

## Politics

### 5+5 Joint Military Commission: Reopening coastal road very soon



The 5+5 Joint Military Commission (JMC), concluded meetings in Sirte in the presence of a UNSMIL delegation, and announced that reopening the coastal road would be very soon after all requirements had been done.

The 5+5 JMC hailed the swearing in of the Government of National Unity in Tobruk, welcoming the visit of the Prime Minister, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, to its meetings in Sirte hours after being sworn in.

The 5+5 JMC hailed the commitment of the field commanders to the ceasefire agreement since October 23, 2020, and the role of the sub-committees that had done a lot of work such as removing mines and war remnants since February 10 to pave the way for reopening the coastal road.

It also said the members would meet soon (in two weeks maximum) to assess the readiness for reopening the coastal road, reiterating the call on the Security Council and stakeholders to abide by Berlin Conference conclusions to oblige the countries that brought mercenaries to Libya to withdraw them immediately.

"We have also talked with the UNSMIL teams about the work limitations and process of the UN monitors on Libyan soil." The 5+5 JMC explained.



### Al-Sarraj hands over power to new Presidential Council, Unity Government

The Head of the Presidential Council of the Government of National Accord, Fayez Al-Sarraj, along with the outgoing members have handed over power to the new Presidential Council Head, Mohamed Menfi, and the Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah.

In a handover ceremony in Tripoli on Tuesday, Al-Sarraj urged the new executive authority to work on holding elections to allow Libyans to have their say in their leadership, in addition to achieving national reconciliation across the country.

He also referred to the hurdles that faced his government over the last years since 2016 and said the war on Tripoli in 2019 led to more deterioration of the electricity crisis after foreign firms left Libya.

Meanwhile, Menfi said they would work on establishing peaceful transition of power in Libya via democracy and transparency for building a civilian state, adding that holding general elections on time by the year's end would be their priority, adding that elections

must be preceded by national reconciliation and unification of state institutions.

Dbeibah, in the meantime, said mistakes and merits of the past period of the Government of National Accord were present, but that period was very challenging and difficult, thanking Al-Sarraj and the rest of the officials for their efforts.

"We aim to carry out reforms and pick up from where the outgoing government has left." Dbeibah indicated.



Pakistan has welcomed the endorsement by the Libyan Parliament to the cabinet proposed by the Prime Minister of Libya Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah and the successful formation of the Government of National Unity.

"We wish the Libyan parliamentary and political leaderships every success. We appreciate the resolve of the Libyan people for peace



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and security, which has led to this outcome. We also acknowledge the positive role played by the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), as well as the efforts of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Libya." The Government of Pakistan said in a statement on Monday.

The government added that Pakistan accords high importance to its historically close and cordial ties with Libya, vowing to work for advancing the bilateral cooperation as well as coordination between both countries at the regional and international fora.

Politics

## Military activity spotted near the Libyan Egyptian border



Volcano of Rage Operation published aerial photos showing the monitoring of military activity near the Libyan Egyptian border.

The images showed activity at the Habata Military Airport, approximately 50km from the border between both countries, along with an increase in the number of military aircraft hangers and a number of new yards at the military airport during 2019 and 2020.

An investigation on March 8 by Al Jazeera revealed that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had dismantled its military base in Eritrea, transferring a number of its installations and military vehicles to the Egyptian military base of Sidi Barani, on the border with Libya.

Politics

## Parliament to discuss adoption of state budget to facilitate government work



The Spokesman of the House of Representatives, Abdullah Bali-hak, said that the parliament would discuss, during the upcoming period, the adoption of the state budget to enable the government to carry out its obligations.

Balihak confirmed in a press conference, following the swearing-in of the Government of National Unity, that the items on the agenda in Tunis by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF) had been referred to the Constitutional and Legislative Committee in the House of Representatives (HoR) for a decision.

He indicated that the new Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah promised to hold the elections on time and that the parliament would follow up its work.

Politics

## Kubis welcomes legal oath of Dbeibah's government



The head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Jan Kubis, welcomed the Government of National Unity's swearing-in before the House of Representatives (HoR) on Monday.

On UNSMIL's Facebook page, Kubis congratulated the head of the new government, Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, his government and the Presidential Council (PC), strongly urging him to urgently accelerate answering the challenges faced by the Libyan people, to improve living conditions and basic services.

Kubis called for high-priority in preparing the country to hold the national elections, scheduled to be held on December 24 of this year.

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**Economy**

## Finance Ministry launches new platform for tracking imported, exported goods via sea



The Finance Ministry has launched a new platform that presents data and information on imported and exported goods transported via sea outlets throughout Libya.

