

Politics

Rights groups launch initiative for independent international investigation in Derna

Four human rights organizations: Mudafea (Defender) for Human Rights, Tahara, Libyan Crime Watch, and Lawyers for Justice, called for the establishment of an independent international investigation mechanism to probe the responsibility of the state and its institutions and to identify those responsible for the disaster of the collapse of the two dams in the city of Derna, urging for bringing the ones accountable to justice and giving compensations for the victims.

The groups announced in a joint statement their support for the demands of the residents of the city of Derna to conduct an impartial, fair and independent investigation into the worsening disaster of the collapse of the two dams, which resulted in thousands of victims. They also launched a Libyan initiative called "Accountability First" group to support the demands of the residents of the city of Derna and the affected communities in eastern Libya, as an open channel for the public to receive information and suggestions with the aim of communicating the voices and demands of survivors to the Libyan and international entities.

They also said that the newly-established group would work on analyzing and searching for the appropriate form of the required investigation body, its competencies, and the goal of its work based on the demands of survivors and affected communities, and work with Libyan and international organizations and experts in the field of corruption, climate change, crisis management, and human rights to communicate the demands of affected communities to the international community to investigate corruption, negligence and abuse of power committed by the Libyan authorities that worsened the disaster.

The four groups pointed out the attempts of Libyan officials to highlight the disaster as resulting from sudden climate changes and to deny their responsibility for the aggravation of the disaster, adding that the Head of the World Meteorological Organization stressed the possibility of avoiding this huge number of victims in Derna, and that the failure to take the necessary measures, including advance warning and emergency management bodies coordinating population evacuation efforts, resulted in the worsening of the humanitarian disaster in Derna.

They also referred to an announcement by a spokeswoman for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs that the Libyan authorities had refused entry to a United Nations team that was scheduled to go to the city of Derna to contribute to confronting the effects of the disaster in there. They considered that the response of the government appointed by the House of Representatives to the disaster was late, and it only satisfied itself with issuing a decision to dismiss all members of the Derna municipal council and referring them for investigation, after the outbreak of protests in the city.

The joint statement said that the authorities carried out a campaign of arrests of some participants in the protests that took place in Derna, and placed them in detention conditions that could amount to enforced disappearance. It added that there were also reports of warnings received by local journalists to refrain from covering the protests and popular anger. In addition, the Libyan authorities issued instructions to local and foreign journalists to leave Derna, claiming that they are hindering rescue work.

The groups pointed out that the Internet and telephone networks in Derna were cut off in the wake of the protests, which the government justified as a result of damaged fiber optic cables, in addition to "online social media pages loyal to the authorities in eastern Libya inciting against and targeting activists, male and female human rights defenders to silence them.

Politics

16 officials face criminal charges over Derna dams' negligence, Libyan Public Prosecution says



The Libyan Attorney General announced the filing of a criminal case against 16 officials responsible for managing the country's dam facilities, as part of investigations into the Derna dam collapse incident.

The Attorney General's Office stated that they had ordered the imprisonment of the mayor of Derna, the current and former heads of the Water Resources Authority, and other officials accused of wrongdoing. The Office also announced orders to jail the head of the Dam Projects Implementation and Maintenance Department, the head of the Dams Department in the eastern region, and the head of the Water Resources Office.

The Public Prosecution charged the imprisoned officials with mismanagement of administrative and financial tasks, their mistakes contributed to the occurrence of the disaster, their neglect to take precautions against disasters, and their causing economic losses to the country.

The Office also charged the mayor of Derna with abuse of power and deviation from the obligations of the mandate of managing funds allocated for the reconstruction and development of the city, noting that the mayor did not bring forth any evidence to defend these charges, adding that the prosecution proceeded to request the necessary investigation against the rest of those responsible for the Derna floods and others who mismanaged the reconstruction project.

The Office said that in 2014, officials of the Water Resources Authority deliberately took measures to pay sums of money to a Turkish Construction Company, which was contracted to maintain the two dams, despite the fact that the sums of money it received were not proportional to its completed work, and it was proven that it had breached the obligations of the contract.

The Attorney General's Office had previously announced that it would begin its investigations and work in the Derna, Benghazi, and Tripoli offices, adding that the investigations would include current and former officials and extend to 20 years backward.

Politics

President Nguesso says Libyan people have 'had enough'



The President of the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville, Denis Sassou Nguesso, has reiterated the need for a permanent solution to the ongoing crisis in Libya.

"The Libyan people are tired of living in a state of division," President Nguesso said in his speech before the 78th session of the UN General Assembly on Monday.

He expressed sympathy for the victims of the recent floods in Libya and the earthquake in Morocco.

