

THE LIBYA OBSERVER

The 13th anniversary of the 17 February Revolution

No165

Week 166 | 12.02.2024 - 19.02.2024

Politics

UN envoy: Libyan major actors unwilling to settle political disputes



The United Nations Support Mission in Libya's Head, Abdoulaye Bathily, has told the Security Council in his briefing that despite the finalization of the constitutional and legal framework for elections by the 6+6 Joint Committee of the House of Representatives (HoR) and High Council of State (HCS) in 2023 and their subsequent adoption by the HoR, key Libyan institutional stakeholders appear unwilling to resolve the outstanding politically contested issues that would clear the path to the long-awaited elections in Libya.

Bathily added on Thursday that in his latest discussions with the Speaker of the House of Representatives Aqila Saleh, he reiterated that the main issue on the agenda should be the formation of a unified government, as this would be the chief prerogative of the HoR as "the sole legitimate authority" on the matter, and that he would only participate if either the two governments are included or excluded altogether.

"The Head of the High Council of State, Mohammed Takala, maintains his rejection of the electoral laws as published by the HoR, demanding to revert to the draft agreed upon by the 6+6 Joint Committee in Bouznika. In his view, the discussion should focus on the revision of the electoral laws to reestablish what he calls the "initial version" of the text," Bathily added.

The UN envoy indicated that the Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah insisted that he would only step down after the holding of elections, meaning that the Government of National Unity that he chaired would supervise the coming electoral process. "The core objective of UNSMIL, as mandated by this Council, is to support Libyan actors to bring about stability through a peaceful political settlement. I, therefore, will not support any initiative that would bring conflict or trigger war leading to the loss of lives of Libyans.

"I have steadfastly expressed the UN's readiness to consider suggestions and proposals that could lead to a solution based on a peaceful and inclusive settlement among the stakeholders," Bathily said.

He indicated that Libya's southern region had long suffered from economic and political marginalization that must be remedied. He said that Inclusive national mechanisms that would address the socioeconomic needs of all in an equitable manner were critical.

"I continue to urge all relevant Libyan entities to work together to achieve equitable, transparent and accountable management of Libya's revenues and resources. To avoid Libya sliding into disintegration as foreseen through numerous alarming signs, a political agreement is urgently needed among the major stakeholders to form a unified government that will lead the country to elections. I call on their sense of moral duty to negotiate and reach a compromise to restore the dignity of their motherland," Bathily said.

Politics

Parallel government cancels February revolution celebrations in solidarity with floods victims

The government designated by the House of Representatives (HoR) in eastern Libya announced the cancellation of the official celebrations commemorating the February 17 Revolution for this year in solidarity with the victims of Storm Daniel and ensuing floods that struck the eastern region in September 2023. The government said in a statement on its Facebook page that it had decided to cancel official celebrations in order to employ all human and material capabilities in the field of rebuilding the affected cities through the Derna Reconstruction Fund, and to preserve public funds.

The government also attributed the reason for the cancellation to solidarity with the people of the city of Zliten, which is currently witnessing a rise in groundwater levels. It also said that people would be allowed to celebrate the February 17 revolution as an expression of their constitutional right at home or even on streets.

The government's Prime Minister Osama Hammad issued a decision declaring Saturday and Sunday, February 17 and 18, an official holiday on the occasion of the anniversary of the February 17 revolution.

Politics



Italian interior minister in Tripoli to discuss migration, border security

Minister of Interior Imad Al-Tarabulsi held discussions with his Italian counterpart, Matteo Piantedosi, who arrived at the head of an official delegation in Tripoli on Wednesday.

In a statement, Libya's Interior Ministry said that talks focused on exchanging information on illegal migration, securing borders, combating crime, and cooperation in training.

They also agreed to have their security teams meet in Tripoli to follow up on agreed-upon actions.

"The problem of illegal migration in Libya is escalating, requiring support for the Ministry of Interior with the necessary resources to address migrant flows and voluntary repatriation in coordination with the International Organization for Migration," the ministry quoted Al-Tarabulsi as saying.

