

Economy

# Billions in Losses

## Libya braces for billions in losses due to oil fields closure



Libya has lost over 2.9 billion dollars since the January 17 oil blockade, according to the National Oil Corporation (NOC). NOC stated that Libya's current levels of production are 114,331 bpd, as of Sunday, March 8.

It declared in a statement that the closure of oil ports and fields has caused financial losses exceeding \$2,932,005,883.

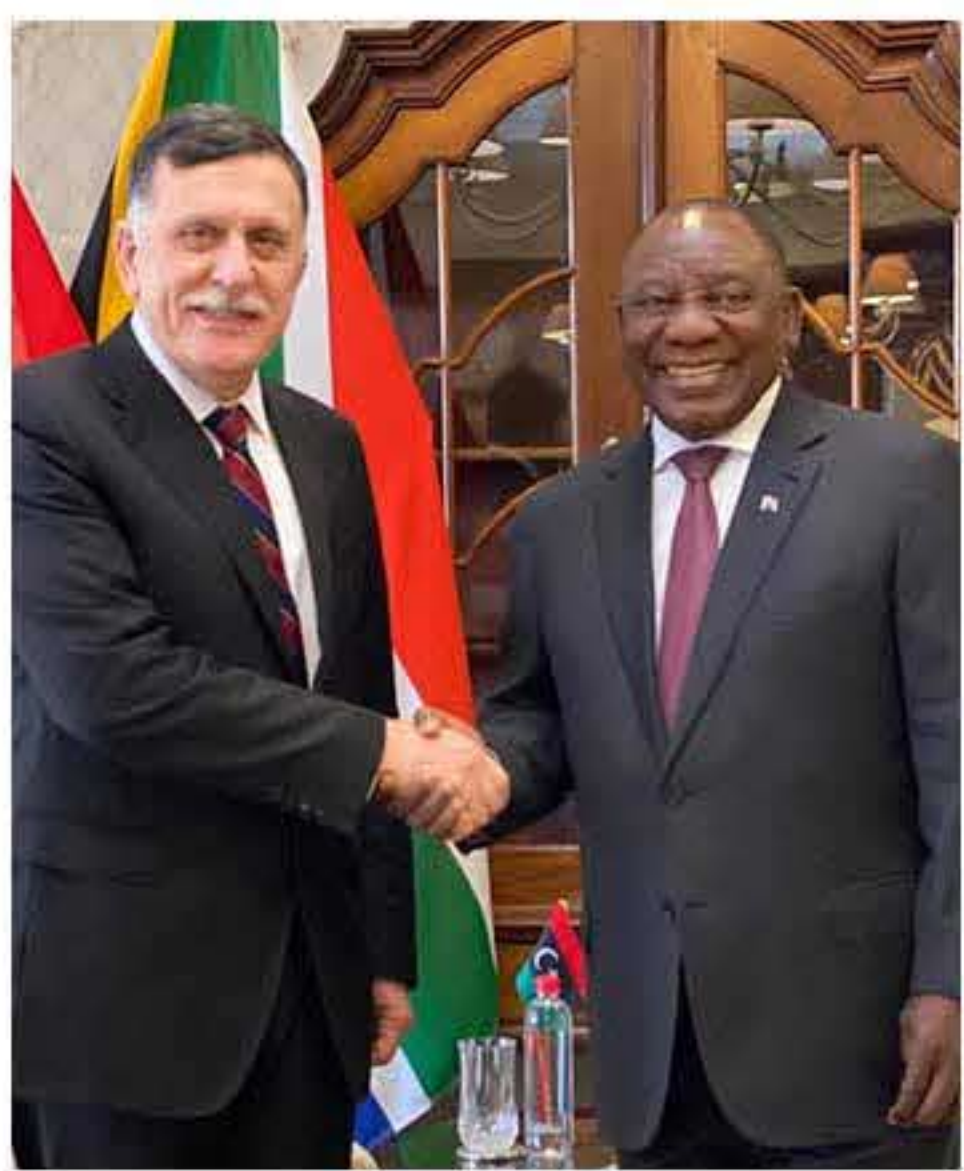
The Ministry of Finance also warned that Libya's foreign currency reserves will fall to 63 billion dollars if the closure of oil installations and ports continues until next June.

