



Politics

Washington: Arms trafficking could reproduce conflict in Libya

The US ambassador to the UN Security Council, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said on Tuesday that Washington is concerned about the ongoing arms trafficking, as it could lead to reproducing conflict in Libya.

In Tuesday's UNSC session, Greenfield affirmed their full commitment to stopping the supply of arms to Libya, insisting that expelling Wagner from Libya is essential for maintaining peace there.

She urged the 6 + 6 joint committee to contribute to the UN-led efforts by promptly addressing obstacles that undermine the elections in Libya.

The US diplomat also urged not to buy oil illegally away from the NOC, saying that such an act undermines stability in Libya.

"The Libyan people have been waiting for a long time for stability, and the interest of the Libyan state must be put first," Greenfield added.

Politics

UN envoy asks Libyan leaders to deliver on their commitments to holding elections this year



The UN envoy to Libya Abdoulaye Bathily told the Security Council in a briefing Tuesday that his work to support Libya on its path to elections in 2023 and broaden the political process to include a wider scope of actors is underway, adding that he had been engaging key actors through shuttle diplomacy to encourage compromise on key issues blocking progress on elections, and offered the technical expertise of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to the 6+6 Committee formed by the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High Council of State (HCS) to establish electoral laws under Constitutional Amendment 13.

"I urge the leaders of the two chambers to expedite the work of the 6+6 Committee and publish a timebound work programme," Bathily said, adding "For elections to take place this year, the electoral laws must be completed in time for the High National Elections Commission to begin implementing the electoral process by early July."

In addition to expediting elections, Bathily

said his engagements aimed to facilitate the adoption of a code of conduct that commits all candidates and stakeholders to engage in elections in a constructive manner and accept the results.

"It is vital for the success of elections that all parts of Libyan society are involved and have their voices heard," Bathily said, adding that elections should be a "peaceful competition of visions and programmes" and not "an occasion that triggers hate speech and violence."

To promote stability and ensure security during and following elections, Bathily referred to his March facilitation of a series of meetings in Tunis, Tripoli, Benghazi and Sebha between the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and Libyan security and military actors from all three regions of Libya.

"Leaders and representatives of military units and security formations operating in western, eastern and southern Libya committed to support all stages of elections, reject violence throughout Libya, take prac-

tical steps for the safe return of internally displaced persons, release detainees and address the missing persons issue in the context of national reconciliation," Bathily told the Security Council, adding that as a result of those consultations, on 8 April 2023, Haftar's forces released six detainees from western Libya as a confidence-building measure.

Bathily also pushed for the removal of foreign fighters and mercenaries from Libya, referring to his travel to Sudan, Chad and Niger to secure support from authorities. "Under UN auspices, liaison committees from Libya, Sudan, Chad, and Niger also met to discuss strengthening cooperation and establishing an information-sharing mechanism." He said, calling on the international community to "remain mobilized a vigilant" to support the moment toward elections and added that he is committed to continue to use his good offices to facilitate progress, urging Libyan leaders to deliver on their commitments and "meet the people's expectation to choose leaders this year."

Parliament committee demands US defendants be prosecuted for preaching Christianity

The Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives has demanded that the US defendants arrested for promoting Christianity in Libya be presented to the judicial authorities as soon as possible.

About a week ago, the security services in Libya announced the arrest of Libyan nationals for allegedly converting to Christianity. The interrogations of the Christian converts led to the identification of a US network proselytizing Christianity. Several US nationals were arrested as a result.

The committee stated that "the main sus-

pect, who is an American citizen, exceeded his jurisdiction and exploited his position as a teacher by luring young people to spread his beliefs without the knowledge of their families."

It called for tighter laws to protect Libyan society, adding that preaching another religion is rejected by social norms in the county.

However, the London-based Al-Sharq Al-Awsat quoted official sources from the Government of National Unity as saying that four US defendants charged in the respective case left Libya from Mitiga Airport on Friday.



It may be worth noting that converting from Islam to other faiths is forbidden under interpretations of Sharia, as converts are considered apostates.

