

## Politics

### Turkish Defense Minister: EU's Operation IRINI flawed from the start



Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar told reporters at the Turkish parliament in the capital Ankara Tuesday that European Union's Operation IRINI was stillborn, saying "it has lacked a solid basis in terms of international law since the beginning".

Operation IRINI's implementation has been problematic since the beginning, Akar said, adding that the EU should have asked Libya's UN-recognized Government of National Accord for permission before launching the operation this March.

He said, commenting on the German inspection of a Turkish vessel en route to Libya, that the statements of Ankara's allies don't reflect the facts and some are flawed.

Under EU's Operation IRINI, a German frigate on Sunday illegally stopped and searched a private Turkish-flagged ship carrying humanitarian aid to Libya, drawing condemnations from Turkish leaders, while Germany's Defense Ministry later said its teams had found nothing fishy on the Turkish vessel.

Meanwhile, Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay described EU's Operation IRINI as "biased" and aimed to "punish GNA in Libya", condemning the illegal German inspection of the Turkish vessel in the Mediterranean.

Oktay added on Twitter that EU's Operation IRINI doesn't monitor and inspect the military and arms' support sent to Khalifa Haftar and his forces but rather aims to punish the legitimate GNA in the country.

## Politics

### Second round of Libyan Political Dialogue Forum commences online



The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has kicked off the second round of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) virtually, saying the round is attended by the Acting UN Envoy Stephanie Williams as well as all 75 LPDF participants.

Later on Monday, UNSMIL said the second round was delayed to next Wednesday so that the LPDF participants can mull the options of selecting the new executive authorities in Libya.

The first round of the LPDF was completed on November 15 in Tunisia after the participants had agreed to hold elections on December 24, 2021.

The LPDF participants in Tunisia also agreed at the time to specify the authorities allowed for the Presidential Council and the new unity government, with the criteria for candidacy to state positions remaining undecided.

Meanwhile, members from the Tripoli-based and Tobruk-based House of Representatives arrived in Morocco's Tangier with the aim of holding a full-quorum deliberations session in an attempt to unite the legislative body ahead of elections.



### Libyan legal organizations urge investigation into alleged bribes at LPDF in Tunisia

11 legal organizations and civil societies have lodged a complaint with the Libyan Attorney General over the "bribes given to participants of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Tunisia this month" and have called on the UNSMIL to continue their investigation for the allegations of bribery.

In a statement Sunday to the UN Secretary General, Acting Envoy Stephanie Williams, and Libyan Attorney General, the organizations expressed shock at the circulated news of "political money" being used at the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum to buy votes for certain names to win positions at the new executive authorities.

"We are awaiting the revelation of results of the investigation that has been announced by the Acting UN Envoy to Libya Stephanie Williams." The statement reads.

They explained that the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum members who would be found guilty of the bribes' accusations should be dismissed from the upcoming dialogue sessions and those names who were behind the money should be deprived from being nominated for any position at the Presidential Council and Government.

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"Selecting the participants of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum should have been more transparent and careful and people whose names were stained in the past with any misdeeds and misconduct shouldn't have been invited to be part of the dialogue." The statement adds.

The organizations and civil societies said the allegations of bribery threaten the integrity of the Political Dialogue and that they need to know the results of the investigation so that the outcomes of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum can be respected afterwards.

Social media and media outlets circulated news last week that some participants of the LPDF had been depicted as trying to buy off votes for certain names to be nominated for new Presidential Council and government positions.

Last Wednesday, 56 LPDF participants urged the UNSMIL to suspend the membership of those who are subject of the bribes allegations until the investigation results come out.



Politics

### Libyan Mufti says conclusions of UN-led Libyan dialogue are 'disheartening'

The Grand Mufti of Libya, Sheikh Sadiq Al-Gharyani, has described the results of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), which took place in Tunisia, as 'disheartening' at the least.

The Mufti explained in his weekly "Islam and Life" program that these conclusions merely confirm that the participants in the UN-led dialogue were disingenuously chosen to represent the Libyan people and that their main concern is solely to achieve their own interests.

He continued that the participants of LPDF were not sincerely considering the referendum on the constitution, nor indeed the end of the transitional phase, due to the fact that it would herald the loss of their own, 'presently held' seats.