The digital platform includes 12 icons that deliver timely updates to those it serves, including general data for shipments, importers, shipping companies, commercial ports, and statistics of goods and exporting countries.

The Ministry of Finance had also launched the "260 Libya Salaries" application, which will enable public sector employees to follow the movement of their monthly salaries and take advantage of the services provided by the permanent committee for salary rationalization.

**Economy**

## Libya's oil revenues over one billion in February



Libya's oil revenues totaled 1,235 billion in February said the National Oil Corporation (NOC) on Sunday, indicating that it is reviewing the possibility of unfreezing oil revenue funds in the Libyan Foreign Bank.

The profits made from the sales of crude oil and its derivatives were deposited into the NOC's account at the Libyan Foreign Bank in Tripoli, in line with the temporary arrangement, but this would come to an end after the approval of Libya's new government by the parliament, the NOC explained.

Mustafa Sanallah, the NOC's head, confirmed that he had met with Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah in Tripoli. "His (Dbeibah) speech was clear and frank in his support for the National Oil Corporation and its affiliates in order to achieve its goals of increasing production and achieving greater revenues to support the national economy," Sanalla said.

Dbeibah has ordered to start rebuilding stocks of liquid fuel in power plants drinking water desalination plants, and fuel distribution stations in all NOC warehouses across the country in preparation to meet the increasing consumption during the holy month of Ramadan.

The cumulative total of oil revenues withheld since the lifting of the status of force majeure until the date of March 10, 2021, amounted to US\$ 7,767,439,801.73, according to the NOC, noting that the sum includes the rights of partners and the NOC, but neither royalties nor taxes.

**Economy**

## CBL governor discusses exchange of experiences in banking with Turkish ambassador

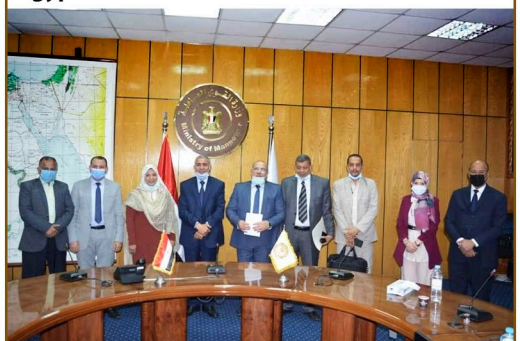


The Governor of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Saddek Elkaber, held discussions with the new Turkish ambassador to Libya, Kenan Yılmaz, the exchange of vast experiences and skills in the fields of banking and finance between both countries.

During a meeting held on Sunday at the bank's headquarters in Tripoli, both sides discussed the economic situation and methods to develop joint cooperation, in addition to exchanging skilled expertise and experiences between both countries in the fields of banking and finance.

**Economy**

## Libya, Egypt agree to expedite entry of Egyptian workers



The Libyan Ministry of Labour, along with the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Immigration, concurred on the facilitation of ways for Egyptian workers to enter Libya with ease.

The Libyan embassy in Cairo indicated on its official Facebook page that both sides discussed during a meeting held in Cairo the necessity of implementing the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between both ministries in 2013.

They also discussed the onset of the implementation of an electronic link between the Libyan Ministry of Labour and its Egyptian counterpart in order to better understand the needs in the Libyan labour market.

A discussion also took place on the possibility of a visit by an Egyptian technical delegation to Libya, with a view to conclude any remaining technical arrangements previously discussed.

Opinions



## Challenges looming the newly elected government of Libya

By Alhareth Elshibani

A turbulent period ascends over the Government of National Unity (GNU) of Libya. The newly elected government blossomed after a successful UN-sponsored led initiative that ended up in February 2021 with a new transitional government that aims mainly to hold elections in December 2021. GNU brings new hope to all Libyans, after a fierce war that was launched in April 2019 in Tripoli, over the control of Libya between The Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Fayez Al-sarraj as the Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya and the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by the General Khalifa Haftar, a Libyan-American general and the commander of the Tobruk-based Libyan National Army. The war caused many suffering to all Libyans, according to the United Nations statistics in April 2020 it is estimated that more than 149,000 people were forced to leave their homes. Moreover, facilitated international actors to step up their influence and actions and use Libya as a proxy war for their own national interests.