Apostasy in Islam is a crime punishable by death. The religious converts are given a grace period specified in the Sharia law to reconsider their decision before the sentence is carried out.

Politics

Victims Organization for Human Rights calls for sending investigation team to Al-Kuwaifiyah prison

The Victims Organization for Human Rights has called on the military prosecutor affiliated with Khalifa Haftar, Faraj Al-Sawasa, to send an investigation team to Al-Kuwaifiyah prison in Benghazi to inspect the conditions of the prisoners.

The organization said that the inmates who went on hunger strike in Al-Kweifiyah prison is now held in solitary confinement, and subjected to beatings and torture, by a number of officers, including "Ramadan Qajul" and "Hassan Najm", denouncing the silence of the Military Prosecution and the authorities in the eastern region.

The organization called for the direct release of prisoners and the dispatch of a medical team to assess the health status of the prisoners and provide them with the necessary health care.



Politics

Norland reiterates his country support for Bathily's efforts

The US Special Envoy to Libya, Richard Norland, renewed his country support for the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Abdoulaye Bathily, efforts for holding elections in Libya.

"We reaffirm full US support for Bathily as he continues to actively engage with Libyan leaders and international stakeholders to establish a roadmap for timely elections in Libya", Norland said.

He also added that the UN mediation paired with a strong and genuine political will by Libyan leaders are the keys to establish a basis for elections, calling on Libyan leaders to respect the will of the Libyan people to elect their leaders.

Politics

HoR committee discusses latest report of Independent Fact-Finding Mission on alleged violations in Libya



The Fact-Finding Committee on Violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law in the House of Representatives held a virtual meeting on Wednesday at the HoR in Benghazi, during which it discussed the latest report of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya.

The HoR official Facebook account stated that the meeting listened to a briefing by each member of the committee about the report and the extent to which its findings were accepted.

Each member of the committee presented his recommendations and proposals for work mechanisms regarding the report, provided that a statement will be issued at a later time that includes the committee's point of view. The meeting also discussed means of coordination with the fact-finding mission of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Economy

Al-Kabir takes part virtually in 7th Annual Central Banking Roundtable Conference

The Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, Al-Siddiq Al-Kabeer, participated in the 7th Annual Central Banking Roundtable Conference organized by the American Columbia University.

Media office of the Central Bank of Libya stated that Al-Kabir participated in the conference, which was held on Monday via teleconference, in the presence of several global central bank governors.

The conference discussed the challenges and response to inflation, geopolitical risks and their impact on the work of central banks, and the impact of the Ukrainian-Russian war on the economies of countries and its effects on monetary policies, interest rates and inflation.

Economy



Libya, Algeria set to overtake Russia as Italy's leading gas supplier

Italy has reduced its supplies of Russian gas to 10% after the new energy deals it struck with Libya and Algeria.

"We used to provide 40% of our gas needs through Russia, and today it has decreased to just over 10%, and thus we have effectively overcome our dependence on Moscow," Italy's Minister of the Environment and Energy Security, Gilberto Pichetto Fratin told the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera.

The minister indicated that the reduction of Russian supplies is offset by the increased gas imports running through the Adriatic Sea from Azerbaijan and Africa thanks to the new agreements with Algeria and Libya.

On January 28, the National Oil Corporation and the Italian energy company Eni signed an agreement to produce eight billion dollars worth of gas to boost energy supplies to Europe.

Prime Minister Georgia Meloni of Italy oversaw the agreement during her visit to Tripoli earlier this year.

The NOC and Eni's deal allows Libya to increase its gas supplies for the domestic market and boost its exports by developing two offshore gas fields.

According to Eni, the respective fields will start production by 2026 with a daily target of 750 million cubic feet

Libya exports gas to Italy through the Green Stream pipeline. Eni will have to increase the rate of gas pumping through this pipeline to free itself from Russian imports.



Economy

Ministry of Finance: Revenue has surpassed expenditure in first 2023 quarter

The Libyan Ministry of Finance said in its public financial disclosure and transparency report, that the state's general revenue for the first quarter of 2023 amounted to 26,131,157,000 dinars, while the public expenditure amounted to 18,113,220,000 dinars.

