

Politics

Conflicting reports about meeting for HoR, HCS members in Tunisia



Conflicting reports coming from Tunisia talked about a meeting between representatives of the House of Representatives and the High Council of State to discuss the issue of elections and the formation of a unified government to lead the next period in Libya.

While Tunisian sources confirmed that the Tunisian government canceled the meeting; the member of the House of Representatives, Abdul Salam Nassiyah, confirmed that the meeting was held and ended with recommendations regarding the next stage.

Tunisian media reported that Tunisia canceled a meeting of members of the Libyan House of Representatives and the High Council of State as well as members of the "6+6" Joint Committee that was scheduled to discuss the file of forming a new government that would end the conflict between the Government of National Unity headed by Abdul Hamid Dbeibah and the government appointed by the House

of Representatives, which It is headed by Osama Hammad.

Tunisian Radio EFM quoted Ghazi Mualla, a specialist in Libyan affairs, as saying that the Tunisian authorities prevented a meeting that was scheduled to be held Wednesday on its territory over two days in the Gammarth suburb to discuss the method of changing the government in Tripoli.

Mualla explained that this meeting of 120 Libyans was unofficial, and the mistake goes back to the committee that coordinated its organization, given that it did not contact the Tunisian authorities nor the Libyan ambassador in Tunisia to obtain a license. He added that he contacted the organizing committee a week ago and urged it to obtain the license, but to no avail.

Mualla suggested that Tunisia's prevention of the meeting, which was preceded by calls from members of the two coun-

cils to remove Dbeibah, was because it felt embarrassed by the sensitivity of the issue, and that it did not want to be accused of changing the Libyan authority, especially since the meeting was not under international cover or under the supervision of the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the member of the House of Representatives from Zintan, Abdul Salam Nasiyah, said on his Facebook page: "More than 120 members of the House of Representatives and the High Council of State met on Wednesday to discuss the political impasse, ways to activate the electoral process, and confirm ownership of the political process by Libyans.

He confirmed that the participants agreed on a report that included the agreed-upon issues and the mechanism for their implementation, as well as a political statement about the meeting, the reasons for holding it, and the difficulties that faced holding it.

Politics



Dbeibah welcomes UNSC statement on elections

Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah welcomed Tuesday's UN Security Council statement, which called for general elections in Libya as soon as possible.

On his Facebook account on Wednesday, Dbeibah said the position of the Security Council agrees with his vision for a political solution based on ending transitional stages through fair and transparent elections.

He indicated that this prompted him to accept the invitation of the UN envoy to Libya to the five-party dialogue table, as he called on all parties "to sit at the dialogue table to launch the stage of permanent stability that our people deserve."

On Tuesday, the UNSC members reiterated their strong commitment to an inclusive political process led and owned by the Libyans, facilitated by the UN, and built on the updated electoral laws agreed upon by the 6+6 Committee," referring to the outputs of the joint Committee formed by the House of Representatives and the High Council of State. In a press release, the UNSC members opined that these outputs would pave the way for national elections that are transparent, fair, and inclusive as soon as possible.

Politics



Libya's Grand Mufti calls for independent scholars, warns of foreign influences

Libya's Grand Mufti Sheikh Al-Sadiq Al-Gharyani, emphasized on Tuesday the importance of the Fatwa House and the Faculty of Sharia and Ifta in preserving the religious identity of Libya. In his speech at a ceremony to mark the publishing of the "Series of Fatwas of the Libyan Dar al-Ifta," which was held in Rixos Hotel in Tripoli, the Mufti said that the fatwas of the Fatwa House scholars are independent and free from any affiliation. "Their only motivation is the fear of God and His pleasure, not the satisfaction of anyone else," he added.

Sheikh Al-Sadiq highlighted the vital role of the Faculty of Sharia and Ifta in promoting religious understanding, considering the foundation "a strategic project and a safety valve for the future of Libya."

In this context, he warned against the dangers of foreign fatwas, which can lead to division and conflict. "The people of Libya's old commitment to the Maliki school of thought and Islam was a strong fortress against all foreign influences. Once fatwas from across the continents entered Libya, the circle of disagreement over them widened," the Mufti explained.

