

Politics

Libya has new Presidential Council and Prime Minister



Mohammad Menfi has become the new head of the Presidential Council of Libya.

In the second round of vote that was held by members of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) in Geneva on Friday, Menfi's list won 39 votes out of 73, defeating Aqila Saleh's list which secured only 34 votes

The three-member Presidential Council includes Menfi as the chairman and representative for the eastern region, Abdullah Al-Lafi as a deputy for the west and Mossa Al-Koni as a deputy for the south.

The winning list also includes Abdul Hamid Dbeibah as the Prime Minister.

Dbeibah has to form his government in 21 days. His cabinet should secure a vote of confidence from the House of Representatives. If the parliament failed to hold a full quorum session to vote on the cabinet, the vote of confidence will pass through to LPDF members.

Menfi was born in Tobruk in 1976. He was a former General National Congress member. He was also the Libyan ambassador to Greece before being declared persona non grata due to the signing of Libya-Turkey maritime agreement.

Politics

New Libyan Prime Minister outlines his work plan

The newly elected Prime Minister of the unified executive authority, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, said the members of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) chose peaceful solutions over war, referring to the election of his list in Geneva on Friday.

In a televised statement Saturday, Dbeibah said the LPDF election is the victory of national unity, reconciliation and democracy, adding that he would fulfill his promises toward holding general elections on December 24, 2021.

Dbeibah also said the LPDF roadmap will pave the way to end conflicts and reach elections, thus ending transitional phases in Libya, vowing to work with all parties regardless of their ideologies, background or regional locations.

"We will abide by our commitments to agreements with foreign

countries and cooperate more with neighboring countries in our national interest. We urge all states to be partners in achieving stability in Libya." He indicated.

LPDF members elected Friday in Geneva Mohammed Menfi as Head of the new Presidential Council, with Mossa Al-Koni and Abdullah Al-Lafi as members and Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah as a Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, the LPDF roadmap, issued in Tunisia last December, says the new Prime Minister will have to form his cabinet and receive a vote of confidence from the House of Representatives in 21 days, if not, the LPDF will vote on approving the interim unity government.

Politics

Greece to reopen embassy in Tripoli



The President-elect of the Presidential Council (PC), Mohammad Menfi, has received congratulations from Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis on his election by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) as Chairman of the PC in the new executive authority. The Greek Prime Minister said his country is looking forward to reopening its embassy in Tripoli and a consulate in Benghazi, according to the national Libyan TV channel.

Mitsotakis also assured Menfi that Greece is ready to cooperate with the new government and work for the interests of the two countries. Earlier, The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs tweeted that in light of the developments in Libya regarding the election of a new interim government, and by the decision of Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias, the Greek Embassy in Tripoli will reopen.

It also said that in parallel, the necessary procedures will be undertaken to open a Consulate General in Benghazi.

Ironically, the President-elect of the PC, Mohammad Menfi, was the ambassador of Libya to Greece before the latter expelled him in December 2019 and gave him 72 hours to leave in protest against the Libyan-Turkish maritime agreement.

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Politics

Turkey says its agreements with Libya won't be affected by new government



The advisor to the Turkish President, Yasin Aktay, has confirmed to Russian news agency, Sputnik, that the new Libyan executive authority, headed by Prime Minister, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, supports Ankara's role in Libya.

Aktay reiterated Sunday that all of the Libyan-Turkish agreements signed by the Government of National Accord (GNA) under Fayez Al-Sarraj will remain intact, saying that Turkey's presence in Libya "was requested by the Libyan people and the GNA, and the new unified executive authority doesn't oppose the Turkish presence in the country".

The advisor to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey welcomed the selection of the new executive authority in Libya, adding that his country believed that this UN-led step was a positive step for Libyans towards stability and national dialogue.

"Turkey hopes to see the new executive authority's formation, which represents east, west, and south regions, reflected positively on the Libyan situation. Libyans are on the same page with Turkey regarding the solution in their country, which must include political unity under Libyan leadership". Aktay explained.

Erdogan's advisor warned of efforts to undermine the political process in Libya and endeavors to hinder the peaceful solution, urging Libyans to be vigilant.

