint force affiliated to the two chiefs of staff, drops the argument that it is not possible to hold elections due to the security divisions. It is an argument marketed by representatives, and members of HoR, and HCS respectively. However, the said meetings being sponsored by UNSMIL are accorded a supportive international dimension. After this meeting, the feeling is growing in both HoR and HCS that UNSMIL is quietly pulling the rug from under their feet, and that Bathily may have begun to activate his alternatives, after his repeated pronouncements of such alternatives. Each time, such pronouncement was accompanied by severe criticism of the House of Representatives and the High Council of State. The security and military leaders may well support the UN envoy's approach towards the formation of the High-Level Panel for Elections, which he announced in his last briefing to the UN Security Council, especially if these leaders do secure an appropriate share of the seats in this panel, and this will further weaken the HoR and HCS, and signal the end of their hegemony over the management of the Libyan political solution.

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



Libya, Turkey discuss cooperation in medical training

A committee commissioned by the Ministry of Health met with representatives of Turkish medical institutions to discuss cooperation in the field of training and treatment of Libyan patients in specific medical centres.

The committee is in charge of developing programs and plans with the Turkish side to train medical and paramedical personnel in the specialties of internal medicine, eyes, neurology, orthopedics, dermatology, intensive care, cardiac surgery, oncology surgery, pediatric care, diagnostic radiology, and anesthesia," a statement by Libya's Health Ministry said.

It also disclosed its intention to set up cooperation programs between Turkish educational and medical institutions and Ibn Sina Teaching Hospital in Sirte by convening joint scientific conferences, workshops, and scientific seminars, sharing experiences, and providing medical consultations remotely.

The Libyan delegation, who is currently visiting Turkey, toured the Atlas University Hospital, Istinye University Hospital, Istanbul Orthopedic Center, and Atlas University.

On their part, the hosts expressed willingness to enhance cooperation with Libya and their readiness to sign cooperation agreements in the health field.

WHO concerned over rise of measles cases in Libya

The World Health Organization (WHO) said it was concerned about the rise in measles cases in Libya, especially in the municipalities of the south and west, adding that in the epidemiological weeks 1 to 9, the Libyan National Center for Disease Control reported that 93 of 391 suspected measles cases had been confirmed, with no related deaths.

"The re-emergence of sporadic outbreaks is a worrying sign of a heightened risk for spreading vaccine-preventable diseases that could place children's health at significant risk," said Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Libya.

She added that the ongoing conflict, pandemic-related disruptions and increasing inequalities in access to vaccines globally and in the Region have led to the diversion of resources from routine immunization programmes in Libya, leaving children unprotected against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

WHO urged the Libyan health authorities and the international community to provide more support to help address critical health needs in the country, saying it acknowledged the efforts made by the National Centre for Disease Control and the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre to respond to the current measles outbreaks by organizing supplementary immunization campaigns, improving measles case management, enhancing infection prevention and control measures, and launching risk communication and community engagement activities in the outbreak areas while supporting routine immunization efforts.



Over 50,000 people in Libya received MSF services last year, organization says

More than 50,000 people in Libya benefitted from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) medical services last year, including in the cities of Tripoli, Misrata, Zawiya, Zuwara, Bin Walid, Nesma, Zletan, and Khoms, a press statement The Libya Observer received from the organization on Thursday said.

Since the 2011 uprising in Libya, MSF said it supported public health care centres, hospitals, and illegal migration centres, and reached out to people needing medical and psychological support regardless of which country they are from or what their political affiliations are, emphasizing that its focus remains on those in the most severe and immediate danger.

"It is fundamental to our humanitarian organisation to always act in the best interest of patients, also respect their confidentiality, their right to make their own decisions and do them no harm," Says Gabriele Ganci, MSF Head of Mission in Libya.

In its statement, the MSF listed the services provided by its members, including primary health care, mental health support, sexual and reproductive health consultations, and protection services, noting that its teams worked in health facilities, detention centres, and urban settings to Libyans and non-Libyans.