During the ceremony, Sheikh Al-Gharyani announced the launch of a new project to establish an endowment institution to support the education and training of scholars. He emphasizes the need for independent scholars who are capable of speaking the truth and promoting Islamic values.

The Mufti also expressed his concern about the spread of foreign ideas and ideologies that he said are harmful to Libyan society. He lauded the government for its response to the Fatwa House's request to ban the use of the term "gender" due to its association with the concept of "gender" and the "CEDAW" convention, which he described as destructive to Islamic ethics.

Politics



Menfi, Al-Burhan agree to activate agreements between Libya and Sudan

The Head of the Presidential Council, Mohammed Menfi, agreed with the President of the Sudanese Sovereignty Council, Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, to exchange delegations between the two countries and activate the agreements signed between them, reviewing ways to support and develop bilateral relations.

This agreement came during the talks in the capital, Tripoli, where they addressed issues of common interest, leading to peace and stability in Sudan and the region, according to a statement by the Presidential Council's Media Office.

Al-Burhan applauded the positive positions of Libya expressed by Menfi in regional and international circles, calling for supporting Sudan's unity, national security and stability, and rejecting negative foreign interference in the two countries.

Menfi received Al-Burhan on Monday afternoon at Mitiga International Airport in the presence of the Chief of Staff of the forces affiliated with the Government of National Unity, Lieutenant General Mohammed Al-Haddad, and members of the "5+5" Joint Military Commission for the Western Region, and the acting Foreign Minister, Al-Taher Al-Baour.

In a separate meeting in Tripoli, Al-Burhan discussed with the Prime Minister, Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, a number of common regional and international files, according to a brief statement published by Hakomitna platform.

This official visit by Al-Burhan comes at the invitation of Menfi, as the Sudanese Sovereignty Council said that Al-Burhan will discuss the course of bilateral relations between the two countries, ways to strengthen them, and issues of common interest between the two countries.

Politics

Libya condemns targeting of civilians in the northern Gaza Strip

Libya has expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the targeting of civilians in the northern Gaza Strip, which resulted in the death of dozens and the injury of hundreds.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of National Unity held the international community fully responsible, and called on to take all urgent measures to protect civilians against criminal violations in the Gaza Strip, with the necessity of an immediate ceasefire.

The statement renewed the firm and supportive position of the State of Libya towards the Palestinian people until they regain all their legitimate rights that enable them to establish their independent state.



Economy

Central Bank Governor to PM Dbeibah: Parallel spending badly affected value of the dinar



The Governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, called for halting parallel spending from unknown sources and approving a unified budget for the entire Libyan territory, calling in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity, Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, for rationalizing spending in a way that preserves the state's reserves and the rights of future generations, in addition to diversifying sources of income and enhancing the role of the private sector.

Al-Kabir also stressed the need to reduce reliance on foreign imports of consumer goods, which exceeded 80%, and work to increase oil production and exports in the short and medium terms, calling for prioritizing spending on investment in comprehensive development. He added that public spending on salaries recorded 65 billion dinars in 2023 compared to 2021, which recorded 33 billion, adding that consumer spending accounts for 95% of public spending.

The CBL Governor pointed out that the subsidies increased from 20.8 billion dinars in 2021 to 61 billion in 2022, expecting them to be more than 61 billion in 2023. He also revealed that the state spent approximately 420 billion dinars from 2021 until the end of 2023, most of which was directed to consumer expenditures at the expense of development spending.

The letter to Dbeibah included a response to his statements at the February 17 celebration regarding the dollar exchange rate. Al-Kabir said that the desire alone is not enough to return the dollar exchange rate to 1.3 dinars as it was previously due to the actual practices of successive governments, indicating that the expansion of spending contributed to inflation and devaluation of the dinar. Al-Kabir considered that all these expenses generated pressure on the exchange rate of the Libyan dinar until it reached this point.