Erdogan congratulated Saturday both Dbeibah and the Head of the Presidential Council, Mohammed Menfi, on election for the new executive authority, saying Ankara will keep supporting Libya in the new interim period until the country holds national elections in December.

Politics

HoR Speaker sets conditions for granting confidence to new Libyan government



The Speaker of the Libyan House of Representatives (HoR) in Tobruk, Agila Saleh, called for a consultation session in the city to discuss granting confidence to the national unity government that would be formed in a few days by the interim prime minister, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah.

Saleh told Khalifa Haftar sons' Al-Hadath TV channel that one of the conditions for granting confidence to the interim government is the attendance of all HoR members, adding that official HoR meetings would be convened in Benghazi only.

He also said the new Presidential Council and government should be based in Sirte and work under the protection of the armed forces (Khalifa Haftar's forces) and under the supervision of the

the Libyan 5+5 Joint Military Commission.

Saleh hinted at rejecting any HoR meeting outside Tobruk or Benghazi even if the meeting had a full quorum, reiterating the need to preserve regions' rights in ministerial portfolios and saying he wouldn't accept to see the new government based in Tripoli until the capital is "cleansed and secure".

He also said that the member of the HoR, Abu Bakr Baira, who said on Al-Hadath TV he would back holding a full-quorum session via Zoom, was trying to take sides because he never forgot that he lost HoR Speaker's seat back in 2014.

Economy

LIA rejects Belgium's attempts "to lay hands" on frozen bank assets in Belgium



The Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) has affirmed its rejection of the Belgian government request to the UN Sanctions Committee aimed at lifting the freeze to deduct part of Libya's frozen bank assets in Belgium.

In a statement, the LIA confirmed that it had no contractual relations with the Belgian GSDT, owned by the Belgian Prince Laurent Foundation, which submitted the request.

The LIA insisted that it enjoys full autonomy status with the legal and financial capacity, and therefore it is not responsible for any claims against the Libyan government.

"There are no valid legal reasons for the Belgian government to settle its debts from other Libyan bodies by seizing funds belonging to the LIA or its subsidiary companies," the LIA said.

The LIA called for an urgent decision to reject the Belgian request while demanding that all necessary steps be taken to prevent the release of any funds held by the institution or its subsidiaries in Belgian banks.

Meanwhile, the Libyan ambassador to the UN, Taher Al-Sunni, has warned the Belgium government of any attempts to "lay hands" on Libya's frozen bank assets in Belgium, estimated at 49 million euros.

"At a time when the Libyans are seeking to reunite and arrange for a new stage, Belgium is trying to exploit the circumstance by addressing the sanctions committee to seize 49 million euros of Libya's frozen funds," al-Sunni tweeted, stressing that Libya will not allow such thing to happen.

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Economy

El Sonni warns Belgium wants to seize €49 million of Libya's frozen assets



The Libyan ambassador to the United Nations, Taher El Sonni, warned Sunday Belgium of after attempting to seize Libyan frozen assets worth 49 million euros, advising Belgian authorities to back off as "this won't happen".

El Sonni said on Twitter Belgium was trying to take advantage of this stage, as Libyans are busy preparing for a new political and peaceful period, to seize 49 million euros in frozen assets.

El Sonni said that in cooperation with the Libyan Investment Authority, they have informed the UN Security Council about Belgium's intention to seize Libyan frozen assets, adding that many countries had expressed support for Libya in this situation.

The Belgian Minister of Finance agreed last January to inform the UN sanctions committee to unfreeze some of the Libyan assets in Belgian banks to get dues worth 47 million euros, which he said the Libyan state must pay.

Belgium has been attempting to pave the way for unfreezing Libyan assets for Prince Loran foundation that is demanding to be reimbursed a sum of money for its NGO, thus informing the UN sanctions committee in late January to allow it to use the assets, while the committee said its decision will be made in a few days.

Economy

Pakistan seeks investment opportunities in Libya



Pakistan has expressed its interest to invest in Libya as the African country seems to be heading towards a new era of peace following the election of a new unified Libyan government under the supervision of the United Nations (UN).

Pakistan Ambassador-designate to Libya Rashad Javed said during his visit to the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) that Pakistani businessmen and exporters must prepare to amass a mammoth share in Libya's market at an estimated cost of \$100 billion.

