

Politics

Warlord Khalifa Haftar attacks hospital

Renewed rocket attacks by Haftar's forces on Tripoli civilian neighborhoods

Tens of rockets have rained down on different civilian neighborhoods in Tripoli, including Abu Salim, Al-Hadba and Bab Benghashir, in addition to over 50 rockets falling in the vicinity of Tripoli's Mitiga Airport and surrounding areas - all have been fired by Khalifa Haftar's forces - according to eyewitnesses on Monday.

The attacks caused several injuries among civilians, especially the ones that targeted Al-Khadra Hospital in Al-Hadba, where many



medical staffers and patients were left in utter panic and intimidation.

A nurse at the hospital, who asked not to be named, said a pregnant woman aborted due to the panic and horror she was in when the shelling hit the hospital.

The media adviser of the Health Ministry Ameen Al-Hashimi said a foreign worker was injured in the vicinity of Al-Khadra Hospital, which was targeted by Haftar's rockets Monday afternoon.

"Three people have been injured in Haftar's attack on Abu Salim, including one 15-year-old boy. The shelling continues on Ghabat Al-Nasser, Hay Dimashiq, and Abu Salim. At least four civilians are injured." Al-Hashemi added.

He said all patients at the targeted hospital had been evacuated, saying most of them have chronic illnesses, besides one Coronavirus patient in the COVID-19 department that has been newly assigned by the hospital for the pandemic.

Politics

Al-Sarraj: Haftar is obsessed with gripping power in Libya

The Head of the Libyan Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj has described Khalifa Haftar as "obsessed with gripping power and doesn't care if Libyans died in war or from Coronavirus."

Speaking to Russian news agency Sputnik, Al-Sarraj said the Government of National Accord had responded positively to all calls for a ceasefire in Libya but Haftar didn't and continued to violate the truce.

"I think that the international community is well informed of our position on this aspect. The Government of National Accord has responded to all calls to cease hostilities, the last of which was issued by ambassadors and representatives of the eleven countries' governments, as well as by the United Nations and the European Union. It was on 18 March, and it would allow local authorities to combat the coronavirus epidemic." He told Sputnik.

Al-Sarraj added that "the aggressor" continued to violate the truce, attacking residential areas in the capital of Tripoli every day resulting in civilian casualties, including children and women. He indicated that his government is doing its duty to the people to protect them as per the international law.

He also talked about the European Union's Operation IRINI, saying it ignores monitoring the UN arms embargo and its violations on the side of Haftar's forces which are still receiving weapons via air and land borders, saying he is in contact with the EU in this regard.



Politics

Attacks on civilians must stop, UNICEF and US embassy say



The Special Representative of UNICEF in Libya, Abdu Al-Rahman Ghandour has stressed along with the US Ambassador, Richard Norland the need to end the indiscriminate shelling of civilian infrastructure.

The US embassy noted on its website that the two sides pointed out in a video conference that this bombing killed and maimed a number of innocent children during the past month.

The US Department of State has supported UNICEF in Libya with \$ 1.5 million USD in funding for health and child protection activities in Tripoli, Misurata, Tawergha, and Benghazi, according to the US embassy.

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Politics

UNSMIL: Attacks on Al-Khadra Hospital are shocking and violate IHL



The UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Libya Yacoub El Hillo has described the attacks on Al-Khadra Hospital in Tripoli, which were carried out by Khalifa Haftar's forces, as shocking and a violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

El Hillo said he was appalled by the violent and unjustifiable shelling on Al-Khadra Hospital in Tripoli, injuring one of the workers and damaging public facilities.

"At a moment when people in Libya needed nothing more than a safe home and functioning medical facilities, we received the news of yet another attack on the hospital." He added, saying such attacks violate the international humanitarian law.

"The repeated calls by the United Nations and the international community for a cessation of hostilities have only been met with complete disregard and intensified fighting. This is unacceptable at a time when healthcare and health workers are vital in our fight against a global pandemic." He added in a statement on Tuesday.

He explained that the 400-bed Al-Khadra Hospital was one of the potential COVID-19 assigned health facilities.

"As of March 2020, a total of 27 health facilities have been damaged to varying degrees due to proximity of clashes, including 14 health facilities that have been closed and another 23 which are at risk of closure due to shifting lines of conflict." El Hillo indicated.