It said the total oil revenues amounted to 25 billion dinars, the sovereign revenues amounted to 512 million dinars, and the remaining account balances for previous years amounted to 117 million dinars.

The Ministry of Finance said that oil sales revenue amounted to 14.323 billion dinars, while revenues from taxes and royalties from oil companies amounted to 11.178 billion dinars.

Regarding government public spending, which exceeded 18 billion dinars, the Ministry said that 73% of the expenditure was allocated to the salaries section, 13,223,983,000 dinars.

The Ministry added that more than 3 billion dinars were allocated for support, at a rate of 18%, about 904 million dinars were assigned for operating expenses, at a rate of 5%, and more than 705 million dinars were set for development projects, at a rate of 4%.



Economy

Dbeibah directs respective authorities to facilitate livestock imports measures

Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah has instructed the National Center for Animal Health to facilitate procedures for livestock and meat suppliers in cooperation with the Central Bank.

Dbeibah convened a meeting with a group of livestock and meat suppliers to discuss preparation for Eid al-Adha.

He called for exploring new markets and sources of supply bearing in mind the safety and health specifications.

The suppliers expressed their gratitude for "the PM's interest" in providing the Eid al-Adha needs, in which most Libyans sacrifice animals to demonstrate their obedience to Allah.

During the first two months of this year, Libya spent more than \$150 million on livestock, meat, and fodder, including \$12 million for live livestock, \$40 million for frozen meat, and \$110 million for fodder, according to the Ministry of Economy and Trade.

On Eid al-Adha, families that can afford to sacrifice a ritually acceptable animal (sheep, goat, camel, or cow) do so and gift some of the flesh to the poor, friends, and neighbours.



Economy

Al-Hawij discusses participation of Indonesian companies in Tripoli International Fair

The Minister of Economy and Trade in the Government of National Unity, Mohammed Al-Hawij, has discussed with the Indonesian Ambassador to Libya, Dede Achmad Rifai, the arrangements for the participation of Indonesian companies in the 49th Tripoli International Fair, scheduled for next May.

In the meantime, the Government of National Unity plans to inaugurate the new Tripoli Fair project, to be built on an area of 450,000 square metres.



Economy

Libyan oil Minister takes part in international discussion on future of sustainable energy

The Minister of Oil and Gas Mohammed Oun participated via video conference in a high-level international panel discussion on the future of sustainable energy through a global perspective on the sidelines of the sixth Nigeria International Energy Summit.

The panel discussion included the impact of demand and supply on energy, the growth rate of the global economy, the current high inflation, the performance of financial institutions, the volatile economic conditions, the effects on market instability, in addition to the security conditions and wars that have a negative impact on the stability and security of energy markets, as well as the mechanisms for achieving zero emissions and carbon removal (net zero carbon), promoting the circular carbon economy framework and carbon capture, utilization and storage.

Oun said that the ministry paid great attention to achieving its strategic vision with the aim of raising the efficiency of advanced technical operational performance and providing a safe work environment, pointing out that the huge challenges require concerted efforts to implement the strategy of the Ministry of Oil and Gas in the various activities of the oil and gas industry with real partners and availability of resources (security situation - competence - financing).

Oun also talked about the depletion of oil wealth (the use of fossil fuels for energy production), the implementation of energy transition projects, the intensification of the use of renewable energy sources, and the world's participation in making greater progress in achieving a sustainable mix of clean energy (reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions that harm the environment and the climate).

He pointed out that the biggest challenge is for African countries to unite and make every effort to achieve comprehensive development for the African people, especially for the provision of electricity and cooking gas to every African citizen.



Opinions

What is behind the Sudanese Sporting Club deal?

By Abdullah Alkibir,
a Libyan political writer and commentator

The media reported the news of the appointment of one of Haftar's sons as honorary president of the Sudanese Al-Merreich Sporting club, in exchange for two million dollars.

Comments on the news on the Libyan social media pages, varied between anger, astonishment and sarcasm, questioning the source of the funds with which Haftar Jr will finance the Sudanese club.