Sports



Tunisia beats Libya, qualifies for AFCON 2023

Libya lost the second leg match against Tunisia at Benina Stadium in Benghazi 0-1 to Tunisia on Tuesday as part of the fourth round of the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON 2023 Ivory Coast). This is the second loss for Libya against Tunisia in a week's time as it lost the first leg match in Tunis 0-3. Now Libya has lost three matches of Group J and its hopes to qualify for AFCON 2023 are shrinking.

Tunisia qualified immediately after the win to AFCON 2023 as it won twice against Libya and once against Equatorial Guinea, and drew Botswana. Tunisia has now 10 points before two rounds of the end of qualifiers. Equatorial Guinea has 9 points, Libya 3 and Botswana 1.

Local



Municipality of central Tripoli begins streets maintenance program

The Municipality of central Tripoli announced on Saturday, the start of maintenance and development work on a number of streets in the Al-Dahra area.

The municipality stated on its Facebook page that a number of companies are carrying out these works in partnership with the National Oil Corporation.

On Friday, the General Services Company in Tripoli reopened the "Jinan Al-Nawar" park, after completing its maintenance, in the presence of the Minister of Local Government, Badr Al-Din Al-Toumi, and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Services Company, Mohammed Ismail.

Local



MMRA controls water leakage near Al-Khums city

The Man-Made River Authority (MMRA) announced on Monday that it had controlled water leaks on the eastern path near the city of Al-Khums.

The MMRA pointed out that controlling the leakage prevented the loss of about one million cubic meters of water and its interruption in many cities and municipalities.

Earlier, the MMRA warned of the seriousness of encroachments on the water paths, calling on the security authorities to assume their responsibilities in protecting transport stations and paths.

Culture



Libyan-Tunisian agreement to reactivate cultural center in Tripoli

Libya and Tunisia have agreed to reactivate the Libyan-Tunisian Cultural Center in the two countries and to revive the activity of Dar Al-Kitab.

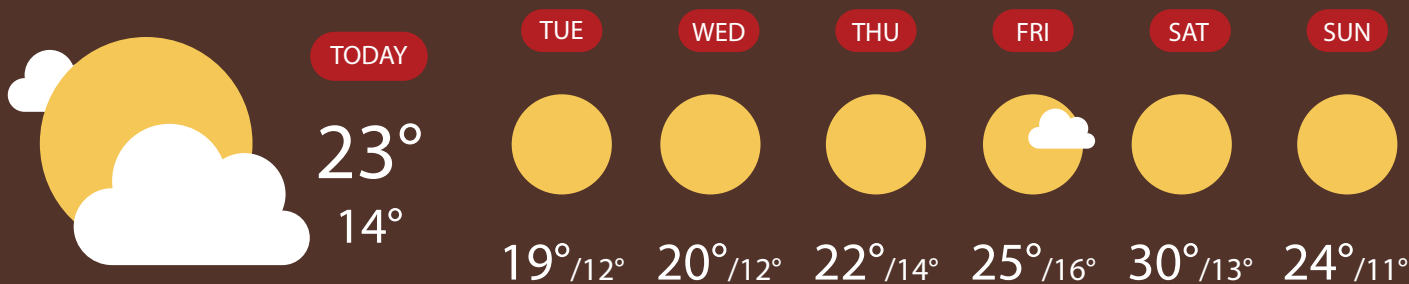
This came after an official visit carried out by a high-level delegation to Libya that lasted for several days, meeting with Libyan Ministry of Culture officials, according to the Tunisian Ministry of Cultural Affairs Facebook page.

The ministry added that the discussions with the Libyan Minister of Culture, Mabrouka Toghi, led to reaching a final formula for a joint cultural project, in addition to reviewing prospects for cooperation between the two countries in various cultural fields.

Photo of the Week



Tripoli Weather Forecast



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