On Sunday, the Ministry of Health called on local and international parties to help put an end to the repeated shelling on Tripoli's civilian neighborhoods and health facilities such as Al-Khadra Hospital, which suffered damages and had to evacuate patients, including COVID-19 cases.

Economy

Minister of Labour opens new production line of PPE



Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation, Mahdi Al-Amin opened on Sunday at The Libyan-Korean Center in Building and Construction professions a production line for sewing protective medical clothing. According to the minister, the new line will produce around 150 pieces of clothing per day, in order to make up for the shortage of protective clothing amid the exceptional circumstances resulting from the outbreak of Covid-19.

The minister said that the step comes to support the medical staff as they fight the coronavirus pandemic.

The factory will make trousers, gowns, and head wear, as said by the minister, noting that other initiatives have been put forward to support the medical sector, such as maintaining some equipment inside the center's workshops.

Economy

Al-Sarraj urges for emergency meeting to unify Central Bank of Libya



The Head of the Libyan Presidential Council Fayeze Al-Sarraj has called on the administration of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) to attend an emergency meeting to take necessary and urging measures to unite the CBL.

The Head of the Presidential Council said in a statement that his government was ready to provide assistance to hold the meeting for the CBL and follow up on its outcome, urging the UNSMIL to support this procedure.

He also said that the individual approach and one-man decision-making should come to an end at the CBL.

"The individual authority of the monetary policies of the CBL should end. No more personal viewpoints in the place of the institutional ones." Said Al-Sarraj.

He also said that this man at the CBL - referring to the CBL Governor Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir - had halted the transfer and clearing systems at the bank and delayed salaries that had been referred to the CBL on a monthly basis by the Ministry of Finance.

Al-Sarraj indicated that this behavior has caused huge damage to the income of Libyan citizens, in addition to the interference in state economic and financial policies, saying such a behavior could have serious consequences.

Over the last period, the Presidential Council and Central Bank of Libya weren't on the same page amid a state of financial problems as Al-Sarraj accused Al-Kabir of monopolizing the decisions of the bank while the former said Al-Sarraj didn't finalize the decisions regarding budget approval and fees on dollar purchase transactions.

The meeting called for by Al-Sarraj seems out of reach at this time as at least two members of the CBL administration, including the Governor of the east-based CBL Ali Al-Hibri, are in Benghazi and in favor for Haftar and his war on Tripoli, knowing that Al-Hibri said earlier that all the funds of the CBL should go to Haftar's forces so they can accomplish their military operations in Tripoli.



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Economy

Government exempts state-owned commercial real estate from usufruct fees



Tenants of state-owned commercial real estate will be exempted from rental fees, says the Presidential Council.

According to a decision issued by the Ministry of Finance, the tenants will be also exempted from paying fines for the "delay" in paying the rental fees in accordance with the laws and regulations.

The government indicated that the decision will be in effect during the state of emergency, as part of the procedures to confront the coronavirus epidemic.

Economy

NOC says oil blockade causes losses close to 3.9 billion USD



The National Oil Corporation (NOC) said on Thursday that the shutdown of oil exports by Haftar's militias has made losses of almost 3.9 billion USD.

According to the NOC, the total oil production dropped to 92,731 barrels per day, as of last Wednesday.

It called for the blockage to be lifted at once, and the restart of oil production.

The oil facilities have been closed by Haftar's militias since January 17th and the losses are growing day by day, which in turn has a direct effect on the living conditions of all Libyans.

Health

Coronavirus treatment center in Tripoli's Mitiga hospitalizes first case



The Libyan Health Ministry said the newly set up Coronavirus treatment center in Tripoli's Mitiga had hospitalized the first case, adding in a statement on Saturday that the patient was sent from Bani Walid, saying a sample from the patient was sent to the Reference Laboratory of the National Center for Disease Control.

The Ministry added that the case was lodged first at the clinics complex in Zawiyat Al-Dahmani, which is assigned as the diagnosis center for Coronavirus cases by the Ministry of Health before sending the severe cases with respiratory problems to Mitiga treatment center.

Libya recorded Friday six new Coronavirus cases, bringing the total to 17, one of whom died on Thursday, according to the National Center for Disease Control.

It added that out of 20 latest tests, 14 tested negative and six positive, saying five of the six positive cases are for people who have been in contact with the old woman who died of COVID-19 on Thursday.

Health

Health Ministry announces arrival of first batch of PPE



The Ministry of Health announced the arrival of the first batch of personnel protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare providers dealing with COVID-19 patients.

