

## Politics

### Libya marks first anniversary of Tripoli Military College attack



Libya on Monday marked one year since the death of scores of cadets in a UAE-backed drone strike of Khalifa Haftar's forces, which targeted The Military College in Tripoli.

The Military College honoured the parents of the victims in a memorial ceremony held at its premises yesterday.

Students who had survived the bombing pledged, in a statement to hold those responsible for the attack accountable and to resist any coup against the state.

"There is no place for putschist between us" the students stressed in their statement, indicating that they were bombed while seeking to build a truly national army to secure a modern civil state.

On January 4, 2020, at least 30 people, most of them students, were killed and dozens of others wounded in a lethal attack on The Military College in the Hadaba area south of Tripoli.

The raid struck as cadets gathered on a parade ground before retiring to their dormitories, leaving bodies scattered across the ground.

The UN-backed government blamed Khalifa Haftar's militias for the attack. The allegations were later confirmed by a UN report and the BBC, which uncovered that a drone operated by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) - a key supporter of Haftar's aggression against Tripoli - was behind the attack.



### GNA rejects reopening Sirte-Misrata road before mercenaries' departure

The commander of the Sirte-Jufra Operations Room of the Libyan Army under the command of the Government of National Accord (GNA) Ibrahim Baytelmal rejected again the reopening of Sirte-Misrata road before the withdrawal of mercenaries from Sirte and Jufra.

Baytelmal told reporters that the road between east and west Libya "won't be reopened before the mercenaries are withdrawn", adding that the ceasefire agreement points should be implemented, including the mandatory withdrawal of foreign mercenaries and clearance of mines, which will be accepted by the Room's personnel after re-

after receiving maps for the mines' locations."

Sirte-Jufra Operations Room has rejected reopening the Sirte-Misrata road many times due to the presence of mercenaries and forces in the region in contradiction with the points of agreement of the ceasefire signed in Geneva last October.

Meanwhile, Hatteen Brigade of the GNA armed forces said earlier that it would be withdrawing its military vehicles and equipment from the coastal road, taking them back to its camps, according to a letter from the commander of the brigade, Omar Atham, sent to 5+5 commission of the GNA.

## Politics

### Conte urges Biden to pay more attention to Libya's status quo

The Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said he spoke to the US President-elect Joe Biden and discussed the situation in Libya, reminding him of the need for more US attention to the Libyan crisis.

In a press conference in Rome, traditionally held every year-end, Conte said Italy backed peaceful solutions in Libya, saying the military situation is fragile and that military solutions cannot solve the problem, which can only be resolved by dialogue, according to Aki.

He said the crisis in Libya has always been of importance to Rome, adding that Italy, in cooperation with the European Union and NATO, aims to achieve stability in the country as per Berlin Conference conclusions away from foreign intervention or military action.

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Protesters in Houn town stormed Thursday into a building of Khalifa Haftar's forces to urge for the departure of Russian Wagner Group and Sudanese Janjaweed's mercenaries amid mounting attacks against the townspeople, a source has reported.

The source, who asked to remain unnamed, said the protest came after the burial of Ayman Abu Gasisa who was killed by a Janjaweed mercenary fighter in the town. The protesters called for bringing the mercenary fighter responsible for the man's death to justice and dismissing all other mercenary fighters from the town.

Several residents from Houn also staged a civil disobedience after the killing of Ayman Abu Gasisa, who is the victim number six of such murders by Haftar's forces and foreign mercenaries.

Haftar's Wagner Group and Janjaweed mercenaries, along with others from different countries, have been positioned in Jufra after escaping western Libya in last June.



The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has urged for an international monitoring mechanism of the Libya ceasefire, adding in a report to the Security Council that this mechanism could achieve consolidation of the truce in the country.

Guterres said the Libyan 5+5 Joint Military Commission agreed on the ceasefire and urged the Security Council for supporting it with a UN-supervised monitoring mission of unarmed personnel, adding in the report that the monitoring mechanism will work in 155 km<sup>2</sup> between Ben Jawad and Sirte, and 132 km<sup>2</sup> between Abu Grein and Sirte, as well as 277 km<sup>2</sup> between Soukna and Sirte.