The Sudanese press indicated that some members of the board of directors rejected this appointment, as well as the club's Consultative Council. However, this objection will have no effect after presenting Haftar as honorary president in an official ceremony.

The club's newspaper introduced Haftar's son to its readers as a chess lover, enjoys the company of pets, advocates for humanity, loves poetry, and is a diplomat. Such alleged high profile implies that he possesses extensive experience and tremendous capabilities in diplomatic work, although Haftar Jr, Al-Siddiq Haftar was not known of holding any diplomatic position, or pursuing of any work of a diplomatic nature.

Even in the midst of his family and its influence in eastern Libya, or the management of the property it possesses in Libya, America, and some other countries, he does not play a prominent role like his brothers who rose to high military ranks, in the forces led by their father, and in record time they hold the highest ranks and commanded the most important battalions, and they accumulated huge fortunes from exporting scrap metal, robbing the central bank Benghazi branch, and smuggling of oil and other commodities. The newspaper only referred to a single diplomatic mission, in which Haftar Jr traveled to the UAE where he had a late Ramadan meal with princes and officials, at the end of which he wished them continued blessings and stability for the UAE.

Al-Siddiq Haftar has no military, political or social activity, but weeks ago he began posting several stanzas of poetry with his voice on social media, an initiative that now appears to be a preparatory step, by which he promotes himself as a public figure with cultural interests, before announcing the purchase of the honorary presidency of the Al-Merreich Club.

The step of Haftar Jr, appearing in Sudan and installing him as honorary president of one of its oldest clubs is just a cover-up for political and military goals related to the Khalifa Haftar's project. Such as renewing old alliances between

Khalifa Haftar and some prominent militia leaders in Sudan, such as Mohamed Hamdan Daglo Hemedti, Vice- President of the Sovereignty Council, and Wagner groups which have activity in Sudan. Then the honorary presidency of a Sudanese club can be used to accomplish some things without raising suspicions, especially after the Wagner group was classified as a transnational criminal organization by the US administration, and Haftar cannot continue to cooperate with them openly. Such classification places Haftar, being a US citizen, under the US law.

Among the possibilities also mentioned for this step is Haftar's willingness to push his son, Al-Siddiq Haftar to the presidential elections if he is unable to run for any reason, and the activity through sports clubs in a neighboring country is an appropriate gateway to present him as a Libyan public figure, whose activity transcends the Libyan geography.

There is more than one reason to suspect the existence of political goals behind Haftar's son move to buy the honorary presidency of the Al-Merreich Club, such as the appearance of the officer Khairy al-Tamimi, director of Haftar's office, accompanying Haftar's son during his reception at Khartoum airport, which means that there is a link between Haftar's political project and the purchase of the honorary presidency to his son, as well as his meeting with Hemedti, Vice-President of the Sudanese Sovereignty Council, who provided Haftar with Sudanese military units that provided assistance to Haftar in his wars in the past years. Is it just a coincidence that the war broke out between the Sudanese army and Hemedti's militia two days after this meeting? Dbeibah's approach to consolidate his government's relationship with the government of Niger, could be an additional reason for Haftar to build bridges with Sudan, and renew relations with a major wing of the Sudanese authority through the sports portal. All neighboring countries have an influence of varying degrees in Libya, and this calls for the normalization of relations with them, to ensure their support in any possible political shift, if the elections become a fait accompli due to international pressure.

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

Health Minister urges World Bank to double efforts for Libyan projects

The Deputy Prime Minister of the National Unity Government, Minister-designate of Health, Ramadan Abu Janah, called on the World Bank to double efforts to achieve the goals set in joint health projects with the Libyan Ministry of Health.

His remarks came during his meeting with a delegation from the World Bank, headed by the Regional Director of the Maghreb and Malta Department, in Washington.

Abu Janah's discussions with the World Bank delegation focused on prospects for bilateral cooperation between the two sides in the coming period, in the field of human resource development, as well as health programs and projects funded by the World Bank.



Health

Libyan NCDC warns of Marburg virus outbreaks in Tanzania, Equatorial Guinea and Burundi

The National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) has warned against traveling to Tanzania, Equatorial Guinea and Burundi, except when absolutely necessary, due to the outbreak of the Marburg virus there.