Politics

### Erdogan: Turkish intervention in Libya contributed to reanimating hope for a political solution



The Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said on Saturday that the Turkish intervention in Libya greatly contributed to reanimating Libyan's hopes for a political solution in the country.

This came in a virtual message sent by Erdogan to the Halifax International Security Forum, in which he stressed that "Turkey does not follow an antagonistic or expansionist approach and does not interfere in other country's affairs."

He reiterated that Turkey would continue to stand by its friends and brothers everywhere, beginning with Syria, whilst continuing through Libya and the eastern Mediterranean, reaching as far as the Caucasus, as he put it.



Politics

### Russia blocks UN blacklisting of pro-Haftar militia

Russia has stopped the United Nations sanctions commission from blacklisting pro-Haftar Al-Kaniyat militia and its leader Mohammed Al-Kani, for human rights violations.

Reuters said Friday that the United States and Germany proposed that the Security Council's Libya sanctions committee impose an asset freeze and travel ban on Al-Kaniyat militia and its leader Mohammed Al-Kani.

Such a move has to be agreed by consensus, but Russia said it could not approve, saying its support in the future is possible, but conditioned by provision of an irrefutable evidence of their involvement in killing of civilian populations; a Russian diplomat told his Security Council colleagues in a note seen by Reuters.

According to Reuters, the United States and Germany wrote in their sanctions proposal that international human rights groups and the UN Support Mission in Libya have "received reports of hundreds of human rights abuses perpetrated by the Al-Kaniyat militia against private individuals, state officials, captured fighters, and civil society activists in Tarhouna."

The proposal said that under Mohammed Al-Kani's leadership, Al-Kaniyat militia has reportedly carried out enforced disappearances, torture, and killings, adding that UNSMIL verified numerous summary executions at Tarhouna Prison conducted by the Al-Kaniyat militia on September 13, 2019.

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Economy

## NOC: Oil revenues will not be transferred to the CBL

The National Oil Corporation (NOC) reiterated on Sunday that it would not transfer the oil revenues to the Central Bank account, explaining they would be kept in its accounts at the Libyan Foreign Bank.

"The revenues will not be transferred to the account of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) until the bank has a clear transparency in front of the Libyan people regarding the mechanism of spending the oil revenues during the last years and the entities that benefited from such revenues in the foreign currency which exceeded the total of 186 billion US dollars during the last nine years," the NOC said in a statement on Facebook.

The state's oil company indicated that the withholding of revenues in the corporation's accounts at the Libyan Foreign Bank would be temporary until reaching a comprehensive political settlement, the most important of which is the fair use of revenues between all Libyan cities and towns.

The NOC also revealed plans to contract with a key international company of financial auditing and verification to review its financial and administrative systems, emphasizing that the state's revenues, as well as the rights of foreign partners, are accurately documented and held in the NOC's account at the Libyan Foreign Bank.

The NOC's announcement came in response to the recent CBL statements regarding the public revenues during the period from January 1 to October 31, issued on Thursday.

The CBL said that the NOC's data on oil revenues was inaccurate, which the NOC deemed as a malicious statement, demanding the bank to withdraw its statements at once.



Economy

## Libyan Businessmen Council inks MoU with Turkish MUSIAD

The Libyan Businessmen Council has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Turkish Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MUSIAD).

The MoU was signed on the sidelines of the "MUSIAD Expo Trade Fair" currently taking place at Tuyap Exhibition Center in Istanbul, Turkey.

The exhibition, which will run from the 18th to the 21st of November, is usually organized once every two years with broad participation of companies from various sectors including food, construction, real estate, tourism, medicine, logistics, and textiles.

The Libyan Businessmen Council expressed in a statement its interest to participate in several exhibitions during the coming period, including the 24th conference of the International Business Forum "IBF" the food and beverage exhibition, besides those concerned with food processing, packaging, refrigeration, transportation, market equipment, food packaging techniques.

It also confirmed it would take part in an exhibition for commercial agencies in the aforementioned areas, which is scheduled to take place in Istanbul from 25 - 28 of the same month.



Economy

## Waha Oil Company operates second largest oil station in Jalu Oil Field

The Waha Oil and Gas Company announced on Tuesday the operation of the second largest crude oil station in the Jalu oil field.

The Company said in a statement that its Libyan workers were capable of replacing the 'LP1' gas line within a period of less than one week, in addition to operating the crude oil producing station, Jalu1.