He highlighted the efforts of his ministry to secure borders, activate electronic surveillance towers, and conduct desert patrols to monitor smuggling routes, noting the need for more support "from the Italian partners" in training, technical and technological fields.

Politics



Haftar's sons lead military maneuvers in Sirte, Jufra with Russian support

Khalifa Haftar's sons, Saddam and Khaled, have dispatched men and military vehicles towards the Sirte desert and Jufra, the Italian Nova news agency reported on Wednesday.

The move, which comes a few days before the anniversary of the 17 February Revolution, is perceived as a show of strength by the officers, with the support of Moscow, aiming to strengthen its presence in Libya on an important date for the country's most recent history.

Nova reported, citing a security source from Jufra, that a series of military vehicles moved during the last day to conduct exercises in Sirte and Jufra. The major brigades participating in the exercises include the "General Command" led by Khalifa Haftar, security units led by Khaled Haftar, the Tariq Bin Ziyad Brigade led by Saddam Haftar, and the 128th Brigade led by Hassan al-Zadma.

The military exercises, expected to take place after February 17, will involve the Russian-made MiG-29 dual-engine fighter jets piloted by fighters from the Wagner Group.

According to the same source, these manoeuvres are intended to send a message that Haftar's sons are in control of the situation, with or without their father's presence, and are capable of imposing their military control over the eastern region of Libya.

The publisher highlights that the General Security Network is, in fact, "an empty box with no real functions, while Haftar is depending on his tribal allies to stamp his power in Cyrenaica and Fezzan.

Politics



UN report says ISIS is still active in south Libya

The Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) Antonio Guterres has issued a new report warning that ISIS continues to operate in remote areas of south and southwest Libya, saying that its activities are funded by human trafficking and gold mining.

The report indicates that some ISIS fighters have traveled to gold mining areas in Libya and on the Libyan-Nigerien border. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) says that human trafficking and smuggling are the main source of income for the terrorist group.

The two issues are linked, as immigrants and refugees are detained and forced to work in illegal mines to pay for their trip to the north of the country.

The report adds that ISIS is cooperating with some Tebu tribes and their leader, Abdul Salam Derkallah, who provides protection for the group in the desert and mountain areas to help keep them off the radar.

The report estimates the number of ISIS fighters in Libya at approximately 150 to 400 active ones, including fighters from Chad, Nigeria, and Sudan. No recent terrorist attacks have been carried out by the group.

The report also says that the presence of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in Libya, where it has established and protected routes for transporting fighters, whether for transit purposes or as a hide-out.

The group cooperates with some Tuareg residents in the southwest, near the Algerian and Nigerien borders, and is stationed in areas around the cities of Ubari, Ghat and Al-Oweinat, as well as along the Algerian border from Ghadames to the "El Salvador Triangle", which passes through the Akakus Mountains. The group aims to use southern Libya as a transit point to transfer fighters to its affiliated groups in Mali.

Politics



Menfi discusses with military officials border demarcation concluded agreements

The Chief of the General Staff of the Libyan Army Mohammed Al-Haddad, and the head of the Presidential Council Mohammed Menfi have discussed in a meeting the impact of previous international agreements to demarcate borders on Libyan sovereignty.

According to a statement by the Presidential Council, the meeting held Thursday was attended by the Chief of the General Staff of the Border Guard Forces, in the presence of members of the Land and Sea Border Committee. For its part, the committee provided Menfi with a detailed report and explanation on the conditions of the land and sea borders with neighboring countries.

In turn, Menfi stressed the need to protect and monitor land and sea borders, explaining that supporting the efforts of the committee and the border guard forces will be the council's top priorities and one of its most important tasks.

Politics



UAE's President to Dbeibah: We support dialogues aiming to end Libya's transitional periods

The President of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Mohammed bin Zayed re-affirmed his country's readiness to support any dialogue aimed at ending the transitional periods through elections in Libya.