Al-Kabir attributed the decline in the dinar's exchange rate against the dollar from 1.3 to 4.48 dinars per dollar, to successive crises since 2013, which were represented by the arbitrary closure of oil that caused the state losses of about 150 billion dollars, accompanied by a defect in financial and trade policies. He said that these reasons led to the squandering of a large portion of the state's foreign exchange reserves, and there was no option to create balance and preserve the remaining foreign exchange reserves except by reducing the value of the dinar against other currencies.

Al-Kabir also attributed the decline in the value of the Libyan dinar to a significant increase in the level of public spending, reaching the level of 165 billion dinars in 2023, and the presence of parallel spending of unknown sources that contributed to the increase in the volume of demand for foreign exchange despite the increase in the volume of supply by 5 billion in 2022. He said that the expansion in parallel spending of unknown sources directly affected the increase in demand for foreign exchange in the last months of 2023, which resulted in an increase in the parallel exchange rate, despite the liquidation of \$5 billion in 2022.

The CBL Governor added that the increase in demand for foreign exchange began in the last quarter, which made it difficult for the bank to defend the current exchange rate, indicating that 1.3 dinars per 1 dollar will not be the real price of the dollar in light of the size of the money supply amounting to 160 billion dinars.

Economy

ConocoPhillips presents work program for Waha Oil Company

The US oil and gas company ConocoPhillips has presented an "ambitious and implementable work program" to increase production at Waha Oil Company during the current year.

According to a statement on the Ministry of Oil's Facebook account on Wednesday, the initiative was put forward by the company's delegation during a meeting with the Minister of Oil and Gas, Mohamed Aoun.

Minister Aoun stressed the importance of continuing bilateral meetings to discuss the challenges facing oil companies, highlighting the importance of the contribution of American companies to oil and gas production operations, given their long experience.

He also discussed outstanding issues related to the collection of financial obligations and investment plans in the company's fields according to the agreement signed between the two parties.

Aoun emphasized the urgent need for complete transparency, good governance, and compliance with applicable laws in the management of the company's various operations and contracts.

Economy

Bengdara says Libyan oil production is around 1.25 million bpd

The Chairman of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Farhat Bengdara, said on Tuesday that oil production is currently approaching 1.25 million barrels per day (bpd) and may increase to 3.4 million barrels per day, which is the level achieved in the 1970s.

Bengdara said during the International Energy Week activities in London, on Tuesday, that only 25% of the capacity of the pipeline that exports natural gas from Libya to Italy is currently used. He added that Libya will hold a tender to grant oil exploration rights at the end of 2024 or early next year, noting that there are indications that major companies will participate in the bidding.

He also indicated that the National Oil Corporation was mulling over the production of solar energy in cooperation with partners, for local use and possibly for exportation to Europe.

Economy

Economy Minister vows to provide facilitations for Serbian companies in Libyan market

The Minister of Economy and Trade of the Government of National Unity, Mohamed Al-Huweij, expressed the ministry's readiness to provide possible facilitations to Serbian companies and investors to enter the Libyan market.

Al-Huweij met on Tuesday with Serbian Minister of Foreign and Interior Trade Tomislav Momirović on the sidelines of the 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi, according to a statement issued by the ministry.

Al-Huweij directed the Department of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation

in the Ministry to supervise the organization of a joint economic forum in the capital, Tripoli, that includes the private sector, in cooperation with the Ministries of Economy in both countries, aiming to present and exchange expertise and experiences and present investment opportunities. He also invited Serbian companies to participate in the Tripoli Exhibition that is scheduled to be held next May.

The meeting with the Serbian minister discussed opening direct communication channels between the institutions affiliated with the ministry, the chambers of commerce, and the joint chambers,

and organizing official visits and bilateral meetings that include business owners, with the aim of creating real partnership opportunities between the private sectors in both countries.

The Libyan Minister stressed the importance of strengthening the role of the private sector to build long-term partnerships in the field of trade and investment to increase the volume of trade exchange between the two countries, while the Serbian minister pointed to the beginning of a new phase of economic and trade cooperation toward a long-term economic partnership.



Economy

Saudi Arabia proposes conference to showcase investment opportunities in Libya

The Saudi Minister of Commerce, Majid Al-Qasabi, has proposed holding an international conference in Libya to showcase the country's future investment potential.