According to the statement, it is expected that the operation of the second largest production station in the field will contribute to the increase of quantities of total production, which will then support the export process.

Health

## UNICEF: Over 300 thousand children in Libya require humani-



Around 1.2 million people, including more than 348,000 children need humanitarian assistance in Libya due to the protracted armed conflict, political and economic crises and, the Covid-19 pandemic, the UNICEF said in a statement regarding its humanitarian work plan and needs in 2021.

The UN organization expressed its willingness to coordinate with government officials, civil society organizations, and the private sector to achieve its humanitarian, development, and peace-building strategy in Libya while preserving capacity for a rapid response at the onset of new emergencies.

"UNICEF and partners require US\$49.1 million to spearhead emergency preparedness and response interventions in Libya in 2021," the organization noted, explaining that the priority interventions for 2021 are related to Covid-19, such as health, water, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as education and child protection.



Opinions

# Is there a way to move from frozen conflict to durable peace in Libya?

🐦 @ferhattpol

By **Ferhat Polat**, Deputy Researcher at the TRT World Research Centre

*Credit: This article was first published by TRT World Research Centre on April 20, 2020*



Negotiations have given a glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel but with wildcards like Haftar still empowered by foreign powers, there is a real risk to Libya's long term security.

Libya has been mired in chaos since the ouster and killing of longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 after mass protests against his rule turned into civil war.

The near decade of conflict that followed has claimed the lives of tens of thousands and increased instability in North Africa and the Sahel. Recent talks held in Tunisia have nevertheless made some progress, according to the United Nations acting envoy in Libya, Stephanie Williams, raising hopes that there is a viable route towards elections set to take place in December, 2021.

The meeting has reached a preliminary agreement on a road map to "free, fair, inclusive, and credible parliamentary and presidential elections" that also includes steps to unite institutions, Williams said.

During the opening ceremony of the peace conference, Williams had stated that "the road to the agreement will not be paved with roses and it will not be easy to achieve a good outcome.

"The conference, however, is the best opportunity in the last six years to put an end to civil war".

The UN has been engaging in the country since the beginning of the Libyan revolution in 2011.

Following NATO intervention, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), set up in September of the same year, became the main international body seeking reconciliation between different groups.

The UN has been supporting diplomatic efforts for close to a decade, but the failure of past initiatives, the arms build-up, and Haftar's record of threatening political solutions, has made it harder for any credible diplomatic effort toward resolving the conflict.

Since August, rival Libyan parties to the conflict have agreed on a ceasefire, despite a number of violations by pro-Haftar militias.

In a positive development despite the efforts to disrupt it, the ceasefire has so far succeeded in preventing fighting, and oil production has resumed.

This return to the negotiating table has increased hopes of reconciliation and resulted in the lifting of the oil blockade. More importantly, it has enabled rival parties to sign a permanent ceasefire during the fourth round of talks of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC) in Geneva.

This is the first time military leaders have met face to face since Haftar, who is backed by Egypt, Russia, France and the UAE, launched an offensive against the UN-backed government in April 2019. The offensive was only prevented after Turkey intervened with military support to the internationally recognised government.

The UN seems to believe that the current deal could provide fresh momentum to political and economic negotiations taking place in a parallel process. The JMC reportedly will resume talks within weeks to work on unifying their armed forces and bring about the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries.

However, the situation remains fragile, particularly in Sirte, a key city in Libya's 'oil crescent' region, which provides 60 percent of Libya's oil exports. The ceasefire agreement is viewed as a move toward broader political talks and a way out of the conflict. However, the threat of renewed violence still exists.

The UN Libya mission is also leading the military talks near the ceasefire line in Sirte. The internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) warned the current truce could be in peril, saying their Moscow-backed opponents had started live-fire exercises, further accusing Russian mercenaries of preventing their delegation from landing at an airport near Sirte.

In response, on Thursday, the military command of the UN-backed GNA stated: "We do not want these moves to cause the failure of peaceful dialogue and we will not accept to negotiate under the duress of mercenaries and their air defences."

## Obstacles to Peace

Haftar has played the role of chief disrupter over the last two to three years and has broken every single agreement and ceasefire brokered by the international community. Haftar's heavy losses in western Libya have caused fractures within his eastern camp, as a result, he has lost a lot of support internally and externally. Nevertheless he still has significant support from the UAE and therefore enough international backing to disrupt efforts to find peace.