The new leadership comprising of Abdul Hamid al-Dabaib as prime minister, Mohamed Al-Manfi as the president of the Libyan Presidential Council, with Musa al-Koni and Abdallah al-Lafi as deputies, has a hard task of lifting the weight of national issues, of weakening infrastructure, raised poverty levels, inflation, fighting corruption and ensuring a peaceful transition to election. Thus, the new leaders took calculated steps to start their government by visiting both Tripoli and Benghazi to send a message of unity and progress. In fact, visits to Turkey and Egypt were accomplished just recently. Mr Abdul hamid's history allows him to serve this period perfectly as he has worked with the Gaddafi regime and was within close distance of Ghaddafi's son Saif al-Islam in his ambitious project of Libya Algard. Abdul hamid has promised Libyans to alleviate their suffering and provide them their dignity. Thus, a lot of Libyans, specially the youth, are hoping good in this new government, as they are tired of the existing faces in power that caused Libya even more issues. However, the disagreed factions are still looming around, with hopes to be involved directly or indirectly, to secure a position of power in the next upcoming elections.

The GNU has an important role to take on board the issues that has been floating across both governments and its mission to alleviate the suffering of the day to day life of Libyans is an essential criteria to accomplish. However, within the list of problems there are several issues that the GNU needs to focus on. Firstly, the difficulty to function within the environment that has been created since 2011 revolution, as the corrupted elites, militiamen, politicians will be the main spoilers of any advancement the government will make. Moreover, the fight for positions within the new government and sovereign institution such as the Central Bank of Libya, the Audit Bureau, and National Oil Corporation will continue to facilitate for corrupted officials to diversify their control by employing different legal and illegal factions to protect their seats in power. Thus, the government will be forced to resort to using

some of the existing factions to allow the government processes to continue and focus on their main goal of having elections by Dec 2021. However, even if the government opens its arms to work with the current factions on the ground it will be faced by hardships as some of the main players could face elimination from power position, which could result in new alliances being made by those eliminated to strain the government's ability to do any progress on the ground.

Secondly, another important issue that threatens the elections is the referendum over the constitution. Libyan leadership in the last years have turned their backs on the constitution and were not interested to implement it, to continue the unbalanced relationship and have no real core to a national solution that govern how power is distributed and exercised. Although, the Constitutional Committee formed by the House of Representatives and the High Council of State continues to bring hope by meeting between 19-20 January in Hurghada, The Arab Republic of Egypt, and agreeing to hold a constitutional referendum before the general elections on December 24th. Therefore, this is a golden opportunity for the GNU to affirm in holding the referendum before the elections as the later if not held could result in a similar circle of violent events created after 2015. The importance for the presence of a constitution during the election will allow full legitimacy to the party elected in power. However, the opposing factions to the election will try to work to mess both deliverables to ensure a backup plan if elections succeed. Therefore, the Unity government should engage with the constitutional committee, the high council of state and the UNSMIL to follow-up on the outcomes of the January meeting, strengthening the outcome of the Dec elections.

Thirdly, the issue of migration, which is an important for the EU, specially Italy, Malta and France. Just on the 5th of February, the International Organization for Migration's Libya branch tweeted that more than 1,000 refugees have recently departed from Libya's shores, escaping "dire humanitarian conditions". EU need to cooperate with the GNU to facilitate further strengthening of the Libyan National Coast Guards and provide sufficient support to the Migrants held in detention centers and conduct campaign to improve standards of dealing with migrants and liaise with the responsible authorities in the GNU. Thus, the GNU will have an opportunity to use this card towards improving its relationship with the EU to further its approval as a government of crisis. Although, the GNU will require to coordinate on the ground with existing authorities and ensure that small steps are taken to prepare the ground for the next government to work even further on this issue.

The fourth issue would be the people of Libya. Libyans are struggling and have lost hope in all the previous government, liquidity is scarce, corruption is at its highest, IDPs are all over the place, prices are going up, cooking gas and car petrol are hard to reach for, deficiency in electricity across the state and many more issues that burdens the people of Libya. The GNU needs to focus on making small changes that will give some hope to the Libyans. Unfortunately, previous governments resorted in promising the Libyans huge dreams that are not reasonable to fulfill. Therefore, an approach of crisis mode should be taken in this transitional period that allows the government to function throughout the multiple issues mentioned by focusing teams of international and national consultants with coordination of international IGOs and bodies to allow for a firmer implementation and tangible targets. Meanwhile, once small goals are accomplished the people can be assured that there is progress and with time, change will occur.