Tribal groups loyal to Libya's eastern warlord Khalifa Haftar closed the country's oil fields and ports under their control in an attempt to cut off funds for UN-recognized the Government of National Accord. On March 04, the Libyan Government of National Accord approved a budget for 2020 worth 38.5 billion dinars after a meeting for the Head of Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj, CBL Governor Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, Audit Bureau's Head Khalid Shakshak, Head of High Council of State Khalid Al-Mishri and others.

The delay of budget approval hindered state institutions' salary payments since the start of 2020 with both the CBL and Ministry of Finance exchanging blame for it. The CBL said in late February that it had started salary payments for January and February without promotions and incentives.

Politics

## Libya, South Africa agree to cooperate in finding peaceful solution to ongoing conflicts



The President of South Africa, Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, said Libya's interests in peace and ending the ongoing offensive against Tripoli, adding that the oil blockade is harming such interests.

Ramaphosa and the Head of the Libyan Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sirraj discussed in Pretoria South Africa's support for the Government of National Accord, outlining the negative impact of foreign interventions in Libya.

Achieving peace in Libya is a priority for him as the current President of the African Union, Ramaphosa said, adding that his country will play a neutral but active role in finding peaceful solutions to the Libyan crisis based on the Political Agreement signed in Skhirat on December 17, 2015.

Meanwhile, Al-Sirraj said Libya is positive that South Africa is now President of the African Union at this difficult time, hailing the role of the Congo-chaired high ranking committee on Libya.

Al-Sirraj explained to Ramaphosa the details of Khalifa Haftar's offensive against Tripoli, which he said aimed at returning Libya to the totalitarian rule, while Libyans all aspire for a democratic and civil state.

The two officials talked about cooperation in different fields like education, agriculture, industry, health and the participation of South African firms in rebuilding Libya, in addition to security and political consultations.

Politics

## Merkel to Haftar: No military solution in Libya



The German Chancellor Angela Merkel has met with Khalifa Haftar, whose forces have been leading an offensive against Tripoli trying to seize power from the Government of National Accord for 11 months, in Berlin, according to a spokesman at the German government.

The spokesman said on Tuesday that Chancellor Angela Merkel told Haftar that the military solution wouldn't be viable in Libya.

Merkel and Haftar discussed the ongoing conflict in Libya, reiterating that the ceasefire progress in the political talks as per Berlin conference conclusions are very significant for Libya.

The meeting in Berlin follows a meeting for Haftar and French President Emmanuel Macron, who discussed with the former a way out of the oil blockade entan

entanglement provided that Haftar lifts the blockade in return for fail revenues' distribution outside the Libyan Central Bank, according to Le Monde.

Haftar's forces have been violating the ceasefire since its announcement in January with intensified shelling in civilian neighborhoods and Mitiga Airport, causing a number of civilian deaths and injuries.

Meanwhile, on February 12, the UN Security Council unanimously approved a British resolution that supports Berlin conference conclusions on Libya, which include a call for a permanent ceasefire. Russia, Haftar's military supporter, abstained from voting for or against the resolution at the time.



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Politics

**Egypt, UAE, Jordan and Belarus have supplied military equipment for Haftar, report says**



Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said Khalifa Haftar had received - between 2015 and 2019 - armored vehicles from Jordan and UAE as well as fighter helicopters from Belarus and Egypt.

SIPRI said the fighter jets and drones that were supplied to Haftar by the UAE had been used in Libya's conflict, including the aggression on Tripoli,

indicating that the intervention of the UAE in Libya was part of its foreign policies that include military intervention in Yemen.

SIPRI said that despite the violation of the UN arms embargo in Libya, which has been in effect since 2011, no country has been sanctioned for such violations.