The report said the mechanism will include supervisors from the African Union, European Union and the Arab League, explaining that the monitoring mission should help Libyan parties consolidate the ceasefire, withdraw foreign mercenaries and clear mines and explosives, which are three points included in the ceasefire

agreement to be done in three months since signing in last October, but are still on pause amid violations of the truce.

The Sirte-Jufra Operations Room of the Government of National Accord rejected reopening Sirte-Misrata road last week in contradiction to the ceasefire agreement, saying it couldn't reopen the road while mercenaries were still positioned in Sirte and Jufra with Khalifa Haftar's forces constantly carrying out military build-ups in the region.

#### Economy

### NOC acquires Norwegian Yara's 50% stake in Libyan-Norwegian Fertilizer Co



The National Oil Corporation (NOC) confirmed on Monday in a statement that it had acquired 50% of the Norwegian company Yara's share in the Libyan-Norwegian Fertilizer Company.

The NOC reiterated that the deal was signed following extensive negotiations between concerned parties and obtaining the necessary approvals, according to the legislation in force.

According to this acquisition, the ownership of the ammonia and urea plants has been returned in full to the Libyan state with 75% to the National Oil Corporation and 25% to the Libyan Investment Authority, as said by the NOC.

The state-owned oil firm expressed appreciation for Yara company for its "cooperation" that lead to closing the deal in a "friendly manner" as it put it.

The deal will enable the Libyan party to restart the plants and conduct necessary maintenance and works and would guarantee the payment of salaries to employees, according to the NOC.

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**Economy**

## Libya's Central Bank starts working with new exchange rate



The Libyan Central Bank started Sunday implementing the new exchange rate of the Libyan dinar to be 4.48 per 1 US dollar.

The Central Bank of Libya said the new exchange rate will be used for all purposes; government, trade or personal uses, adding that only 18 years old or above individuals can buy foreign currency from banks which will allow each illegible citizen 20.000 dollars per year.

Meanwhile, the Presidential Council issued Sunday morning a statement suspending the 2018 decision of imposing fees on dollar purchase transactions at commercial banks for three months, adding that the period could be extended, conditioning the suspension to the implementation of the new exchange rate by the Central Bank of Libya.

**Economy**

## Libya's NOC eyes 1.2 million oil bpd in 2021, Chairman says



Chairman of the Operator Management Committee at Mellitah Oil Company, Muhammad Bin Shatwan has conducted a visit to Bouri Offshore Field to discuss plans to increase productivity by 2021.

The company's media office said that the delegation toured several sites that underwent development work during this year, including Platform No. 3, which was equipped with new cranes, and approved by the international licensing bodies.

As for the company's plans for next year, the media office clarified that the company would conduct comprehensive maintenance for the electric power generation unit No. 3, besides other development work at platform No. 4, namely, installing a new arm for the eastern crane, and preparing for drilling well No. 49.

**Economy**

## Al-Reaid: Libyan businessmen delegation to visit Cairo in February



The Head of the General Union of the Libyan Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture Chambers, Mohammad Al-Reaid, said Friday a delegation of Libyan businessmen will visit Cairo next February to discuss investment and trade cooperation in different fields.

Al-Reaid told Bawabet Al-Wasat website that the delegation of Libyan businessmen is from West, East and South regions, adding that they work in different sectors, including construction and food.

Al-Reaid said the visit of the Egyptian delegation to Tripoli on December 27 was very important, adding that they had received positive signs from Egypt about boosting cooperation and facilitating goods' transportation between Libya and Egypt.

**Economy**

## NOC agrees to a deal to drill ten water wells in southern towns



The National Oil Corporation (NOC) has signed a contract to drill ten water wells in Ubari, Al-Ghuraifa, and Bint Bayyah municipalities in the southern region in efforts to end the problem of water shortage in these areas.

The NOC expressed in a statement on Facebook its concern at the limited access to clean and safe drinking water in these municipalities, a problem which persisted for decades, with no solution, according to the NOC.