To ensure a successful transition, a stable, and peaceful handling



of power, the international community cannot stand as an observer, to ensure that Libya do not return to the point of conflict. This has never been as important as before. Therefore, the United Nation Security Council should commit, carefully advise, and warn those involved in the Libyan situation to control their influence and maintain discipline. Moreover, an optimistic new American administration represented by Joe Biden, is predicted to increase its presence in the Libyan affairs and ensure that stability and ceasefire continues throughout the whole process. Meanwhile, the Russian, UAE, Egyptian and Turkish involvement has not seen any reduction as reports continue to surface that weapons and supplies are being delivered to parties in conflict. Moreover, the United Nation's Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) needs to have an open eye to any violations or spoiling occurring in the next coming months. The importance of swift actions against those who undermine any progress is crucial in the next months as this will inevitably occur at some stage to reach for elections. Therefore, the UNSMIL should coordinate with the international actors involved in Libya and loosen tensions in between to reach to a ground of agreement internationally which would help the situation domestically. Unfortunately, if this is not taken in firm matter, an army arsenal, newly trained soldiers, a large number of unmanned aircrafts, at the hands of the current conflicting factions, sponsored by multiple foreign actors directly and indirectly will fuel another bloody war and further the suffering of all Libyans.

Libya today progresses into a difficult period that is crucial to build the remains of a sovereign state, with a unity government elected with high hopes to accelerate this process and help make Libya a prosperous, stable and peaceful country. The challenges laid down ahead will either prove that the Libyan political leadership are ready for a period of development, reconciliation and reintegration or they are facilitating another bloody scene ahead. The GNUs role can be the most important role to Libya's future development and reentrance to the world stage as a rich, untapped territory. However, time will only prove either the GNU was able to float and drive Libya and its people towards peace and harmony or sink the whole ship and accept the painful reality of another bloody war.

Alhareth is a Libyan Postgraduate student studying an MA in International Relations at the University of Birmingham. He is a youth advocate and a civil society activist. He is involved with several youth from around Libya to push for change and peace through various means of social pressure.

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

### Gharyan: The COVID epidemic is getting out of control



The head of the Coronavirus Control Committee in Gharyan city Nasreddin Al-Fazzani has said that the epidemiological situation in the city is getting out of hands. He warned that with the severe shortage of capabilities and logistical resources the situation appears set to worsen quickly.

"The city is short of oxygen supplies, and the new stocks do not arrive on schedule in addition, the city has only one isolation centre while the other centre affiliated with the military medicine apparatus has closed its doors," Al-Fazzani said in a press statement on Monday.

Al-Fazzani urged the government to take swift action and to get the oxygen plant back working as soon as possible, as it could cover the city's needs and the entire region of Nafusa Mountain.

#### Health

### PM Dbeibah orders dissolution of anti-Covid-19 committee



Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, on Sunday, ordered the dissolution of the anti-coronavirus committee established by his predecessor, Fayeze Al-Sarraj.

The committee was established in mid-March last year, headed by the Minister of Health and membership of several governmental bodies, among them the ministries of education, interior, justice, transportation, finance, foreign affairs, local government, and economy.

It also included the heads of the National Center for Disease Control, civil society institutions, and the General Union of Libyan Students, besides representatives of the Internal Security Agency, the Social Solidarity Fund, the Libyan Holding Company for Communications, and the Emergency Management at the Ministry of Health.

The multisectoral committee has been mandated to take exceptional and precautionary measures to confront the spread of Covid-19, in coordination with all relevant authorities.

However, in October last year, the Attorney General's Office ordered the halting of all financial transactions related to the anti-covid-19 response plans, after detecting financial violations in the Covid-19 Procurement Committee.

The Government of National Accord faced criticism in managing the pandemic crisis, as the death toll of Covid-19 fatalities in Libya was among the highest in African countries relative to its population, according to the UN report last February.

#### Health

### NCDC Sabha branch temporarily closed after more staff gets Covid-19



Sabha branch of the National Centre for Disease Control was forced to close its laboratory after most of its employees tested positive for Covid-19.

In a statement Monday, the center also referred to suffering technical malfunctions in the laboratory, stressing it is working to address the problem as soon as possible.

It further indicated that it can not issue health papers or receive patients at present, as a result of a lack of staff.

The statement warned that the health situation in the region is very fragile and may implode at any moment due to the limited resources and capacities in the isolating centers in terms of beds, oxygen supplies, respirators, and medical teams.

The center urged citizens to abide by health and safety rules and halt all gatherings and social events until further notice.

Authorities in Sabha last week ordered a complete lockdown upon the recommendations of the anti-coronavirus committee in the region. Sports and cultural activities will halt, weddings, funeral gatherings disallowed for two weeks, while schools were closed for a week.

Sports

## Benina Martyrs stadium to host Libya football team's CAF matches



The Confederation of African Football (CAF) lifted Thursday the ban on Benghazi's Benina Martyrs stadium, allowing it to host the AFCON qualifier between Libya and Tunisia on March 25.

The Libyan Football Federation announced lifting the CAF ban on Benina Martyrs stadium on its Facebook page, saying the Chairman Abdelhakim Al-Shalmani announced the news from Rabat, Morocco.