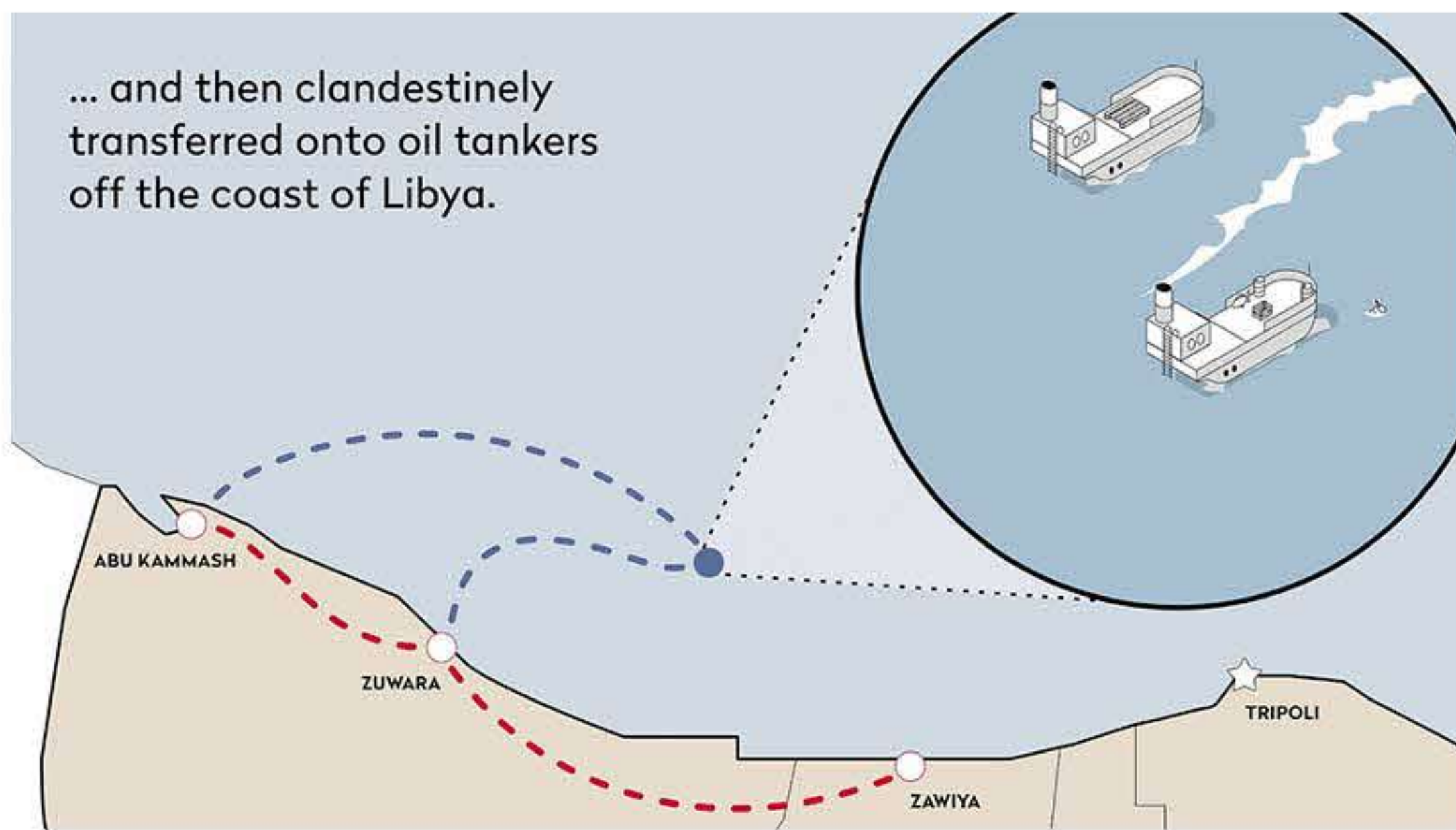
The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said on February 04 that movements of forces from Egypt were depicted in Libya with drones from the UAE and mercenaries from Sudan and a Russian firm.

Also in February, French website Intelligence Online said Haftar had signed a contract to obtain six Chinese-made CH-4 aircraft from Jordanian Royal Air Force.

While a UN report revealed as well in December 2019 that most of the military support for Haftar was provided by Jordan and the UAE.

Politics

**Public Eye: Swiss trader Kolmar is linked with network for smuggling Libyan fuel**



A Journalist at the Swiss-based "Public Eye" organization, Agathe Duparc has said that the Swiss company "Kolmar Group AG" involved in smuggling Libyan oil between 2014 and 2016 had rented two underground warehouses in Malta to store the smuggled shipments.