The conference would be attended by global investors and major companies, including those from the Gulf region.

Al-Qasabi expressed the Kingdom's willingness to cooperate with Libya and provide technical and advisory support in the areas of economy, trade, investment, and development.

The proposal was made during a meeting between Al-Qasabi and the Libyan Minister of Economy and Trade, Mohamed Al-Hwaij, on the sidelines of the 13th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Al-Hwaij highlighted that Libya's strategic location makes it a vital transit point for trade in Africa and a key centre for trade between Europe and Africa. He also highlighted the country's natural resources, such as natural gas, which offer significant prospects for energy and infrastructure development.



Economy

Tunisia to launch in March a commercial sealine passing through Libya

Tunisian authorities officially announced the launching of a sea line linking its ports to the ports of Libya in the eastern region, along with Spain and Morocco in the west, scheduled to open next March to be a main route for importation and exportation operations.

Tunis Afrique Presse said that the economic scene in Sfax, especially in the field of export and supply, will be strengthened next March with the establishment of a new regular sea line to transport containers from the commercial port of Sfax toward Morocco, Spain and Libya.

The agency cited the approved maritime agent for the line, Malek Al-Alawi, as saying that all administrative and logistical arrangements are in their final stages, announcing that the official opening of this line will take place next March.

It added that, in addition to competitive prices, this line is characterized by the short duration of the ship's journey to reach these destinations, with two flights available per month starting from Sfax.

In February 2023, the Libyan authorities reactivated the sea line between Tunisia and Libya, which had been suspended for 11 years. The line included the Al-Shaab marine station for transporting passengers and the first sea line between the Al-Shaab station in Tripoli to the Zarzis region in southern Tunisia. It is noteworthy that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries witnessed a positive development of 10.8% between the years 2022 and 2023, as it increased from \$972 million to \$1,077 million.



Health



Dbeibah forms committee to limit the spread of foot-and-mouth disease in cattle

The Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, has issued a decision to form a committee headed by the Minister of Agriculture, Hussein Al-Qatrani, to monitor and take the preventive measures to limit the spread of foot-and-mouth disease in various cities.

According to the decision, subcommittees will be formed in each municipality that will be directly subordinate to the Central Committee, in addition to submitting periodic reports on the results of the committee's work to be presented to the Prime Minister.

Health



Minister of Health discusses with Libyan doctors residing in Qatar supporting localization of treatment at home

The Minister of Health, Ramadan Abu Janah, has met with a number of Libyan doctors residing in the State of Qatar to review supporting national programs for internal treatment in various specialties.

The meeting, which came on the sidelines of Abu Janah's visit to Qatar, to participate in the activities of the Middle East Forum for Quality and Safety on Healthcare, discussed strengthening joint cooperation, raising the level of health services in Libya, and contributing to performing surgeries in hospitals and medical centers in Libya in a number of specialties, including heart surgery.

This meeting comes within the initiative launched by Abu Janah to invite Libyan doctors residing abroad to contribute to national programs for treatment at home in various specialties.

Health



Egyptian medical recruits arrive in Libya

The Minister of Health, Ramadan Abu Jinnah, has received a team of 50 Egyptian medical professionals to provide health-care services in the southern region.

The step follows a contract that aims to address the shortfall of specialized medical and ancillary personnel in the remote and southern regions.

According to the Ministry of Health, the team comprises a group of experts and consultants in various medical fields, including psychiatry, neurology, neurosurgery, paediatrics, orthopaedics, kidney disease, eye surgery, physical therapy, ear, nose and throat, fertility and ICSI, and gynaecology and obstetrics.

The team also includes nursing personnel with expertise in oncology, intensive care, neonatal care, emergency care, operations, cardiac care, and pediatric care.

Health



Minister of Health discusses with his Qatari counterpart health cooperation

The Minister of Health, Ramadan Abu Janah, has reviewed with his Qatari counterpart, Hanan Al-Kuwari, experiences and expertise in the field of health initiatives, comprehensive health coverage, and the management of hospitals and medical facilities.