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The power shift is apparent in eastern Libya, where Aguila Saleh, a speaker in the Tobruk based Parliament, has become the new political representative of the eastern bloc. The present truce further reduced Haftar's strength and empowered Saleh's rise, therefore, the European Union recently decided to drop sanctions against Saleh, thereby allowing him to further consolidate power within the country.

A sustainable settlement is presumably not in the interest of some foreign actors such as Russia, Egypt and the UAE because it could undermine their influence and may even threaten its military presence in Libya. Therefore, none are likely to stop supporting their Libyan proxies and neither will they pull their foreign fighters out of the country despite the agreement.

Justice and accountability are also major issues in the country, as militias in Libya have committed a number of crimes. Most recently, prominent Libyan lawyer Hanan al Barassi was gunned down in the eastern city of Benghazi. Her killing in an area that is still under the control of Haftar's LNA took place just a day after she shared comments on social media criticising the warlord's son.

According to the UN, she was widely known as a vocal critic of corruption, abuse of power, and human rights violations.

Hanan Salah, researcher at Human Right Watch, has commented that "What the agreement does not provide is a clear commitment and a pathway to accountability for the serious crimes and other abuses perpetrated by the conflict parties with support of their foreign backers. This includes indiscriminate attacks that killed civilians, destruction of critical infrastructure, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and unlawful killings".

The international community should ensure the security and justice required in which the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum can prepare for new elections without fear of getting killed. Similarly, the need for security and stability will encourage the majority of Libyans to engage in the process of peace and to support paths of reconstruction and development.

There is a viable political track that exists for the Libyan situation to move in a positive direction but at the same time a lot of factors could undermine the process.

**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 Libya's NCDC holds workshop on new evaluation criteria for Covid-19

The National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) organized on Thursday a workshop to discuss the epidemiological situation according to the new World Health Organization (WHO) criteria, which provides a picture of the levels and stages of the spread of Covid-19.

The attendees discussed means to perform work at the new standards and how to organize the flow of data and information between various relevant facilities and the teams concerned.

The National Center for Disease Control stressed the importance of the WHO cooperation to increase the capabilities of the monitoring and response teams on the ground, especially those working in the southern region.

The activity targeted Libya's NCDC monitoring and rapid response team, as well as members of the technical cooperation office and the information, statistics, and data analysis office.

The workshop was also attended by a representative of the WHO office in Libya, in addition to several other WHO experts, who participated online.

The National Center for Disease Control registered 802 new Covid-19 cases during the last 24 hours, in addition to 794 recoveries and six fatalities.



### Health A family of nine people died of suffocation in Tripoli

A Libyan family consisting of seven children and their parents, the youngest is seven months old, suffocated to death inside their house in Al-Abyar Road in Ain Zara district, south Tripoli, the media advisor to the Ministry of Health, Amin Al-Hashemi, told The Libya Observer.

"Contact with the 'Barion' family has been cut off since last Tuesday", Al-Hashemi said, adding that their decomposing bodies were found on Friday.

Al-Hashemi indicated that the forensic report showed that the family died of carbon monoxide poisoning from a portable generator due to the power outage in the region.

The family has recently returned to their house after over 12 months of displacement due to the failed aggression of warlord Haftar on south Tripoli.

He also called on the concerned authorities of the Government of National Accord to accelerate the restoration of the areas affected by the failed aggression, as they are still suffering from the spread of war remnants, in addition to power and communications outages.





Science

## Libyan activists launch the "Angel Shark Project in Libya"

A group of Libyan scientists and activists have launched the "Angel Shark Project in Libya" aimed at highlighting the importance of Libya as a hot-spot for the endangered angel sharks in the Mediterranean.

The project is led by the Marine Biology website in Libya with the partnership of several international stakeholders, including the "Koenig Museum" in Germany, the Zoological Society of London, the Spanish University of Las Palmas, the iSea and, the Shark trust organization, with the support of "Save Our Seas" Foundation.

Marine biologist Sarah Al-Mabruk, founder of the "Marine Biology in Libya" website explained to the Libya Observer that she and her team aim to spread awareness and promote reporting of angel shark catch and identification in Libya, to help better understand the most three critically endangered angel shark species living in the Libyan waters.