In a statement issued on Monday, the NCDC called on travelers to those countries to take a number of precautions, especially avoiding contact with the patients who show symptoms such as fever, muscle pain and rash, and to avoid areas where the virus is spread in those countries.

The NCDC also asked travelers to avoid contact with blood and other body fluids, not to visit caves and mines where bats live, and to avoid contact with animals such as chimpanzees and gorillas.

It recommended isolating or quarantining travelers coming from those countries, going to the nearest health institution and informing doctors when symptoms appear, which include also sore throat, diarrhea, weakness, vomiting, stomach pain or unjustified bleeding from anywhere in the body or bruises. It said the period of isolation or quarantine should last 21 days.



Health

Libya's Health Minister discusses with US delegation cooperation with American companies for medical supplies

The Minister-designate of Health, Ramadan Abu Janah, has reiterated the importance of the return of American companies specialized in the health sector to work in Libya, adding in a meeting on Friday with the Chairman of the African-American Chamber of Commerce, and a number of representatives of major pharmaceutical and medical supplies manufacturers, in the presence of the US envoy to Libya, ambassador Richard Norland.

Abu Janah referred to the plans of the Government of National Unity and the importance of establishing development companies within the "plan for the return of life" announced by the Prime Minister.

The Ministry of Health said that during the meeting, the two sides discussed strengthening cooperation with the American companies specialized in manufacturing medical supplies.

Crimes

Security patrol in Zawiya comes under fire while raiding fuel smuggling dens

Security forces in Zawiya came under heavy gunfire while on a mission to raid fuel smuggling dens on Tuesday.

The Security Directorate of Zawiya said a patrol affiliated with the joint security room survived a shooting on the high road near the Zawiya refinery bridge.

The incident occurred during rush hour as people were traveling home from work, which generated panic and fear and led to a big traffic jam.

The security directorate denounced the "disgraceful act" and said it was to protect corruptors and outlaw gangs.

Culture

An ancient Roman cemetery discovered in Misrata

The Ministry of Interior of the Government of National Unity announced, on Thursday, the discovery of an ancient Roman cemetery at a beach in the city of Misrata. The ministry stated that a communication was received by the Misrata Public Works Company, while it was carrying out dredging and cleaning of the seashore in Abu Fatima Ras al-Kom, about finding a suspected archaeological site. The ministry said that following the communication, they moved to the site with an antiquities' expert, and the site turned out to be an ancient Roman cemetery containing human skeletons.

'Due legal measures were taken regarding the site and the report of the communication was referred to the Public Order Prosecution for its jurisdiction,' it added.



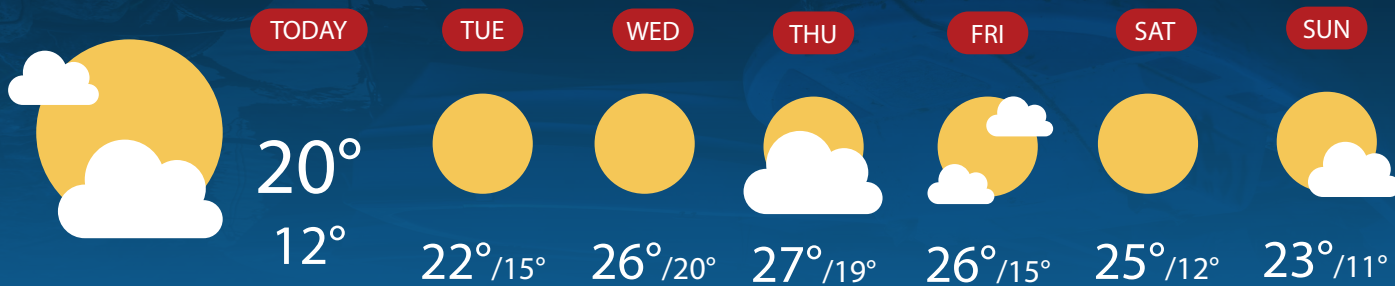
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