The ministry explained that the supplies arrived by air from Belgium to Misurata International Airport.

The shipment includes face masks, gowns, and eye protection (goggles or face shields), as well as "White Isolation Coverall", according to the Ministry of Health.

Health

Health Ministry allocates medical complex at Zawiat Al-Dahmani to receive suspected Covid-19 cases



The Ministry of Health has said it had allocated the medical complex of the Zawiat Al-Dahmani in Tripoli to receive patients suffering acute respiratory infections, in addition to suspected Covid-19 cases. As said by the ministry, a medical team consisting of 12 specialists will serve at the clinic and carry out the necessary examinations, including conducting the CT scan for the patients.

They will also collect information related to the travel history of the patients or their contact with people coming from affected areas or countries, according to the Health Ministry.

Opinions

International Oil Companies Roles in Libya

By Prof. Jamal S Ellafi, Economic researcher in the oil and gas industry

Libya is a huge country with considerable petroleum resources and marginally small population. Since the discovery of oil in 1959, the North African country strives to improve its economic position in the region and to better its petroleum industry. From the start of Libyan production, Libya pioneered in many petroleum industry indicators such as first LNG producers, largest reserve holders in Africa.

Major and international oil companies very much enjoyed early era of Libyan petroleum contracts (concessionary contracts) that allowed them control of the production of oil from the Libyan kingdom petroleum field, Libya produced as much as 3.5 million barrel of oil in 1970.

New Libyan government came to power in 1969 after toppling the Libyan king which followed by subsidizing the petroleum industry in the 1971 and abolished previous petroleum contracts. Again Libya was pioneer as first OPEC member to introduce production sharing contract PSC which forced all major oil companies to embrace it, in a step by the Libyan government to regain control of Libyan petroleum resources and production. Soon after that Libya's production figures indicated a sharp decline of Libyan petroleum production due to U.S. government eagerness to tame the north African leader through imposing sanctions and boycotting almost all U.S. petroleum developing activity in Libya.

The tension reached its peak in 1986 after the USA bombed the two Libyan cities; Tripoli and Benghazi, oil production at that time was around 1.1 million barrel per day. Few but sizable petroleum discovery were made that boost Libya's petroleum reserved which made Libya once more the hottest spot for oil exploration during the 1990s and 2000s. Few problems have to be solved politically before the U.S. government lifted its sanctions and allow their mighty petroleum companies enter to Libyan petroleum fields in late 2004.

Libya invited all petroleum company to participate in the first and second round of petroleum contracts knowing locally as EPSA VI. Between both rounds, a total of 47 EPSA VI contract were signed. The result was outstanding economically for the Libyan national oil company (LNOC), after publishing the results, many skeptics questioned the seriousness of the signed major oil companies. 27 EPSA VI contracts gave the LNOC 88% production Share of any oil discovered, eight of them between 88% to 80% for Libya, the rest not less than 70% in 2008. Negotiation rounds were a huge success for the Libyan NOC and its administration. Few major oil companies announced sizable petroleum discovery in number of wildcat well drilled during 2010, a promising future was awaiting the North Africa nation, but the industry luck just run out.

Libya engulfed and still has in eight years of civil war since 2011. All major petroleum companies ceased their activities and moved out of Libya at the beginning of Libyan escalation. Many Libyan governments after Gaddafi failed to hold a grip on the fast country, the division still widely speared with no light at the end of the Libyan tunnel are seen yet. Major oil companies are not obliged legally to the previous Libyan contracts since LNOC declared force majeure many times since 2011.

Attempts to motivate them to start petroleum activities failed, with an indication of LNOC vulnerability is perceived by oil players in the international oil markets. In 2018 Libyan National Oil Company allowed the sale of U.S. Marathon Oil 16.333% stack of Libya's Waha concession for 450 million US dollar to French Total, although LNOC should and could have bought it and increase its control of the Waha concession, not doing that many critics questioned LNOC credibility of protecting Libyan petroleum interest. Before that in the middle of 2017, the U.N. backed government in Tripoli tried to side with German's Wintershall oil company by allowing them to convert their concession contract to EPSA IV contract only for LNOC to oppose such move. Libyan NOC is currently vulnerable without a strong and unified Libyan government. Current effort to entice international company to come to Libya will not work, LNOC should concentrate heavily on improving its scattered oil fields which in constant need for technical and financial attention, and many of which will cease their productions activities imminently.