In his address, the African leader referred to the African Union (AU) Peace and Reconciliation Mission report on Libya, which he said underscored "the courage and resilience of the Libyan people who were tired of living in a state of division."

In his capacity as Chairman of the AU High-Level Committee on Libya, Nguesso urged the international community to support the bloc in bringing the peace and reconciliation process, which began in Brazzaville last July, to a successful conclusion.

He emphasized that the most effective way to prepare for general elections in Libya is to support the African Union's steps towards national reconciliation.

The Congolese president also renewed his call for supporting all efforts aimed at bringing the conflicting parties in Libya together to end the long-standing conflict in the African state.

Politics



Haftar in Russia "to discuss situation in Libya"

The media unit of Warlord Khalifa Haftar's forces has reported that the latter arrived in Russia on Tuesday upon an invitation from the Russian Federation.

Greeting him at the airport was Russian Deputy Defence Minister Yunus Bek Yevkyurv- former leader of the Republic of Ingushetia. Haftar will discuss developments in Libya and bilateral relations between the two countries, his media reported.

The visit comes a week after Yovkyurv met with Haftar in Benghazi on September 17, where he arrived at the head of a specialized team to support search and rescue operations in the flood-stricken city of Derna.

Haftar's media had earlier described Yovkyurv offering his condolences to Haftar and the Libyan people for the victims of the floods, stressing Moscow's endeavour to support the areas affected by Storm Daniel in eastern Libya.

In late August, Yevkyurv also met with Haftar at his HQ in Benghazi to discuss "cooperation in combating organized crime and terrorism," according to the media of both parties.

However, identical sources said the visit was to reassure Haftar of the continued support of the Russian Wagner Group mercenaries following the death of their leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin.

Politics

Gagnon: Situation in Derna is tragic beyond words



The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Libya, Georgette Gagnon, has said "what people in Derna and surrounding areas have experienced is tragic beyond words," following her second visit to Derna since the floods.

"All the displaced families I met said they have one wish: For their lives to go back to normal. The outpouring of unity, solidarity and support shown by Libyans from all over the country gives me hope this will happen soon," Gagnon said.

Gagnon highlighted progress in ongoing efforts to remove debris, rehabilitate roads and deliver humanitarian assistance to affected people. Together with WHO and UNICEF, she reviewed access to essential health services and medical referral paths in Al-Bayda and Shahat and met with displaced families in Derna.

Gagnon also thanked Libyan and international search and rescue workers for their tireless efforts to find survivors in the most difficult conditions and commended the search and rescue operation.

In meetings with local authorities, Gagnon discussed the importance of full access by humanitarian workers and the need for strong coordination among relevant national and international stakeholders. She highlighted the need to accelerate early recovery efforts to advance longer-term reconstruction.

Politics

Chinese coalition offers to rebuild Derna within Libyan metro project



The Minister of Investment in the parallel government, Ali Al-Saidi, unveiled a Chinese offer to rebuild infrastructure in Derna under the initiative of the "Libya Metro Project," noting that he had received an official letter from the coalition of Chinese companies BFI in this context.

Al-Saidi added in a statement to Radio Monte Carlo: "We have a project of 2,000 housing units in Derna that was implemented during the previous regime, and it can be completed within six months, and we may establish a new city called New Derna," indicating that China has the ability to create infrastructure of roads and bridges in record time, in addition to its great financial potential.

"The door is open to all companies without exception to participate in the reconstruction of Derna, as Libya needs large companies that can work around the clock, and is also waiting for international support to confront the repercussions of the Storm Daniel disaster," he added.

Politics

Bathily calls on Haftar to grant access to UN relief organizations to reach affected areas



The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, called on Khalifa Haftar to grant full access to UN agencies and aid organizations working to alleviate the suffering of affected people in the storm-hit areas.

This came during Haftar's reception of Bathily at his headquarters in Rajma on Sunday, accompanied by the Resident Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Georgette Gagnon. On X platform Bathily explained that he discussed with Haftar the ongoing relief efforts in Derna and neighbouring areas.

"I welcomed the solidarity displayed by all entities, including military and security actors working in the affected areas," Bathily said.

Amnesty International had accused Haftar's militias of obstructing the delivery of aid to those affected, and of placing unjustified restrictions on media.

Politics

Conference of Ministers of Culture of Islamic World expresses solidarity with Libya and Morocco



The 12th Conference of Ministers of Culture of the Islamic World, held by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and hosted by Qatar, has issued a statement of solidarity with the Kingdom of Morocco, following the tragic earthquake of Al Haouz and surrounding regions, and the State of Libya in the aftermath of the floods of Derna and eastern regions.