"The drilling of wells is part of an integrated project that also includes maintenance of water tanks, laying a water line system, and providing pumps besides installing other requirements," the NOC said.

It indicated that the step comes within its sustainable development program, under the sponsorship and funding of the Repsol consortium, and coordination and follow-up from the committees formed by Acacus Oil Operations.

**Health**

## Zawiya opens new hospital



The Ministry of Health opened on Friday the "Abu Surra" regional hospital, in Zawiya city west of Libya, with a capacity of 75 beds.

Dr. Mahmoud al-Ahrash Director General of the hospital praised during the opening ceremony the efforts of the Ministry of Health, and everyone who contributed to the establishment of this facility. According to the Information Office of the Ministry of Health, the hospital has been equipped with edge-cutting equipment, including a digital fingerprint scanner and a fire control system.

The hospital contains two rooms for general surgery operations, spaces for cesarean and normal birth deliveries, and radiology and x-ray departments. It also includes 75 beds with 13 intensive care beds equipped with modern devices and oxygen supplies.

It may be important to note that the "Abu Surra" village hospital was a health center before the Presidential Council issued a decision to develop the centre into a hospital in 2017.

Opinions

# Libya's warlord Khalifa Haftar has got some nerve!

By Yasin Aktay, adviser of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

Credit: This article was first published by Yani Safak on December 29, 2020



A decade ago, the people of Libya launched a revolution to utilize their right to determine their own destiny. The aim of this uprising was to end the autocracy, which was the last gift given to them by the colonialist occupation administrations that has been imposed on them for a century. Yet, the discourse presented by Muammar Gaddafi, who ruled the country for four decades under ruthless autocracy, was utterly national, and his actions were strangely idiosyncratic. This initially flattered the Libyan population and, in fact, all Arab nations, whose pride was wounded during the colonial years. During his visit to France, he had a tent set up in the garden of Hotel Marigny, and held his official meetings there. This allowed Arabs the opportunity to look down upon Westerners, even though it was all a charade.

However, the price of this façade turned out to be quite high. The Arab public started to ponder more over the great purchases made from France, and that Libyan money was being poured into France. The falsity of these images, with the addition of the disgrace they hid, was even more shameful. Such displays of arrogance against the West were nothing other than a charade aimed at concealing an exacerbated form of colonialism.

The French left, and in fact, even the entire opposition's objections against being humiliated by this demonstration signified nothing. At the end of the day, the only thing that concerned French colonialism was its gains. A guaranteed economic exploitation discourse could allow such relations. This was not the first and only disgraceful situation in which the French national identity became involved.

The Arab Spring gave the Libyan people an important opportunity to overcome this contradiction, and save their country and honor from this hypocritical autocracy. Thus, they took advantage of this opportunity and gave birth to a revolution.

Libya's Khalifa Haftar, who is now striving against this revolution to restore the Gaddafi order even more ruthlessly, with backing and funding from those exploiting him, accuses Turkey of colonialism – a country that is present in Libya upon the nation's invite which prevented his putschist, invader desires from being fulfilled. Forgetting that he fled the Turkey-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) only a few months ago, he took to the lectern at the ceremony organized by the Libyan National Army (LNA) in Benghazi, commemorating the 69th anniversary of Libya's independence, and challenged: "Independence has no value, and freedom means nothing while Turkish troops disrespect our country's sanctity. There is no security or peace either. The enemy has no other option; it is going to leave voluntarily and in peace, or we are going to have to force them to do this through an armed and powerful will."

Turkish troops are there not to disrespect Libya's sanctity but against Haftar, who is ready to hand the country over to occupiers. Haftar spoke at the Benghazi ceremony, however, we proved in a recent article that even the people of Benghazi do not support him. At least 150,000 people who were forced to migrate from Benghazi also serve as proof of Haftar's complete lack of legitimacy. Haftar, who is in the position of an occupier everywhere he sets foot, who disregarded the Libyan people's sanctity, who served his country on a silver platter to France, the Gulf gang, the sons of Zayed, and Egypt's Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, is raving on about independence and freedom. Obviously, the independence he mentions is not Libya's independence, and the freedom he mentions is not Libyan people's freedom.