The initiative started online and found success on the Facebook platform, which prompted the organizers to take a further step and reach out to international organizations concerned with protecting sea life.

The team managed to prove themselves to the Swiss-based "Save Our Seas" Foundation dedicated to protecting life in oceans, especially sharks and rays.

Professor Sarah explains that they will proceed along three parallel paths. The first track is to survey the main fish markets along Libya's coast and to make fishers aware of angel sharks and their status in Libyan waters.

As for the second and third tracks, the team will launch a broad awareness campaign on all social media platforms and gather information to create a database.

According to Professor Al-Mabruk, the Libyan coasts in the Gulf of Sidra, Tocra, and Zuwara may be one of the last hot-spots for angel sharks in the Mediterranean.

She pointed out that the "World Wide Fund for Nature" indicated in its latest report that Libya is ranked first among the Mediterranean countries in fishing cartilaginous fish.

"However, while achievements are significant, we continue to face challenges," said Sarah, pointing out to the impact of the global Coronavirus pandemic and the recent conflict in the country on their work, as well as trying to convince a fisherman to unhooked a shark he caught and return it to the water!

The Marine Biology team on the ground is currently working from Al-Bayda, Shahat, Tobruk, Misrata, and Tripoli, says Al-Mabruk.

She indicated that the next step is to prepare a scientific paper before moving on to an advanced "Tag" stage that requires installing a device on the shark to track and collect information about these species, and this says Al-Mabruk demands coordination of efforts at the official capacities and among the general public.



Culture

## Libyan man hands over antique coins to Tolmeita Museum, eastern Libya

The Libyan Antiquities Authority (LAA) announced on Saturday that a Libyan citizen named Fadel Adam Yunus, working at the Tourist Police Office of Tolmeita, eastern Libya had handed 68 antique coins to Tolmeita Museum.

LAA explained that some of the coins dated back to different Roman and Byzantine eras, while the others are being identified, indicating that they require cleaning operations to remove the sediments attached to them in order to identify them.

Culture

## Research, Documentation and Information Center opens new HQ in Tripoli



The General Authority for Culture has opened the new HQ of the Research, Documentation and Information Center in Tripoli.

An opening ceremony was held on this occasion on Sunday, with the participation of several officials from relevant bodies, including the head of the General Authority for Culture, Hassan Onis. The center will resume work from its new HQ after a pause for several months due to the great damage sustained to the former building as a result of Haftar's barbaric aggression against the capital, Tripoli.

It may be important to note that the Research, Information, and Documentation Center was established in 1981 under the name of the Media Research and Studies Center.



The center compiles many cultures and artwork, including information about the lives of cultural and media figures. It also publishes The Journal of Media Research, which is a specialized magazine concerned with research and studies in the media and communication area.