The statement offered heartfelt condolences to the respective heads of state, government and people of the Kingdom of Morocco and the State of Libya, paid tribute to the victims and wished a prompt recovery to the injured, lauding ICESCO's initiative to send two humanitarian caravans, the contribution of its staff to the voluntary solidarity fund for the earthquake victims

The statement also affirmed readiness to support the competent authorities of the Kingdom of Morocco and the State of Libya in assessing and preserving their heritage sites affected by the two disasters.



Politics

Libya operates first flight to Rome on Sep. 30 after a decade-long halt

Direct flights between Libya and Italy will resume next Saturday, Libya's Embassy in Italy announced on Wednesday.

"On Saturday, September 30, 2023, the first Medsky Airways flight will depart from Mitiga Airport in Tripoli to Fiumicino Airport - Rome," the embassy stated on its Facebook account. According to the statement, the air carrier will operate two flights on Saturdays and Wednesdays each week.

The embassy hailed the efforts made to resume flights between the two countries, indicating that it "came after significant political and technical work carried out by the Government of National Unity."

Last July, the GNU Prime Minister, Abdul Hamid Dbeibah announced that the Italian government had lifted the ban on Libyan flights in its airspace, for the first time in a decade.

Politics

PM convenes meeting to follow up on IDPs following recent floods

Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah has convened a meeting to follow up on the measures taken by the relevant ministries and state institutions to support those who have been displaced due to floods in eastern Libya.

The meeting grouped Minister Wafaa Al-Kilani of Social Affairs, Chairman of the Response and Emergency Committee, Badr Al-Din Al-Toumi, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Adel Juma'a.

The Hakomitna platform said Al-Kilani presented a summary of the tally process that was conducted to identify the number of displaced people who moved within the affected municipalities or those who have been displaced to other cities, indicating that such a step would facilitate the delivery of services.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of government agencies joining efforts to provide services in an organized and rapid manner.

This includes providing basic needs such as shelter and rent, among others, to those who have been affected by the floods, according to Hakomitna.

Economy

Al-Huweij announces housing initiative for surviving families in floods-ravaged areas

The Minister of Economy and Trade Mohammed Al-Huweij launched Tuesday an initiative to house families who survived the floods that swept away parts of the city of Derna and its surrounding areas on September 10 and 11, directing the opening of a bank account for the initiative.

The announcement came during a meeting for Al-Huweij with a number of ministry officials, in addition to the Vice President of the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, the Vice President of the Business Owners Council, and the heads of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Misrata, Sebha and the Western Region, as well as the Head of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Derna

and Al-Bayda.

The meeting reviewed the report of the visit of the Committee to Support and Coordinate Relief Efforts to Derna and the impacted municipalities, and the results of the meetings held with members of the High Committee for Emergency and Rapid Response in the east and the Crisis Committee in the Municipality of Benghazi. The attendees also discussed the reports of the census of affected families residing in schools in the municipalities of the east. Al-Huweij asked that the entities affiliated with his Ministry, the chambers of commerce in all regions, and the Business Owners Council to participate in the initiative under the supervision of the committee and the chambers of com-

merce in the impacted areas, indicating that the disbursement mechanism would be approved from the initiative's account through the Ministry, the General Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, and the Business Owners Council.

He also asked the committee to follow up on the conditions of citizens and residents in coordination with the relevant committees in the east and to contribute to providing urgent needs with the participation of business owners and to prepare periodic reports on the activity of affiliated agencies and chambers of commerce to support the floods-ravaged municipalities before sending the reports to the Government of National Unity.





Opinions

Derna events; ambiguity and lack of transparency

By *Shiekh Al-Sadiq Al-Gharyani, Libyan Grand Mufti*

As expected from every authoritarian regime with no fear of accountability and ousting, there is a lack of transparency in dealing with the disaster in Derna. It is not yet known what has gone of Derna, is it half of it, a third of it, a quarter of it? Nobody knows! There is no credible data or realistic statistics issued, or broadcast through media moment by moment, as is the case in such situations in all countries.

In the first two days of the disaster, those in charge of the burials were announcing the statistics of whom they had buried by the hour, because they were acting spontaneously. This was the case before Haftar's forces entered and took over. Since these forces entered Derna, the media was put under control. Even news about the numbers of those being buried around the clock has become scarce and unreliable.

Lack of transparency has made the world know nothing about the dead, the missing, the wounded, or the displaced! This is if we exclude the 145 Egyptians, who were handed over to their families with honest statistics and accurate numbers!