Even in Benghazi, where he is able to somehow stand today, the people are looking for ways to get rid of him and be liberated. Essentially, he is the one who has no legitimacy at all based on the way he conducts his operations. He came to power through a coup he orchestrated against the elected and legitimate administration with weapons he was somehow able to obtain. He initially displaced 250,000 people who opposed this coup from Benghazi, killed thousands, and imprisoned thousands more.

All these actions are within the scope of crimes against humanity and must be tried in international criminal courts. The dozens of mass graves he left behind as he withdrew from Tarhuna, which he was able to seize during the coup he was subsequently intending to expand to the West as well, illustrate the magnitude of the crimes he commits daily. This alone is enough to reveal in all its colors the reign in Tobruk and Benghazi, areas where he is currently positioned.

However, it would be wrong to think that this criminal's audacity to challenge us, despite being put in his place by Turkey, stems from his own self-confidence.

It is clear that there are those who are recently provoking Haftar and trying to drive him into another conflict against Turkey. Why? To make him lose what he barely managed to get away with? Or are the forces that have taken advantage of the ceasefire period as a chance to amass troops and weapons now seeking the opportunity to exact revenge against Turkey?

Regardless of their pursuits, they will only get their comeuppance against Turkey, which is simply taking action in accordance with the desire and will of the Libyan nation.

Turkish National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar's recent visit to Libya was a clear presentation of this message. Akar drawing attention to warlord Haftar's massacres with the 21 mass graves found in Tarhuna was critical.

Surely it is extremely strange and unacceptable for the world to continue to remain silent against Haftar, who is constantly tried to be presented on international platforms as a legitimate party in Libya. However, Mr. Akar expressed his belief that the GNA will not let Haftar walk free for his crimes.

This is extremely significant, because if he is taken to the International Criminal Court, it will be a step towards reestablishing the distribution of the legitimacy of the parties in Libya.

Those who commit crimes against humanity against the people of Libya, who have no respect for them, cannot have a say in its future. Yet, as Akar also clearly stated, in Turkey's eyes, Libya belongs to the Libyans, and Turkey is present there only upon the request and will of the Libyan people.

**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

## Tajoura Heart Centre reopens departments, commits to provide better services



The National Heart Centre in Tajoura district east of Tripoli has reopened several departments, including those providing diagnostic medical services, after completing maintenance and development work.

An opening ceremony took place on Thursday, in the presence of Vice President of the Presidential Council (PC), Ahmed Maiteeq, the Director-General of the centre Dr. Abdul Raouf Fares, and Commander of the Tripoli Military Region, Major General Abdel Basset Marwan.

The officials and visitors toured the facilities to inspect the new work and the sophisticated equipment installed, which will have an immediate impact on the centre's capacity and its ability to deliver better services, according to the Director-General of the centre, Dr. Abdul Raouf Fares.

Meanwhile, PC Deputy Head Maiteeq emphasized the need to focus on the human factor, stressing that it is no less important than the logistical capacities, especially the paramedical personnel who serve as the hospital's backbone, according to his statement.

Health

## Food and Drug Control Center inspects medical laboratories in Waddan



The inspectors of the Food and Drug Control Center in Jufra made an inspection tour accompanied by the Municipal Guard to a number of medical laboratories in the city of Waddan.

During the tour, expired materials used for the purpose of analysis were seized, the center said, confirming that all legal measures were taken for violators and referred to the competent authorities. It also stressed the necessity of implementing precautionary measures and applying sanitary conditions to laboratories.

Health

## TUH says staff conducted 250 open-heart surgeries in 18 months



The Tripoli University Hospital (TUH) performed about 250 open-heart surgeries from June 2019 until the end of this year.

The head of the cardiac surgery department at the hospital, Dr. Khaled Talib, said the department provides its services to all citizens regardless of their region or background.

"Most of the surgeries conducted were major, delicate, and complex operations," he explained, hoping that this would restore confidence in the Libyan doctor and encourage people to seek medical treatment inside the country rather than traveling abroad.