weather



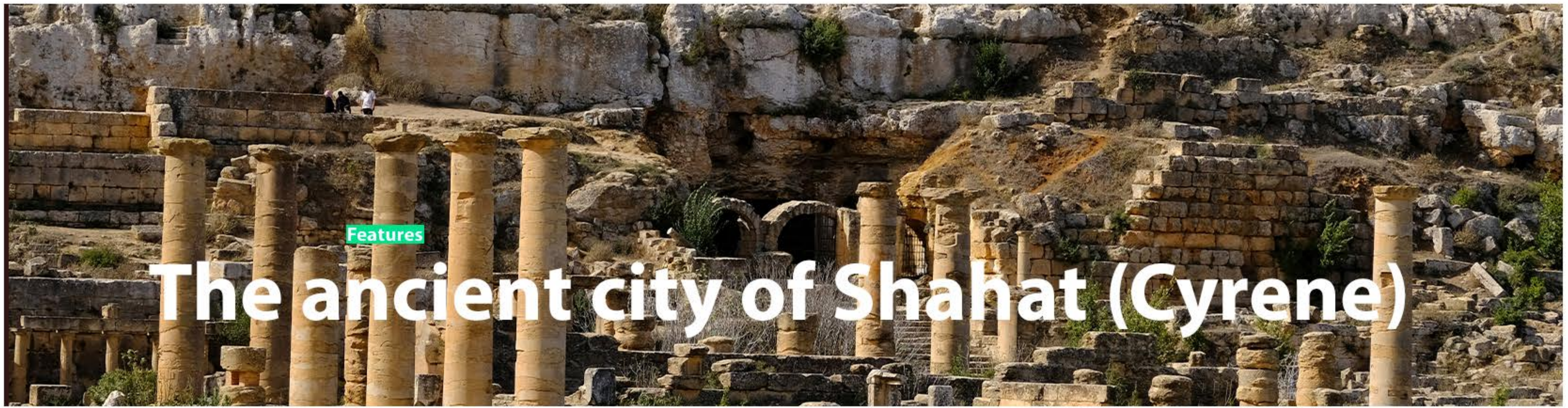
## Tripoli Weather Forecast

Fri 27	23°/15°		Sunny	10%	SSE 19 km/h
Sat 28	23°/13°		Mostly Sunny	10%	S 26 km/h
Sun 29	21°/14°		Sunny/Wind	10%	WSW 33 km/h
Mon 30	21°/14°		Mostly Sunny	20%	W 23 km/h
Tue 01	21°/13°		Mostly Sunny	20%	W 13 km/h
Wed 02	21°/13°		Partly Cloudy	20%	WSW 15 km/h
Thu 03	20°/14°		Partly Cloudy	20%	WSW 20 km/h

### Photo of the Week: Libya Equestrian Festival, Tripoli, November 2020







# The ancient city of Shahat (Cyrene)

Shahat or Cyrene is an ancient city founded by the Greeks in the District of the Green Mountain (Jabal Al-Akhdar), north-eastern Libya. It lies in a lush valley in the Green Mountain uplands. It is located 10 kilometres east of Al-Bayda city. It's considered the second largest city in the Green Mountain after the city of Al-Bayda.

It was an ancient Greek and later Roman city near present-day Shahhat.

It is linked with Derna by two roads, the inner one running through Al Qubah, which is a part of the Libyan Coastal Highway and the coastal one running through Susa and Ras Al-Helal.

Shahat was the oldest and most important of the five Greek cities in the region. It gave eastern Libya the classical name Cyrenaica that it has retained to modern times. It is also one of the most beautiful cities in Libya, and ranked third among the ten most beautiful cities in the Arab world.

The city is currently affiliated to the Green Mountain Governorate. Its population around 43,376 (2004).

## Origin of the Name (Cyrene and Shahat):

A Greek legend states that the name 'Cyrene' came from the name of a nymph that was spotted by Apollo wrestling and strangling a lion in the jungle.

Whereas it called 'Shahat' because of the scarcity of water, as it contained springs that has depleted.

## Foundation and History:

The city followed all the empires that followed the rule of northern Libya including the Republicans in 414 BC, Alexander the Great and the Greek rulers in 332 BC, the Romans in 96 BC, the Byzantines in 324 AD, and the Islamic conquest in 635 AD.

## Greek period:

It was founded in 631 BC as a settlement of Greeks from the island of Thera, traditionally led by Battus, who was its first ruler for 40 years. It became the chief town of Libya and reached its heights prosperity in the fourth century BC by establishing commercial relations with all the Greek cities.

## Roman Period:

In 74 BC, the Roman province of Cyrene was created. However, while the Jewish population under the rule of the Ptolemies enjoyed equal rights, it is said that they were increasingly suppressed by the Greek population. Tensions culminated in the revolt of the Jews of Cyrene under Vespasian (73 AD, the First Jewish-Roman War) and especially Trajan (117 AD, the War of Kitos). This revolt was suppressed by Marcus Turbo, but not before large numbers of civilians were brutally murdered by the Jewish rebels.

## Grandeur of the city:

The city is characterized by the Greek baths, the Temple of Zeus, which was founded in the fifth century BC, the Temple of Apollo and other temples, the Agora, the Shura Council, and the Castle of the Acropolis.

In the Roman era, some modifications were added to the Greek buildings and many new buildings were built, including the Roman baths, theater, Hercules portico, many temples and monuments, in addition to the outer wall, which was built in the first and second centuries AD, however there are many churches dating back to the Byzantine era. It was previously visited by a number of personalities, including the Greek philosopher Plato.

It also classified by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), on the list of World Heritage Sites in Libya since 1982.

The prosperity of Cyrene was founded on the silphium plant, where it resembles a stylised leek or a sunflower. The plant once grew only in Libya and apparently its extinction was a grievous blow to the city's economy.

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