Announcing the numbers as they really are, if they exist, would lead to the fear of knowing the magnitude of the scandal that this tyrannical regime is experiencing. It was clear from the first and second days that it does not have the minimum equipment that can be used to discover what happened, as well as the trained crews and rescue teams that military institutions usually have!

Unfortunately, these and other scandals, which are a few of many, are not allowed to be addressed or talked about, and all channels that they have allowed into Derna, only broadcast what praises the achievements of (the army and the General Command) either out of courtesy, or falsely.

In the absence of transparency, one would have to expect the unthinkable, or else, how would an observer can understand the security orders that were issued on the night of the hurricane to the people of the city, imposing a curfew and obliging them to stay in their homes, yet they knew that there was a hurricane coming, of which they had been warned in advance, and whose time was known.

What one has to call or describe what has happened, because it is contrary to the usual practice in such a situation, among nations of the globe?

Obliging people to stay in their homes in such situations means imprisoning them until they meet their fate and die collectively. The consequence of these orders was that the floods engulfed the city, and its people along with their property, livestock, trees, and stones, and destroyed their structure from its foundations,

throwing them all into the depths of the sea.

Can any of Haftar's servants, who are today in his government or parliament; who used to boast that their mission is for accountability and control, discuss the curfew orders in Derna and its consequences? If he had done so, he would have disappeared from existence, and none of his colleagues would dare to even ask about him, because such talk 'is not in its right time and stirs up discord!'

The General Command is preoccupied with a major crucial issue at the present time, which is handing over Derna free of any concerns and population to the Egyptians after the elimination of its last breath, and also the Parliament and its speaker are busy in an emergency session with the ten billion that they are impatiently waiting for, to take care of, on this occasion.

The only description of what happened, by anyone with any sense of mind, is that it was a deliberate killing of many thousands in one hour by those who ordered it or carried it out. Then, in light of this arrogant, brutal iron fist and the fraudulent parliament, does anyone believe, that investigations that the people are talking about will ever take place regarding the dam that collapsed, or the curfew, or the Egyptian armored invasion, which is calling itself rescue teams!

These soldiers who entered Libya with armored vehicles are not the Egyptians whom we knew and had taught us at schools, and we knew their virtue and benevolence in Libya in the old days. Rather, they are bad soldiers who are subordinated to the Zionists and their agents in the region. Is it right for the people of Libya to remain silent after all this about them and about the billions that Agila Saleh is asking for, in the disguise of providing relief to the people of Derna, or reconstruction of the city! Handing over money to them is an unforgivable crime and an unbearable burden!

This scene in Derna, O people of Libya and the eastern region in particular, if you remained silent about it, it could be repeated in Al-Marj, Benghazi, Tobruk, and Al-Bayda, and they will perish just as the people of Derna did, and then you will say: "I was devoured the day the white bull was eaten.")!

If the people of Libya do not rise up united now to find out the truth about what happened to the people of Derna, and to champion their cause, then they will see what is even worse in the coming days. The Prophet, May Allah's Prayers and Peace Be Upon Him, said: "If people see an oppressor and do not take action against him, Allah will surely punish them all."

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

Authorities detect “numerous medical violations” in Sabha

The Food and Drug Control Centre has reported numerous medical violations at several health facilities in Sabha, south of Libya.

The surveillance team found that expired medicines were being stocked within health facilities. Additionally, the Sabha Educational Centre for Fertility and Assisted Reproduction was found

to have breached medical standards, as well as a newly established health centre.

Legal procedures have already been initiated against the violators, who have been notified of the technical violations, the centre confirmed.

The breachers received notification of the technical violations, and legal pro-

cedures are already underway, the centre added.

In a related incident, the Food and Drug Control Centre closed several medical laboratories and pharmacies in the Tajoura district, east of Tripoli, earlier this month for alleged violation of health procedures.



Health



WHO says hasn't received enough support to help about 250.000 in Libya's disaster areas

The Regional Director of the World Health Organization, Ahmed Al-Mandhari, appealed to supporters and partners to provide the necessary financial resources to deal with the areas affected by the floods in Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar, especially in Derna, pointing out that they were unable to obtain sufficient support and appropriate funding to help about 250,000 people in those areas despite the urgent call for relief response.

Al-Mandhari added in a statement that WHO had sent two shipments to the areas affected by the floods in the eastern region, each shipment consisting of 29 metric tons of medical supplies, including surgical materials, medicines, and some devices and light equipment, indicating that there were approximately 130 met-

ric tons ready for transport in the coming days to ensure that health institutions in those areas would receive necessary supplies.