These remarks came during bin Zayed's meeting with the Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, on Tuesday at Al-Manar Palace in Abu Dhabi, Hakomitna media platform said.

The meeting discussed the issue of economic cooperation, the latest political developments in the region, in addition to the situation in Libya's neighboring countries, and unifying efforts between the two countries for stability.

Dbeibah participated in the World Government Summit in the UAE from Monday to Wednesday in the presence of a number of heads of states, governments and international organizations.

Economy

Menfi reiterates priority of national companies in developing Hamada oilfield



The Head of the Presidential Council Mohammed Menfi stressed in his meeting with the Minister of Oil and Gas Mohammed Oun on Wednesday the need to give priority to national companies working in the oilfield to develop the Hamada field.

Menfi confirmed that the percentage offered by the consortium of foreign companies to develop the Hamada field was very large and exaggerated, and that it was considered a neglect of public capabilities, a violation of applicable national legislation, and a clear violation of the provisions of the political agreement.

He called for implementing what was stated in the letters sent by the House of Representatives, the High Council of State, the Attorney General, and the Audit Bureau regarding avoiding the obligation of the Libyan state to bear any future burdens in the current

transitional period.

In the meantime, the Minister of Oil provided Menfi with a complete briefing on the work of the Ministry of Oil and Gas, on the overlap of competencies between the Ministry and the Supreme Council of Energy, and on the steps currently being taken by the government to develop the Hamada oilfield through a consortium of a number of foreign companies.

Oun indicated that the political agreement confirmed that the executive authority was not allowed to sign long-term agreements during the transitional period, stressing the availability of the technical capacity and capabilities of national companies to develop Hamada field.

Economy



Ministry of Finance: Salaries delayed due to the failure to approve state budget

The Ministry of Finance of the Government of National Unity has attributed the reasons for the delay in disbursing January salaries to the failure to approve the state budget for previous years and the current year.

The ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that the delay in disbursing salaries is due to the decision issued by the House of Representatives to form a committee responsible for restructuring the general budget for the fiscal year 2024.

It also affirmed its keenness to complete the disbursement of salaries on time without any delay, noting that it pays great attention to the regular disbursement of salaries and settlement employees financial situations.

Economy



American company inspects construction site of oil refinery in southern Libya

The American Honeywell-UOP company, along with Zallaf Company, conducted a field visit to the construction site of the South Refinery Project, located southwest of the city of Ubari.

Zallaf Company confirmed that the American company inspected the site geographically and logistically, and recorded its observations to make the necessary arrangements to launch the project.

Economy



Ben Qaddara reviews developments in geophysical surveying in Cyrenaica

The Chairman of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Farhat Ben Qaddara, has discussed the latest developments in the geophysical survey of the Cyrenaica surface adjacent to the Greek and Egyptian sea and land borders.

This came during his meeting with the Board of Directors of the Arabian Gulf Oil Company and the head of the geophysical survey team, Ahmed Al-Majdoub, where they reviewed the modern technologies used to complete the survey operations, according to the NOC.

Ben Qaddara confirmed the NOC support to the Gulf Oil Company due to their great qualifications which will enhance exploration operations in Libya and preserve national wealth.

Economy



Libyan-Ghanaian discussions on establishment of African Investment Bank in Tripoli

The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Government of National Unity (GNU), Taher Al-Baour, has discussed with the Ghanaian President, Nana Akufo-Addo in the capital, Accra, the GNU efforts to establish the African Investment Bank and launch its work at its headquarters in the capital, Tripoli.

The Ghanaian President expressed his appreciation for the depth of relations between the two countries, stressing his support for the efforts of the founding committee of the African Investment Bank, confirming that it will receive the attention of African leaders during the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, which will begin this week.

Economy



Shakshak, Al-Kabir discuss reviewing financial statement of CBL

The head of the Libyan Audit Bureau, Khaled Shakshak, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, have discussed the bank's financial statement audit.

The two sides talked about the possibility of agreeing on a plan according to which audit operations would be facilitated.