He also drew attention that such operations, which would have cost a fortune if conducted abroad or in private health facilities, are being carried out free of charge at the hospital, desiring to relieve the burden of medical treatment expenses on ill people.

Health

## NCDC organizes training course to prepare mental health leaders



The National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), in cooperation with Tamina Municipal Council, Al-Naseem Company and the Libyan Society for Psychological Sciences, organized on Sunday a training course to prepare leaders in the field of mental health and drug and AIDS prevention.

According to the media office of NCDC, the course will continue until January 5, with the participation of 22 trainees from different educational institutions.

Health

## National Animal Health Center organizes vaccination campaign against FMD



المركز الوطني للصحة الحيوانية  
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR ANIMAL HEALTH-LIBYA

The National Center for Animal Health is preparing to launch a campaign to combat the foot and mouth disease (FMD) that affects livestock.

The center called on the cattlemen to cooperate with the veterinary committees and authorities to combat and contain this disease, within the framework of the efforts made by the center to spread useful information of interest to the cattlemen.

The center added that the campaign will be accompanied by an informative and educational awareness campaign at the electronic, audio and radio levels, with the aim of involving all the cattlemen in the efforts of the veterinary authorities to combat FMD.

Science

## First of its kind in Libya.. parking lot for generating electricity



Homes, businesses, as well as government utilities are accelerating their shift away from fossil fuel energy, with the continuing power cuts problem that persisted over the past years, despite repeated promises from consecutive governments.

But this crisis could be a major driver for the renewable energy market in the solar-rich country of Libya.

The Solar Energy Research Center (CSERS) in Tajoura Municipality east of Tripoli have agreed to a deal with Alhandasya Electromechanical Engineering Company specialized in renewable energy to develop a parking lot designed to produce electricity via solar energy.

The CEO of the project executing company engineer Al-Mabrouk Saleh said in statements to The Libya Observer that the project is the first of its kind in Libya and one of the pioneering projects in the African continent.

The car parking space will serve employees and visitors of the (CSERS), but besides, it will generate around 62KW of electricity, exclusively by solar energy, which is sufficient to provide about 30 homes with its electricity needs.

"The system could also be linked to the public grid to power the center during working hours," the Alhandasya CEO said.

Engineer Al-Mabrouk indicated that despite the challenging situation in the Libyan labour market, the company cooperated with local firms to carry out its work, desiring to encourage national industry and provide work opportunities for Libyan youth.

He explained that the company received the project last May while work is on full swing to deliver it in mid-January 2021.

Al-Mabrouk believes that Libya, with its rich solar capacity, can become a pioneer in this field and turn from a top oil-exporting country to a leading provider of solar energy.

It is worth noting that the Engineering Electromechanical Services Co, founded in 2009, is one of the leading companies in the energy field, with the view to indigenize technology and solar energy in Libya.

The company participated in the Global Entrepreneurship Summit, which was organized in Hyderabad India 2017 GES.

Culture

## Ghat Festival kicks off despite COVID-19



The Ghat Tourism Festival kicked off its 26th edition on Tuesday despite the coronavirus pandemic under the slogan (Creativity and Innovation is Born from the Suffering Womb).

"Festival organizers were determined to make sure the show will go on this year, and they made this edition a success," Salem Al-Tohamy, Chairman of the Supreme Committee of the International Ghat Festival, told The Libya Observer.

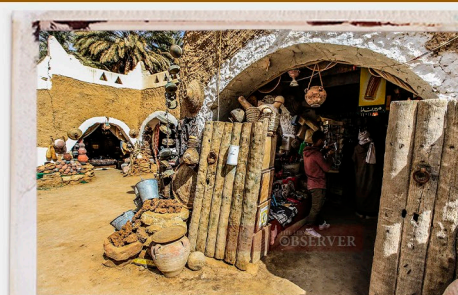
However, he did confirm that the program was curtailed, due to the coronavirus restrictions. "We had to make changes to keep this event in line with protocols, explained al-Tohamy.

"We restricted to outdoor activities to add a level of safety, while events of the old cities of Ghat had to be canceled" he added.

Despite these circumstances, the festival featured all the favorites including, folk music and dancing, crafts, besides the Mahary riding race, which the desert population the "Tuareg" are noted for.