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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

National monitoring and response network urges people "stay at home"



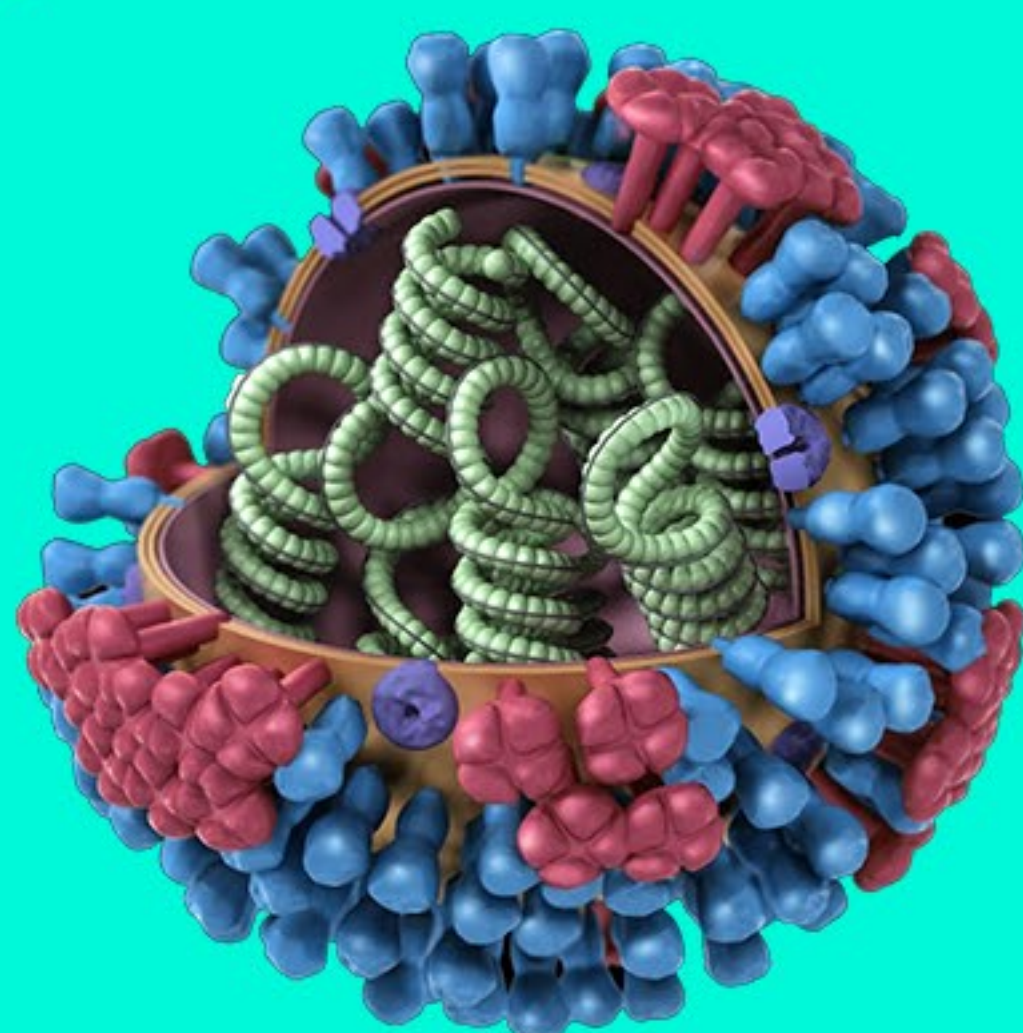
Member of the national monitoring and response network of the National Center for Disease Control, Fatima Al-Bakoush, appealed on Monday on citizens in all parts of the country to self-isolate their selves at home and not to go out unless necessary.

In a press statement, Al-Bakoush called on the authorities to follow the step of Misurata and impose a 24-hour curfew, to limit the virus from spreading.

She pointed out that the first Covid-19 patient in Libya is doing well and will be transferred to Al-Hadaba General Hospital for quarantine and to be under the auspices of specialists.

Health

Libya records second recovery of Covid-19 patient



The second coronavirus patient in Libya has recovered and left the hospital, the National Center for Disease Control has announced.

Earlier, the Director of the National Center for Disease Control, Badr Al-Din Al-Najjar, officially declared the recovery of the first coronavirus case, saying all his tests came back negative.