In a statement to Radio France Internationale, the journalist revealed that the smuggled fuel was transported by truck from Zawiyah city, west of Tripoli, with the help of Libyan "Fahmy Bin Khalifa". Afterward, it was loaded aboard small fishing boats in Zuwara, before being discharged into larger tanks in the Mediterranean heading to Malta.

Duparc emphasized that their report is backed with documents and evidence that proves the involvement of Colmar in this case, and its relationship with Italian, Maltese and Libyan smugglers, indicating that part of the smuggled oil was sold in Europe.

Economy

**Libya reviews economic relations with the UK**



Minister of Economy and Industry, Ali al-Issawi, has discussed with British Minister of State for International Trade, Conor Burns, the possibility of signing a free trade agreement between the two countries.

The meeting took place at the British Foreign Office HQ in the presence of the Chargé d'Affaires of the Libyan Embassy and the delegation accompanying Libya's economy minister, according to a statement of the Libyan Ministry of Economy yesterday.

The two sides emphasized the importance of establishing and managing free zones and special economic zones as a way of enhancing relations between the two countries, as well as promoting investment and reviewing the bilateral agreements signed in between.

Libya's Economy Ministry emphasized the importance of this visit as it comes after the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, which requires the resuming of economic relations directly with the UK.

Economy

**International Sanctions Committee refuses to freeze assets of Libyan Investment Authority**



The Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) announced that the United Nations Sanctions Committee rejected to renew the freezing of assets belonging to companies affiliated with LIA.

LIA clarified in a statement that the United Nations Sanctions Committee refused to freeze its assets after

efforts were made regarding the negative impact that would become if the decision was implemented.

In their 2019 report, the UN panel of experts on Libya recommended freezing the assets of companies affiliated with the Libyan Investment Authority.



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**Economy**

**Minister of Economy:  
Mining could be Libya's  
alternative to oil**



Libyan Economy Minister Ali Al-Essawi said Wednesday mining in Libya may eventually become a more significant economic activity than oil production as the country seeks to reduce its economic dependency on oil.

Al-Essawi said at an event at the Arab-British Chamber of Commerce in London that Libya has gold, magnesium and iron ore, adding that mining could eventually become more important than oil, adding that because of the focus on oil, Libya has lost many other opportunities, according to S&P Global Platts.

"We are trying to attract investment to areas other than oil. Oil in Libya is currently cheaper than water, partly because of the country's subsidies to the oil industry, which are expected to be reviewed in a move to liberalize domestic oil prices and stem "huge" losses made in domestic energy generation, the minister said.

He added that currently, Libya's metallics mining industry is largely underdeveloped, although tests on samples and reserves are being undertaken by the country's industrial research institution.

Al-Essawi said the Russians and the Italians may be interested, noting that foreign investors may own up to 100% of mining ventures.

Al-Essawi said Libya's economy had been recovering, although the country was still in a transit period after the regime change in 2011, yet he explained that the country's geographic location favors commodities trade with both Europe and Africa, and an exchange rate reform began in 2018.

"The great support we need is not money, but foreign investment and stock exchange support," the Minister of Economy said.

He added that Libya's economic growth rate this year is expected to be very low because the country's oil industry is producing at its minimum capacity, reinforcing the need to diversify away from oil.

**Economy**

**Dates producers are facing a crisis due to poor marketing**



Palm tree growers have called on the authorities to take needful measures to prevent a further slide in their business.

The oasis town of Waddan, known as the palm city in the southern region, produces the finest dates in the world, but dates producers complain that their products are not being sold.

With the absence of government support, farmers are encountering difficulties to

market their own products. Lack of foreign labor, frequent interruption of electricity, in addition to security issues also had their burden on the palm industry in Libya.

Date producers also fear to lose the European market, which they provide annually with 30 thousand tons of dates, according to the Libyan Olive and Date Palm Agency. They warned this will have a long-term impact on the palm industry in Libya.

The farmers appealed to the competent authorities to attach importance to this issue and boost investment in this sector, which they say represents an important economic resource to the country.

**Economy**

**Libya Okays a 2020 budget worth 38.5 billion dinars**



The Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) has approved 2020 budget and financial arrangements, saying they are worth 38.5 billion dinars.