They also discussed the work of unifying standards between the Audit Bureau and the CBL in order to facilitate their work, and amending the requirements that must be met to develop accounting work in Libya.



Sports

Libyan athletes shine at Arab Women's Clubs Games, UAE

Libyan champion Sama Al-Ferjani on Friday clinched the silver medal in the Karate Kumite competition for the over 55kg category at the 7th Arab Women's Clubs Games in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, which continues until February 12th.

Al-Ferjani's achievement comes after champion Retaj Al-Saih secured the gold medal in Thursday's competition, breaking the Arab and Libyan record in the discus throw event.

Libya's participation in the games spans three sports: athletics, karate, and table tennis.

The Libyan team comprised Retaj Al-Saih (discus throw), Sama Al-Ferjani and Raneem Al-Saqli (Karate Kata - Kumite), and Zeinab Al-Sherif (table tennis).



Migration

442 immigrants returned to Libya from the Mediterranean in a week

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) announced the return of 442 illegal immigrants to Libya last week as they were heading to Europe.

The IOM said that among the immigrants were 17 children and 68 women of different nationalities, after they had left Libya from the coasts of Zuwara and Sabratha.

It also indicated on Facebook that 1004 immigrants have been rescued since the beginning of the year, explaining that 73 other immigrants are missing, while 16 deaths have been recorded. It stressed that the total number of illegal immigrants who were rescued and returned to Libya during the past year reached 17,190 immigrants.



Travel

Royal Air Maroc explores direct flights to Libya

A delegation from Royal Air Maroc visited Mitiga International Airport on Wednesday.

During their visit, the General Director of Mitiga Airport, Lutfi Tabib, briefed them on the operational procedures and safety and security measures in place at the airport.

The two sides also discussed the possibility of establishing regular and direct flights between Libya and Morocco via Royal Air Maroc.



Health



Al-Sayeh denies spread of leishmaniasis in Bir al-Ghanam area

The Director of the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), Haider Al-Sayeh, has denied the spread of leishmaniasis in Bir Al-Ghanam area.

Al-Sayeh confirmed in a video clip posted on his Facebook account that the area was free of any epidemics after a visit conducted by the monitoring team and the epidemiology office to the city, during which they examined several migrants in the city.

The results showed that several migrants in one of the

shelter centers were infected with bacterial skin infection and that the necessary treatment was provided to them after they were diagnosed by the specialized teams, Al-Sayeh added.

Al-Sayeh pointed out that the NCDC has developed a future plan to solve the health problems that inmates may be exposed to inside the shelter centers in the region and its suburbs.



Health

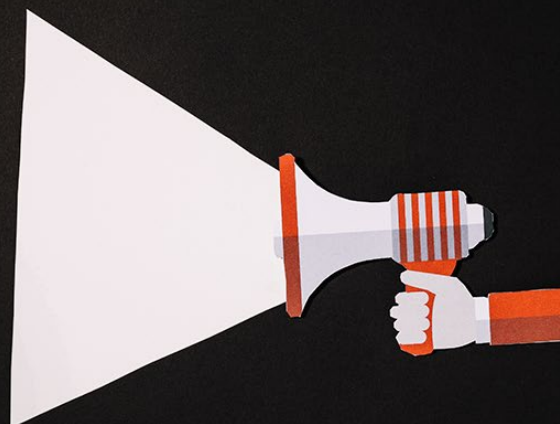
Libya seeks cooperation with WHO to develop health sector

Deputy Prime Minister/ Health Minister Ramadan Abu Janah and WHO Representative in Libya, Ahmed Zouiten, discussed cooperation for activating health insurance services across all age groups in Libya.

They also debated strengthening Libya's health sector, launching WHO's general plan for the next five years, and digitalizing the health system to enable evidence-based decision-making.