This came on the sidelines of the activities of the 10th Middle East Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare, which was held in the Qatari capital Doha.

The meeting discussed ways to enhance and expand future cooperation between Libya and Qatar in the health sector, and to increase the exchange of experiences between medical teams through cooperation between health institutions in both countries.

Education

Maltese ambassador lauds Libyan teachers as champions of innovative thinking

In a ceremony held on Sunday, teachers from Mokhtar International School were recognized for their achievements in Libya's first-ever "Teaching the Teachers" project.

The project, which focuses on the "Lateral Thinking" methodology pioneered by the late Maltese Professor Edward De Bono, was inaugurated in the presence of Charles Saliba, the Maltese Ambassador to Libya.

The event served as a platform to showcase the dedication and success of these teachers in implementing De Bono's concept, which emphasizes alternative ap-

proaches to problem-solving and critical thinking.

A readout from the Maltese Embassy, which The Libya Observer received, said the initiative, spearheaded by the De Bono Foundation under the leadership of Justine Cassar Gasper, marks a significant step forward in fostering innovative thinking within Libya's educational system. Ambassador Saliba commended Mokhtar International School for its pioneering spirit and stressed educators' vital role in shaping Libya's future. "The teachers are the backbone of the students, and the students are the future of Libya," he re-

marked, highlighting the crucial link between quality education and sustainable societal progress.

The ceremony also highlighted the ongoing efforts of the Maltese Embassy to support the return of Maltese professionals to Libya and facilitate collaborative ventures and knowledge exchange between the two countries.

The statement anticipated a high participation increase in such transformative courses beyond Ramadan, with more schools expected to enrol and contribute to Libya's educational landscape.



Libya's Al-Sweihli makes history and wins Arab Club Volleyball Championship

The Libyan Al-Sweihli club won the title of the Arab Club Volleyball Championship, which ended on Wednesday in Jordan, after winning the final match against the Qatari club, Qatar. Al-Sweihli was able to defeat Qatar by three to one: "25-21, 25-22, 22-25, and 25-20".

This is the first Arab title in the history of Al-Sweihli club, which reached the final match for the first time in its history. However, this title is the second Arab title in the history of Libyan volleyball at the club level, as the Al-Tersana club previously won the Arab Championship title by defeating ES Tunis, when Libya organized the first Arab Club Championship in 1978.

The municipality of Misrata announced on Wednesday evening that it had decided to consider Thursday, February 29, 2024, an official holiday in all institutions and sectors within the municipality, on the occasion of the Al-Sweihli team's victory in the Arab Club Volleyball Championship.

The Misrata Municipality Facebook page posted that Mayor Mahmoud Al-Soktari and members of the municipal council congratulated the club for winning the Arab Championship title, an unprecedented achievement in the club's history. Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah also congratulated the Al-Sweihli team.

Sports



Libya beats Uganda in AfroBasket qualifiers

The Libyan national basketball team defeated the Ugandan national team 71-59 on Sunday in the third qualifying round for AfroBasket 2025 after Libyans had the complete advantage over the course of the match and ended it with a deserved victory. The result of the first quarter was 21-16 in favor of the Libyan team, and in the second quarter Libyan domination continued, ending the second quarter 19-13, making the result of the first half 40-29. In the second half, the Libyan team lost the result of the third quarter 17-18, but it was able to end the result of the fourth quarter with a score of 14-12 to end the game with a score of 71-59.

The Libyan team defeated Nigeria in the first round before losing the match to Cape Verde in the second round. With two wins and a defeat, the Libyan team ranked second in the group with 5 points behind the leader, Cape Verde.

According to the prepared program, there will be a second round in November 2024, but the African Basketball Confederation has not yet determined the location of this round. It is noteworthy that this tournament qualifies for the World Cup and the Olympics, as only three teams will go through at the end of the qualifiers.