The decision came after a meeting in Tuesday at the headquarters of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) in Tripoli, where the Head of the Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj, Head of Audit Bureau Khalid Shakshak, Speaker of the House of Representatives in Tripoli Hamouda Sayala, Head of High Council of State Khalid Al-Mishri, Governor of CBL Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir, and the commander of joint operations room Osama Juwaili were present.

The meeting resulted also in agreement to form a crisis committee for the attendees with the Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha in order to tackle the ongoing crises and provide the needed services for Libyans, according to the media office of GNA.

The office added that the budget had been given the greenlight after thorough discussions and minute analysis of the financial needs of the Libyan people amid the blockade of oil production and exports.

Earlier on Tuesday, the CBL and Audit Bureau had agreed to send the 2020 budget proposal (35 billion dinars) to the government after long discussions amid the oil blockade entanglement.

Opinions

## 2019 Diary in Libya: Empowering People to be Part of Sustainable Development

*By Mohammad Amar Ma'ruf, Charge d'affaires of the Embassy of Indonesia in Libya*



As Indonesian diplomat who is just being posted in Libya for 3.5 months, I have been recalled to be always part of positive development in my receiving states. For that reason, I am trying to explore things that may be a problem for my receiving states in term of social and economic affairs. One thing that I had known before I post in Tripoli today is the Tripoli is a land of modesty and a diverse in nature. Frankly speaking, my presence in Tripoli is a second presence when in 1997-2000 I had been posted in Tunisia and covered also for Libya. And, Alhamdulillah during this decade, my government has opened directly our Embassy in Tripoli for one reason, namely to strengthen brotherhood and cooperation. For me, this second presence in Tripoli is my direct chance to get along and share my best experiences and knowledge that my country has, with my Libyan Brothers at all levels. Meanwhile, I also learn from Libya that Indonesia doesn't have to be taken and considered for solving the problem that we have in the country.

In this context, one thing that has attracted my attention is the Tripoli City condition that according to me has the same challenges. The problem of how we keep the City cleaned. If I may compare with my City of Jakarta, both cities have a big issue on Plastic and Paper Waste beside their domestic waste. Jakarta with the population around 11 million people and Tripoli with around 1 or 2 million people. Jakarta City produces around 8 million tonnage per day and for Tripoli City produces around 1.5 million ton per day. This is a huge waste that should be managed well. It means the management not only the responsibility of the municipality but also the citizen itself.

Seeing these challenges, I am trying to look to my Indonesian brother and sister experiences that I consider having something valuable to be known by other countries communities such as the citizen City of Tripoli. In Indonesia, we have a movement that we call "Bank Sampah" or "Garbage Bank". As the concept of a conventional bank, this bank also gives some practical solution to the related stakeholders to participate in solving social problems such plastic or paper waste through economic circulation process. In this process, every family who is considerably aware to keep their domestic environment clean, are primarily player and doing significant role by separating the waste material that classified as organic and unorganic to be collected and be given to Bank Sampah. From this Bank, the social mobilization is managed with empowering program that makes selected waste become value-added products.

This awareness is not an easy job since the habit may not yet familiarize with the self-awareness and initiatives plus business and social incentives. That is why is called Waste Bank that peoples to be invited to think that nothing actually formed in vain. Everything in the world has a positive meaning, at least for generating social friendliness and incomes.

This effort has become the Indonesian Environment and Forestry Ministry program and other Regional Municipalities program that are related to other technical activities. That is why this program includes all related stakeholders ranging from the Government, Non-Government, Educational and Research Institution and also Industries and families/personals.

In this context, as the Indonesian Mission in Tripoli, I have updated and shared these activities with the dignitaries in the National Oil Company of Libya, Eng. Mostapha Sanalla, Ministry of Economy and Industry of Libya, HE Dr. Ali Alisawi, in the Ministry of Plan of Libya, HE. Taher El Jehaimi and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Libya. With those dignitaries, I invite all Government stakeholders hand in hand with the social organizations to protect the environment and empowering peoples.

During the above meetings, I also share and admire attention and movement that being done by local social organizations and volunteer citizen in Tripoli city in keeping their environment clean while they also empower peoples; old and young generation, men and women including children to keep their daily life discipline and awareness about how danger the waste without any attention to manage it well. This gives Embassy injection and support in organizing Indonesian Virtual Seminar on Empowering Peoples by Producing Economic Products from Plastic and Paper Waste in collaboration with the above stakeholders.