At a press conference, Al-Najjar said that the curfew period might be extended to 24 hours, depending on the development of the situation.

He stressed the importance of social separation during this time and commitment to home quarantine, as it is the first step towards beating this virus.

quote



George Vella
President of Malta

Our prime concern is fighting COVID-19. However Libya is also a grave concern. How does the EU hope to control arms supply to Libya by blocking only the sea routes? What about massive supplies by air and land? The disastrous consequences will hit us badly over and above COVID-19.

Q&A on coronaviruses (COVID-19)

Health

How does COVID-19 spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1 meter (3 feet) away from a person who is sick.

Can the virus that causes COVID-19 be transmitted through the air?

Studies to date suggest that the virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through contact with respiratory droplets rather than through the air. See previous answer on "How does COVID-19 spread?"

Can COVID-19 be caught from a person who has no symptoms?

The main way the disease spreads is through respiratory droplets expelled by someone who is coughing. The risk of catching COVID-19 from someone with no symptoms at all is very low.

However, many people with COVID-19 experience only mild symptoms. This is particularly true at the early stages of the disease. It is therefore possible to catch COVID-19 from someone who has, for example, just a mild cough and does not feel ill. WHO is assessing ongoing research on the period of transmission of COVID-19 and will continue to share updated findings.

Should I wear a mask to protect myself?

Only wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. Disposable face mask can only be used once. If you are not ill or looking after someone who is ill then you are wasting a mask. There is a world-wide shortage of masks, so WHO urges people to use masks wisely.

How to put on, use, take off and dispose of a mask?

- Remember, a mask should only be used by health workers, care takers, and individuals with respiratory symptoms, such as fever and cough.
- Before touching the mask, clean hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Take the mask and inspect it for tears or holes.
- Orient which side is the top side (where the metal strip is).
- Ensure the proper side of the mask faces outwards (the coloured side).
- Place the mask to your face. Pinch the metal strip or stiff edge of the mask so it moulds to the shape of your nose.
- Pull down the mask's bottom so it covers your mouth and your chin.
- After use, take off the mask; remove the elastic loops from behind the ears while keeping the mask away from your face and clothes, to avoid touching potentially contaminated surfaces of the mask.
- Discard the mask in a closed bin immediately after use.
- Perform hand hygiene after touching or discarding the mask – Use alcohol-based hand rub or, if visibly soiled, wash your hands with soap and water.

weather

TRIPOLI WEATHER FORECAST

The Weather Channel








DAY		DESCRIPTION	HIGH / LOW	PRECIP	WIND	HUMIDITY
FRI APR 10		Mostly Sunny	22°/14°	0%	E 24 km/h	48%
SAT APR 11		AM Clouds/PM Sun	23°/13°	0%	E 24 km/h	48%
SUN APR 12		Mostly Sunny	24°/15°	0%	E 31 km/h	53%
MON APR 13		Mostly Sunny	29°/21°	0%	ESE 22 km/h	42%
TUE APR 14		Partly Cloudy	31°/21°	0%	WSW 18 km/h	33%
WED APR 15		Cloudy	26°/18°	10%	N 14 km/h	51%
THU APR 16		Mostly Cloudy	25°/17°	10%	ENE 19 km/h	57%

Photo of the Week



Features

Libyan women's Farrashia



Farrashia is traditional attire that Libyan women used to wear outside the house. It is a one-piece costume mostly made of silk, and comes in different colours most popular is the white colour which is for casual wear, besides the yellowish silky one which is worn by brides or for special occasions.

The fringe of the Farrashia is knotted and formed in a bundle like a flower; this technique is carried out by skilled hands, one of the bundles differs from the others in its colour, so when there is a gathering or an occasion, each woman would identify her attire by this flower.

The Farrashia is also an integral part of the bridal wardrobe, it is sent by the groom's family in one of the wedding days with other clothing, jewellery, and presents.

The woman covers herself completely with the Farrashia and leaves only one eye to guide her through the way, however, with changing times it is now replaced with the Jilbab or Abaya, except for some rural areas where it could still be spotted now and then, as for urban areas it is only limited on national occasions in honour of the past.

Many people interested in the Maghreb heritage say that the Farrashia is of an Andalusian background. Andalusian Muslims passed this costume to the north west of Africa where they settled after fleeing Spain fear of the campaign launched by the new rulers that force them to convert to Christianity or face torture and imprisonment.

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