According to al-Tohamy, 37 associations participated in the festival among them, eight folklore music bands and seven Mahary Racing clubs.

He indicated that most of the turnout was from the southwest and central region, while only a few came from the north coastal region this year due to the suspension of flights between Tripoli and Ghat.



Culture

## Ghadames celebrates end of 2020 culture season

The Ghadames Culture Department has organized a ceremony to mark the conclusion of the city's 2020 cultural season.

The participants, which included several intellectuals from the city reviewed the major cultural activities hosted by the city last year.

The Libyan author "Ahmed Qassem Dhawi" was chosen as the cultural figure for this season due to his distinguished efforts in highlighting the cultural heritage of the city for more than half a century.

Dhawi participated in several documentary and photographic films that he translated into French and Italian languages, which he spoke fluently.

He was an active supporter of researchers and spared no efforts to help them access valuable manuscripts and ancient books that contain information about different historical eras.

Among his achievements his book "Ghadames Between Past and Present", besides serving as director of Ghadames region in the 1950s and 1960s.



weather

The Weather Channel

Tripoli Weather Forecast








Fri 08	28°/18°		Sunny	0%	SW 21 km/h
Sat 09	30°/20°		Sunny	0%	SSW 16 km/h
Sun 10	27°/14°		Mostly Sunny	0%	WSW 18 km/h
Mon 11	22°/12°		Partly Cloudy	10%	NNW 13 km/h
Tue 12	17°/10°		Partly Cloudy	20%	WNW 20 km/h
Wed 13	16°/10°		Partly Cloudy	20%	NW 22 km/h
Thu 14	16°/11°		Partly Cloudy	25%	NW 24 km/h

Photo of the Week





## The city of Houn

Houn or Hun is an oasis town in the northern Fezzan region of southwest Libya. The town is the capital of the Jufra District. It was mentioned in the book of historian Jack Terry, 'Libyan Desert History in the Middle Ages', as Abu Ubayd al-Bakri mentioned in his writing 'Al-Masalik and Al-Mamalik' that he wrote in the eleventh century AD, "(Hul) is a city with many residents and with vast areas of palm trees and many springs of water ...",

It is lying around 259 meters above sea level. It is 240 km south of Sirte, 370 km from Misrata, 272 km north of Sabha and around 620 km southeast of Tripoli, the capital of Libya. It is geographically positioned between 29°07'16" N latitude and 15°56'25" E longitude. Houn is well known for the 'International Autumn Tourism Festival', which generally takes place in the month of September annually.

There is an airport in Houn but that is mainly used military purposes. Ghardabiya Air Base in Sirte is the nearest major airport to Houn, located around 270 km northeast of the heart of Houn. This airport is catered by Air Libya Tibesti, Libyan Airlines and Tunisair with scheduled flight services from Tripoli.

Houn is connected to the cities of Sirte towards the north and Sabha towards the south by public bus services.

### History:

During the colonial Italian Libya period, Hun was the administrative capital of the Italian Fezzan region, called Territorio del Sahara Libico. Hun was the Italian military center of southern Italian Libya, and was not part of the national Fourth Shore territory of the Kingdom of Italy as Italian Tripolitania and Italian Cyrenaica. In the 1939 census Italians were 3% of the total population of 35,316 in the city. They disappeared from Hun after Italy's loss of Libya in World War II.

In the 1930s the Italian government made some important improvements to the small town, including a connection to the coast via the new Fezzan Road.

An important Libyan-Italian born in Hun was the internationally renowned painter Mario Schifano (1934–1998).

### Old town of Houn:

Like Libyan cities, Houn was built several times by many European and Arab empires. Those areas are still good in condition and have become famous as picnic spots and sightseeing points.

### Culture, Food and Shopping in Houn:

Houn is culturally rich city with an annual event 'International Autumn Tourism Festival', which organized at the end of September, for four days every year from 1996. It is aimed at promoting tourism and culture and organizes concerts and exhibitions.

International retail outlets and food corners are less in number in Houn, but the city houses numerous upgraded shops and restaurants.

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