"Out of the \$100 billion reconstruction package, \$40 billion has been earmarked for the battered health sector," the Pakistani official said.

He indicated that Libya is importing almost 80% of all consumable commodities for its domestic use, and Pakistan could fulfill Libya's needs relating to agriculture, cereals, and textile products besides exporting its human resource, which would enhance Pakistan's foreign remittances.

Javed urged Pakistani investors and exporters to start establishing links with the Libyan business community, saying that after the elections expected to take place on December 24, 2021, investors from all over the world will rush to set up business enterprises in Libya.

He also addressed the concerns regarding the banking system and remittances. "The rival groups have now agreed to establish a central bank, similarly, they have also linked Libyan dinar with the dollar-based economy by fixing its market floatable parity with the dollar," he explained.

On his part, former Pakistani ambassador to Libya Sajid Iqbal Paracha, who was also present in the event, revealed that there are plans to arrange visits for Libyan importers and investors to Pakistan who would visit Faisalabad as well.

Economy

Libya, Tunisia discuss cooperation in vocational training field



The Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation, Al-Mahdi Al-Amin, has discussed with the Tunisian ambassador to Libya, Al-Asaad Ajili, aspects of joint cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting, which was held on Thursday at the Ministry's HQ in Tripoli, the two sides discussed the possibility of using Tunisian expertise to support the vocational training field, in addition to many other fields.

The meeting also reviewed the terms of the cooperation agreement signed between the two sides, as the ambassador was handed over a proposal for an implementation project for the agreement.

The two sides agreed to hold discussions on the electronic link between the two countries, and they also agreed to invite the Tunisian Minister of Employment to visit Libya.

Al-Amin emphasized the depth of bilateral relations, appreciating the stances of the Tunisian people and their support for the Libyan people since 2011, and welcomed the presence of Tunisian workers to work in sectors that suffer from a manpower shortage.

For his part, the Tunisian ambassador emphasized working to activate the agreements signed between the two countries, pointing out that a Tunisian medical team will campaign for free treatment in Libya.

Economy

CBL discusses with Italian ambassador economic, financial developments



Governor of the Central Bank of Libya Saddek Elkaber discussed with the Italian ambassador to Libya, Giuseppe Buccino the latest developments of the economic and trade conditions in Libya.

This came during a meeting in Tripoli on Wednesday, which included also the Italian embassy's commercial advisor, Michel Rossi.

Both sides exchanged views on many issues of common interest, according to the CBL media office.

Opinions

What are the differences between the Turkish and the Russian Intervention in Libya?

By Fathi Al-Fadli, a Libyan writer



It is customary for the European Union, the US administration, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and most of the international community to equate the Russian intervention with the Turkish intervention in Libya, and some Libyan parties do so as well. They all ask the two parties involved (Russia and Turkey) or their forces to leave Libya. However, there are deep strategic differences/goals between the two countries' intervention, the most important of which are:

- Russia does not object to the division of Libya. In fact, it may actually encourage and actively push for it. Russia aspires to control the port of Tobruk, the airport of Benina near Benghazi, and the military base of Al-Jafra. Russia does not mind if Libya becomes divided or even "crumbles into a thousand pieces" after they have achieved that. Turkey stands firmly against the division of Libya for economic and strategic reasons.
- The Russian presence on the shores of the Mediterranean threatens European national security, the national security of the west in general, and accordingly the national security of America in particular. The Turkish presence in the Mediterranean does not threaten the national security of Europe, the US, or the west in general. In addition, Turkey is a member of NATO, and therefore the competition between European countries and Turkey is an economic one, not a security one.
- The circumstances and timing of Russia's intervention in Libya differ from the circumstances and timing of the Turkish intervention. The Turkish intervention saved Libya from being controlled by a new authoritarian regime attempting to plant a dictator in Libya. The Russian intervention does not mind the establishment of a new oppressive dictatorial regime in Libya.
- The Turkish intervention came through a legitimate, public and legal agreement, while the Russian intervention was born on the deck of a warship between an admiral in the Russian Navy and a Libyan military man who is/was not authorized to negotiate agreements, sign contracts, or create any memorandums of understanding/cooperation with foreign countries.
- The intention of obtaining economic interests in Libya or in the eastern Mediterranean is an ambition of almost all countries in the world including the United Arab Emirates, France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Germany, Russia, Britain, Italy, Greece, Chad, Sudan, China and many others. Therefore, the argument of economic ambitions or interests applies to all, not only to Turkey.
- Cooperation between the United States of America in the matter of European national security or the security of the West in general, is possible, likely and reasonable between Turkey and the United States of America, while this matter is not possible between Russia and the US. The cooperation between America and Russia on the national security of Europe while Russia remains on the shores of the Mediterranean is considered an impossible task or goal to be achieved.
- Cooperation between America and Turkey in establishing a civil and democratic system in Libya is possible, while it cannot be done or agreed upon between Russia and the US due to Russia's refusal to do so.
- The practices of Turkish forces in Libya do not include a single massacre or a single war crime or a crime against humanity. The practices of the Russia's allies in Libya including the so-called National Army, Kaniyats, or the Russian mercenaries known as Wagner group, are full of massacres, mines, bombing of civilian neighborhoods and war crimes. Including but not limited to: the mass graves of the city of Tarhuna, the Al-Abyar city massacre, the Murzuq city massacre, the Qanfouda massacre against women (teenage girls and children who did not carry weapons), the bombing of the refugee detention center in Tajoura, the massacre of the Military College in Tripoli, the war crimes in the city of Derna, the abduction and assassinations of women like Mrs. Seham Sergiwa, Mrs. Hanan Al-Barasy and many others, the public executions in full view of the world, the burning of bodies, the exhumation of graves, the bombing of health facilities and civilian neighborhoods, the looting of civilian homes who did not participate in the wars, and many other war crimes. All the mentioned crimes are executed by and associated with the Russian forces and their mentioned allies in Libya.

I hope that the new U.S. administration, the European Union and the decision-makers in Libya will take into account the main differences between the Turkish and the Russian intervention in Libya.

Dealing with both interventions in the same way and at the same level will not serve the Libyan national interest nor will it establish stability in the region or long-term security for Libya or for European countries.

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

Ministry of Health in discussions with Korean embassy to import medical teams



The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health, Abdulrahman Omair, discussed with the South Korean ambassador on Thursday the methods of cooperation to improve the level of services in the health sector in Libya.

The Ministry said on its official Facebook page that the meeting dealt with methods of cooperation, particularly in the field of supplies of medical equipment.

The meeting also touched on the possibility of importing specialised Korean doctors and nursing staff, within the specialization of intensive care, but also to include the care of children and newborns, in order to fill the serious shortage in these specialities in Libya, particularly in the southern region.

Health

Covid-19 infection rates on the rise, health authorities warn



The epidemiological situation in Libya is ranging between the third and fourth levels of the 48th degree, said the Scientific Advisory Committee to Combat the Coronavirus Pandemic, expecting infection rates to rise as people are more and more getting back to their normal life and attending various activities.

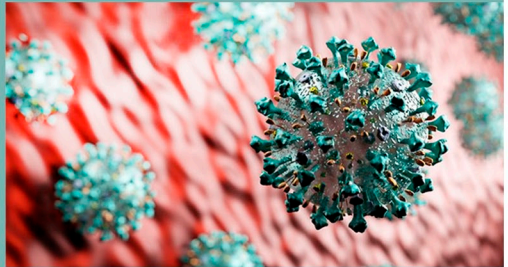
The scientific committee met with the Epidemiology Committee Monday and displayed a visual presentation of its weekly report, which showed a slight increase in the positive cases and the number of fatalities during the past week.

It expressed concern by the rate at which the epidemic is spreading in some regions, stressing that the situation looks worrying and needs strict control and follow-up from the competent authorities if the current precautionary measures are not applied.

The committee recommended strengthening precautionary measures in areas that recorded rise in the epidemic situation, including preventing gatherings in banks, worksites, restaurants, cafes, markets and banning all social activities and events. It also recommended applying financial fines to those who violate Covid-19 precautionary measures.