Opinions

Fragile Hopes in a Tumultuous Libya: From Abu Salim's Tragedy to a Nation on the Brink

By Mohamed Abaid,
Independent Libyan Analyst

Introduction: In the labyrinth of Libya's ongoing turmoil, the fragility of security and the volatility of political dynamics are starkly revealed. Recent events have cast a shadow over Tripoli, unveiling the depth of the nation's distress. This article delves into these critical issues, from the massacre in Abu Salim to the fluctuating regional alliances, the uncertain political horizon, and the crumbling economy, as Libya approaches the crucial juncture of Ramadan.

The Abu Salim Massacre: A Symptom of Deep-Rooted Chaos The recent massacre in Abu Salim, where ten individuals met a tragic end, stands as a harrowing testament to the unstable security situation in Libya's capital, Tripoli. This incident not only reflects the rampant lawlessness but also underscores the government's tenuous grip on order. In response, the Libyan Interior Ministry has promised a reduction in militia checkpoints, aiming to assert its authority more firmly. Yet, skepticism prevails, with many questioning whether these assurances are mere rhetoric or a genuine step towards restoring peace.

The Diplomatic Chessboard: Egypt, Turkey, and Libya's Fate On the regional front, the thawing relations between Egypt's President Sisi and Turkey's Erdogan could herald a new chapter in Libyan affairs. This diplomatic rapprochement may be the beacon of hope for a strife-torn Libya, potentially paving the way for a long-sought resolution. However, the complexity of Libya's internal dynamics and the myriad of international interests involved make any prediction tentative at best.

Elections: A Distant Dream? Politically, Libya remains ensnared in a web of uncertainty. As Prime Minister Dbeibah enters his third year in office, the prospect of elections seems increasingly elusive. The political field,

mired in complexities and competing agendas, offers little clarity on the path to a democratic and stable Libya.

Economic Desperation Amidst a Collapsing Currency Economically, Libya faces a dire situation. The rapid devaluation of the Libyan dinar, now at a staggering 7.30 against the dollar, has significantly weakened the populace's purchasing power. As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, this economic downturn takes on an even more ominous significance, potentially exacerbating the hardships of an already struggling population.

The Militia Quandary and the Search for Stability Central to Libya's turmoil is the pervasive influence of various militias. These armed groups, with their diverse allegiances and interests, pose a formidable challenge to national unity and stability. Integrating or disbanding these militias remains a Herculean task for any government, further complicating the quest for peace.

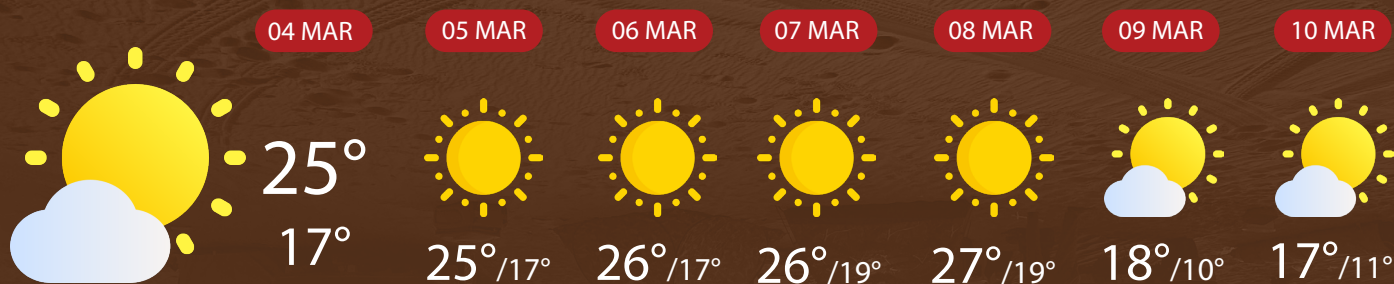
Conclusion: Diminishing Hope Amidst Growing Challenges As Libya trudges into what could be another tumultuous year under Prime Minister Dbeibah, the outlook remains grim. The shadows of economic despair, political uncertainty, and security chaos loom large. Yet, amidst these daunting challenges, the glimmer of hope fostered by regional diplomacy and the resilient spirit of the Libyan people endures. The road ahead is fraught with obstacles, but the quest for a peaceful and prosperous Libya continues.

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

Photo of the Week



Tripoli Weather Forecast



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