He also pointed out that they had provided medical teams with specializations that suit the current situation, for example surgical operations, emergency medicine, accident medicine, and trauma medicine, adding that they reviewed the epidemiological investigation system to ensure that epidemics would not appear in such cases, whether transmitted through drinking water: such as cholera, or diseases transmitted by other vectors such as mosquitoes like hemorrhagic fever or malaria.

It's worth mentioning that WHO has previously confirmed that no epidemic is de-

tected in Libya after the flood disaster in the city of Derna.

“We cooperated with the health authorities to ensure the maintenance of the comprehensive vaccination system for children to ensure that diseases such as measles, polio, and others would not appear among them, and we reviewed the damage done to health institutions in those areas. We are cooperating with the health authorities to rehabilitate and build these institutions to ensure that everyone had access to health services close to their areas, and until we have finished that work, we would cooperate to provide health services through mobile clinics to the affected areas.” Al-Mandhari said.



Dbeibah orders immediate maintenance of schools in flood-hit areas

Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah has issued a directive to commence the immediate maintenance of schools in the Jabal Al-Akhdar region, which suffered flash floods on September 10. Dbeibah met with the Minister of Education, Musa Al-Magarif, and the directors of relevant departments in the presence of the Minister of Local Government and the Response and Emergency Committee at his office on Tuesday.

According to the PM media office, the educational facilities authority branch in the eastern province will oversee the contracts with the executing companies to ensure compliance with the approved standards and timeline.

The PM also recommended providing school furniture and establishing temporary mobile classrooms until the maintenance work is completed.



Studies resumed after 10 days of suspension

Studies resumed on Sunday after being suspended on September 14, due to "the tragic circumstances", which some eastern cities are going through.

The Minister of Education, Musa Al-Maqryif, said that the Ministry will not abandon its students in the affected areas, revealing his circular to Education Monitoring Offices and the Private Education Administration regarding accepting displaced students and registering them in private schools without restrictions or conditions.

The Ministry had begun counting the displaced students, the Minister added, recalling his decision to form a committee headed by the head of the Education Monitoring Office in Benghazi to undertake the tasks of enabling the displaced students to register and study, and to follow up on the conditions of the students and overcome all the difficulties they face.

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Ministry of Culture and Cognitive Development



Culture

Ministry of Culture announces inventory of heritage and cultural sites affected by Storm Daniel in Derna

The Ministry of Culture in the Government of National Unity announced the quantification of damage to heritage, cultural and historical sites in the city of Derna as a result of Storm Daniel, which struck the city on September 10, causing severe damage and losses.

Minister Mabrouka Toghi chaired a meeting of the committee responsible for preparing the inventory, after she visited the city, according to the ministry's statement on its Facebook page on Wednesday.



Libya, Sudan discuss cultural cooperation

The Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, Mabrouka Toghi, has received Ambassador Ibrahim Ahmed of Sudan at her office in Tripoli.

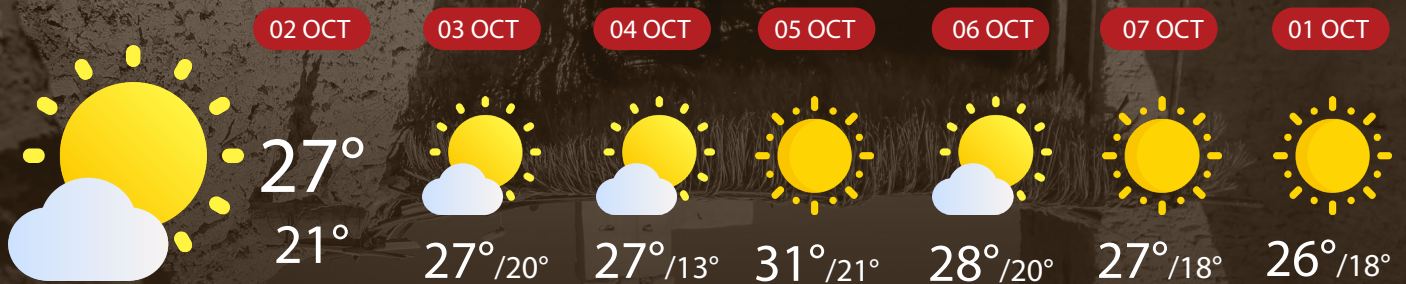
According to the ministry, the two sides discussed prospects for cooperation and ways of enhancing cultural ties between the two countries.

Welcoming the Sudanese ambassador, Minister Toghi expressed her hope that Sudan will enjoy security, stability, and prosperity. For his part, the Sudanese ambassador reiterated his country's desire to enhance cultural relations in the joint interest of the two nations.

Photo of the Week



Tripoli Weather Forecast



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