Health

13 years girl died of Coronavirus in Tripoli

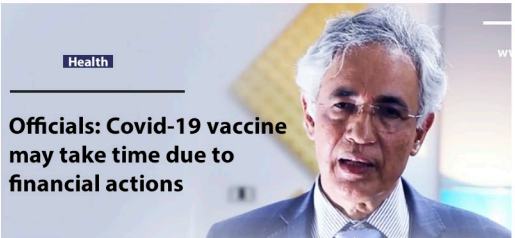


The Health Operations Room to Confront Coronavirus in the municipality of Abu Salim has reported the death of a girl, under 13 years of age, due to her infection with the Covid-19 virus.

The girl was in the isolation center in the Airport Road in Tripoli, according to Abu Salim municipality's official Facebook page. It also called on the citizens to adhere to all precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic, warning about the seriousness of this virus and that it had begun to transmit among children.

Health

Officials: Covid-19 vaccine may take time due to financial actions



The head of the Scientific Advisory Committee for Combating Coronavirus, Khalifa al-Bakoush, confirmed that the agreement to import the Coronavirus vaccine has been approved by Prime Minister Fayez Al-Sarraj but the routine formalities regarding the financial procedures may take a long time.

Al-Bakoush said the epidemic will be tackled through an intersectoral approach, including a sectoral committee composed of under-secretaries for health, local government, and social affairs.

The vaccine will be distributed by the National Center for Disease Control, with a distribution system affiliated with the Health Ministry to determine the dates and centres of vaccination, according to the advisory committee's head, noting that they have formed seven technical committees to follow through the task.

The advisory committee will follow up with the vaccination centers in cooperation with the UNICEF to ensure that the required conditions are applied. Al-Bakoush underlined that they chose the best internationally approved vaccinations from Pfizer companies to Zinka, Moderna, and Johnson.

The final agreement with the vaccine-producing companies requires providing safe sites for distributing the vaccine and a health and legal system in a state that guarantees treatment for every citizen exposed to side complications.

Upon these terms, the countries receiving these vaccines will commit under the convention not to prosecute the manufacturer in the event of side complications for those who receive the vaccine, according to al-Bakoush, noting that this procedure has been obligated internationally.

Life

National Voluntary Work committee organizes cleaning campaign in Qarabulli



The National Committee for Youth Voluntary Work, Qarabulli Branch, in cooperation with the Oxygen Society for Environmental Protection, has held a cleaning campaign for the pine forest 'Al-Sonobor' in the Karawah area in the municipality of Qarabulli. The forest is one of the natural sites for the residents of the city of Tripoli and its neighboring areas.

The committee is also preparing for the afforestation campaign in educational institutions within the municipality of Khums, in cooperation with the Khums Education Monitoring Office.

Education

In preparation for new academic year, Education Ministry delivers 18,000 school desks



The Education Ministry on Monday confirmed that work is in full scale to distribute the schooling needs in preparation for the new academic year, which will resume on the 13th of February.

The director of the educational facilities department at the ministry, Ali Al-Raqiq said that the authority has received around 18,000 school desks as a first batch, which will be delivered to education monitors in the regions soon.

The ministry will provide 20,000 whiteboards, in addition to one million trays of calligraphy, and 100,000 pencils to education monitors in all cities across Libya, according to Al-Raqiq.

He noted that the ministry has contracted to buy more students' desks, besides work chairs, teacher's desks, and administrative offices for school administrations.

Education

Undersecretary of Ministry of Education meets with Maltese Minister of Education in Valetta



The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Adel Jumaa met on Wednesday with the Maltese Minister of Education, Justyne Caruana, in the Maltese capital, Valetta.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed aspects of coopera-

tion between the two countries and work to activate the Tajourni Institute, a Libyan investment project in Malta, through joint programs.

They also reviewed the MoU which is due to be signed between the Libyan and Maltese ministries of education.

Education

Jufra University holds workshop on e-learning



The Law Faculty in Waddan of the University of Jufra on Tuesday hosted a workshop on the e-learning experience and the associated scientific criteria and tools under the supervision of the Post-Graduate Department at the university.

The workshop highlighted the pilot experiences of the distance education program that was implemented by a group of youths from Waddan under the slogan "We Will Not Stop".