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Opinions

The Great Treasure Chest

By Abdullah Alkabir, a Libyan political writer and commentator

After definitely exceeding its clear powers enshrined in the Constitutional Declaration, by issuing unnecessary legislation and laws during the transitional period, such as creating a Constitutional Court to replace the Constitutional Chamber of the High Court, and issuing its own official Gazette, these are just a few examples. The House of Representatives (HoR) continues its subversive role in Libyan political life by establishing the Libya Development and Reconstruction Fund, and subordinating several entities to it, to operate under its supervision, such as the Cities Development Authority, and the Oil Crescent Development Authority, to record the maximum levels of absurdity, by legislating plunder and theft of public money. This fund is exempted by virtue of Article No. (8) from applying the provisions of the Administrative Contracts Regulations, as well as from the Administrative Control and Audit Bureau Laws.

Half of the powers of the executive authorities were granted to the Fund, as it assumes tasks assigned to the ministries of Planning and Finance, so that the need for these ministries will no longer exist after the creation of the Fund.

The legislator who enacted this law may not realize that his law will not be worth the ink with which it was written, and that the opportunity to translate it into reality is extremely impossible. Therefore, the only result that he will achieve after the issuance of the law, and its dissemination via social websites and media platforms, is the shame that will befall him, because he did not hesitate to belittle the trust he held, and he dared to permit the seizure of public money by law, and to protect the person assigned to head this fund from any oversight or accountability.

The emphasis on the impossibility of applying the law regarding the Fund, in particular its Article 8 exempting the fund from oversight and accountability, is not arbitrary or presumptuous, but rather based on the package of basic laws of the state, including the Law of the Audit Bureau and the Law of Administrative Control, which are the laws upon which the High Court relies when considering any laws. They are created by legislative bodies, and therefore any law that violates these basic laws will be invalidated by the court.

The day after the fund law was issued, the Office of the Presidency of the House of Representatives issued a decision naming Belkacem Haftar as director of the fund. This assignment reveals the reason for creating this fund with a legal text, and sparing it oversight and accountability. Over the past months, Belkacem Haftar has been seeking to oust Agila Saleh from the presidency of the House of Representatives.

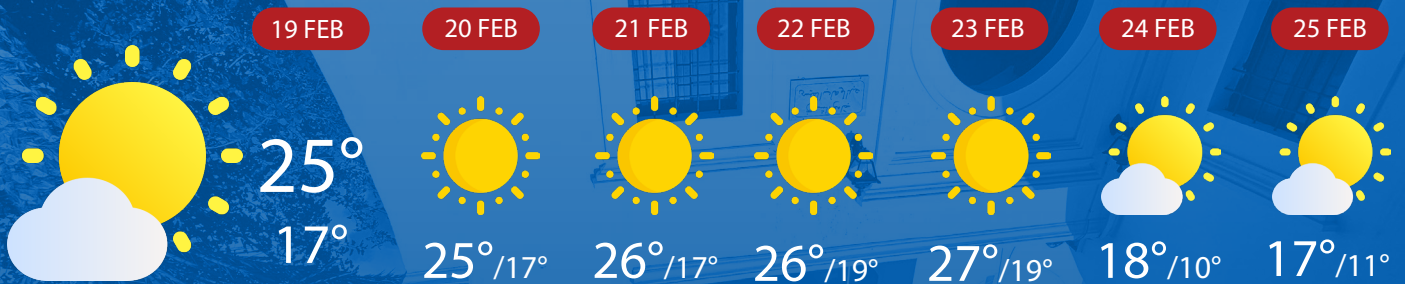
The Egyptian regime has intervened at least once to preserve Agila Saleh and protect him from the encroachment of Haftar's sons. It appears that Haftar's son has not backed down from his goal, and he has wide influence in the HoR, through the loyalty of a large number of representatives to him, they are the ones who will carry out the coup by appointing a new speaker of the HoR. Therefore, Aqila decided to resolve this nightmare by offering this bribe to Haftar's son, hoping to dissuade him from his efforts to overthrow him, and for the boy to be busy with his new toy, the great treasure chest, which is immune from oversight and accountability, in a bid to take his hands off the throne of the Presidency of Parliament.

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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