The Libyan Football Federation said the match between Libya and Tunisia on March 25 at Benina Martyrs stadium. This will allow Libyan fans to finally attend their national team's games at home without bothering the heavy costs of transportation and accommodation in neighboring countries.

Al-Shalmani said they will work on meeting all the requirements set by the CAF delegation that visited Tripoli international stadium recently.

Lifting the ban on Libya's stadiums by CAF was announced in February after a delegation from the African football authority had visited the country's main stadiums to check for their preparedness and the security situation in the country.



## Illegal drug shipment from UAE seized at Misrata International Airport

The Volcano of Rage Operation announced that the Customs Office at Misrata International Airport was capable of seizing a shipment of narcotics arriving from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

They indicated that the shipment consisted of more than 201,000 pills of the banned 'Tamol X' tablets, which were confiscated and those involved in the smuggling network arrested, with the file being transferred to the Public Prosecution.

The operation added that "these actions come under the unscrupulous role of the UAE in supporting turmoil in Libya, following its failure to control Tripoli by supporting Haftar with finances, weapons and mercenaries."



## Classes in Jadu to be suspended until March 18

The Municipal Council of Jadu in the Nafusa Mountains has decided to suspend studies in all educational institutions in the municipality beginning Tuesday, until at least March 18, following a marked increase in the number of new cases of infections with the Coronavirus.

The council said in a statement on its official Facebook page that the suspension of studies was instituted due to instructions received from the head of the Coronavirus control committee and based on a message from the director of the municipality's isolation center, regarding the sudden expansion of the epidemiological situation.

Migration



## 47 migrants freed from secret prison in Kufra

Kufra Security Directorate announced on Sunday the liberation of 47 migrants following a raid on a farm in which a secret prison was discovered, being used to detain migrants.

The Directorate explained that the operation followed the receiving of reports from the Criminal Investigation Department regarding those being held, after the escape of one of the prisoners, who managed to pass the information on to them.

The authorities stated on its official Facebook page that of the 47 migrants freed, 46 hold Sudanese nationality, whilst one individual holds Ethiopian nationality and they further confirmed the referral of all those freed to be accommodated at the deportation center.

Crimes

## Activist Zakaria Al-Zawai kidnapped under mysterious circumstances in Benghazi



Local sources in Benghazi confirmed the abduction of the well-known activist, Zakaria Al-Zawi, on Friday by an armed group. The sources confirmed that Al-Zawi was kidnapped by masked gunmen, without any reason being given.

The same sources suggested that Al-Zawi was kidnapped due to his writings, published on his personal Facebook page, which criticized the present security situation in Benghazi.

This comes as part of a major crackdown targeting all those who declare their rejection of the security hold, imposed by Haftar's militia on eastern Libya.



weather

The  
Weather  
Channel

Tripoli Weather Forecast

Fri 19	22°/14°		Partly Cloudy	 22%	 E 22 km/h
Sat 20	26°/15°		Mostly Sunny	 8%	 SE 18 km/h
Sun 21	21°/12°		Partly Cloudy	 24%	 WNW 24 km/h
Mon 22	19°/12°		Partly Cloudy/Wind	 24%	 W 35 km/h
Tue 23	18°/12°		Mostly Sunny	 24%	 WNW 28 km/h
Wed 24	18°/12°		AM Showers	 35%	 NW 24 km/h
Thu 25	19°/13°		Mostly Sunny	 21%	 NW 18 km/h

Photo of the Week



Features

## Royal Palace of Tripoli



It is considered one of the largest and most beautiful palaces in Libya. It was built during the rule of Italo Balbo in the 1930s. It was officially known as the "Palazzo del Governatore".

It was used as the seat of the Italian Governor General, and during the British Mandate period, it became the seat of the English Governor, then the seat of King Idris Al-Senussi during the period from 1951 to 1964.

It is located in the Dahra neighborhood on a high hill, which is considered one of the highest places in Tripoli, and through its balconies you can see most of the buildings, including the old city and the seashore.

its design blending the local and Roman style and harmonizing with the icon of Tripoli, the Red Castle. Its interior walls are decorated with motifs, murals, and beautiful paintings by famous Italian artists and sculptors.

After the September 1969 coup, the palace suffered from neglect and negligence, and most of its contents, including furniture and artistic paintings, were lost. The roots and decorations were deformed, and some of them were scratched and cracked.

It was affected by some damage following the US raid on Libya in 1986, and it was converted into a museum and called the 'Libya Museum'.

In recent decades, after regular maintenance rather than specialized technical one, it was converted into a public library known as the 'National Library'.

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