The participants assessed the program in terms of the response of students and faculty members. They also discussed developing new methods and tools to help set a program capable of delivering higher education standards.

The social activist and lecturer at the business school and the founder of the distance education program "Hamdouni Hassan" said they were the first to move to distance education in Libya.

"We started giving online lessons since the outbreak of the pandemic and managed to keep on going despite the numerous challenges associated with power cuts and poor internet services," Hassan said.

Education

Ministry of Education confirms resumption of study on February 13



The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Adel Jumaa, confirmed on Thursday that schools will resume on the specified date of February 13, provided there are no further epidemiological developments of the Coronavirus pandemic within that period.

In a statement, Jumaa indicated that the Ministry of Education is committed to push forward with the decision of the Presidential Council (PC), which was issued last January, to suspend studies for a period of three weeks, due to the lack of preparation on the part of various educational facilities to confront the Coronavirus pandemic.

Jumaa went on to explain that the Ministry took full advantage of the suspension period, using it to form committees to follow up on the preparation of all educational institutions and arranging the operational budget for the institutions involved.

Tripoli Weather Forecast

Fri 12	22°/12°	 Sunny	4%	 ESE 10 km/h
Sat 13	21°/13°	 Sunny	2%	 WNW 19 km/h
Sun 14	16°/11°	 Mostly Cloudy	24%	 N 25 km/h
Mon 15	14°/10°	 Partly Cloudy	19%	 N 19 km/h
Tue 16	15°/9°	 Partly Cloudy	15%	 NNE 11 km/h
Wed 17	18°/11°	 Mostly Sunny	9%	 SSW 13 km/h
Thu 18	18°/12°	 Partly Cloudy	19%	 NNE 15 km/h

Photo of the Week





Waddan is an ancient oasis town of the Sahara Desert in the northeast of Fezzan region of southwest Libya. It is located in the Jufra district in central Libya, about 650 km southeast of the capital, Tripoli. It is at the crossroads of the Sirte-Waddan Road and the Fezzan Road. It is surrounded by mountain ranges from the northeast and northwest, and it is also the northern gate of Jufra.

The city's economy depends mainly on the production and marketing of dates.

People of Waddan:

There are three main tribes living in Waddan, namely the Al-Ashraf, Al-Mawjir and Al-Ahali tribe. The city is considered the capital of Al-Ashraf tribe in Libya.

Origin of the Name:

There are unconfirmed Amazigh studies say that Waddan is the name of an ancient Libyan tribe that settled in it since ancient times. They also say that it is the name of one of the villages in the Hijaz.

History:

When the armies of the conquerors entered Cyrenaica in the year 22 AH (which is the eastern region of Libya and its capital was Al-Marj) under the leadership of Amr bin Al-Aas, they conquered the city after another until they reached Maghmdash, south of Sirte, where Omar Ibn Al-Aas sent a part from the army to conquer the lands of Waddan, south of Sirte, under the leadership of Bishr Ibn Arta't, and he found people in it who did not speak Arabic and had no religion and did not find any resistance from them, so he imposed on them the tribute (360 heads of sheep) and returned to join the conquerors.

The people of Waddan, and like all free Libyans, have made an honorable contribution to the jihad against the Italians, in proportion to their number and the size of their city. Some of them are under the direct leadership of the great mujahid Ahmad al-Sharif and the Sheikh Omar Al-Mukhtar. The people of Waddan were not limited to their jihad in the central region, but some participated in the eastern, western and southern regions, and some were imprisoned to death in Zuwara prison.

Among the most famous battles in which the people of Waddan participated were the battle of Toza, Afia, Hashadiya, Taqrift, Qardabiyah and others.

Ancient monuments and attractions:

Among the archaeological and tourist attractions in the city of Waddan are the ancient fortress (Toza), the circular tombs containing tables believed to return to the Germanic era, the (Al-Faqarat), which are underground water irrigation channels dating back to the Germanic era, in addition to Waddan Tourist Park, and Waddan Mountain, and there are also many Germanic and Hadrami monuments that have not yet been excavated their ancient cities despite the presence of remnants of some of them visible, such as the walls of the cities of Bossi and Dalbak, one kilometer southwest of Waddan.

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