The activities seem gives an ample chance for related stakeholders in both countries to deepen their contact and communication, especially for the social organization to build dialogue and communication that very useful as a lesson learned to all countries social element in giving their best attention in order to reduce the problem that now faced not only our by two countries but also by the world. In this regards, the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia is happy to participate in the local event in collaboration with Local partners in the related program.

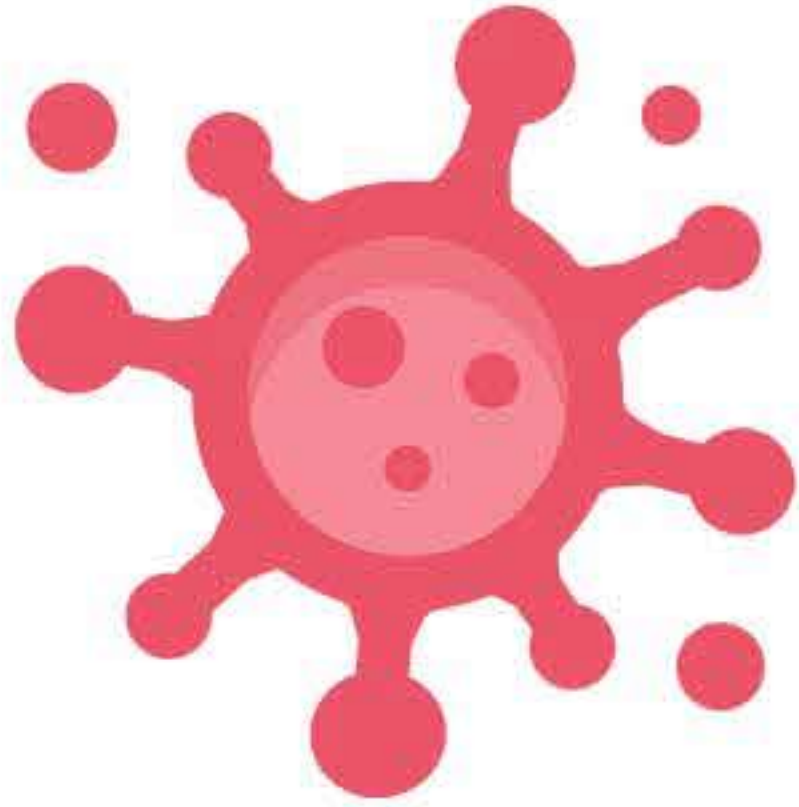
The Embassy also opens to bridge all related institutions in Libya who are interested in establishing dialogue and communication or even enhance it on the issue of Reuse and Recycling plastic and Paper waste. It is hoped that this activity will contribute to protecting the Libyan main resources and national income that one of them coming from Oil products. As we all are aware that plastic is one of the derivative products from Oil. It means if we ignore to manage well this issue, it will degrade the value-added of the main resources of our beloved countries.

May Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala give us the strength to protect our two countries and peoples and also people of the world. Aaameen Ya Robbal Alamin.

**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**

### National Center for Disease Control warns of Coronavirus outbreak in Libya, calls for preventive measures



The Libyan National Center for Disease Control said Coronavirus started to pose a direct threat to the country, warning of its imminent outbreak in Libya.

The center said in a statement that the COVID-19 virus had been registered in 90 countries, including countries bordering Libya.

There have been no confirmed cases of Coronavirus in Libya.

The center also called on the concerned authorities to form emergency committees to help Libyans prepare for confronting the virus if it broke out in Libya, saying it will take all necessary measures to provide the needed support for all related authorities to coordinate efforts against the outbreak of Coronavirus across Libya.

"The response plan of the Health Ministry should be implemented to the fullest to confront the virus. We should have quarantines across the country and areas special to the cases that are in the process of diagnosis for possible contraction of the virus." The center added.

It also called for providing medics and paramedics with the necessary equipment and preventive materials, in addition to supplying the rapid response teams with all the needed equipment and allocating an emergency budget for all of those medical precautions.

The center said it was forming a steering committee and branch technical teams to follow up on the procedures aimed to counter the possible outbreak of Coronavirus in Libya in all borders.

**Health**

### Tripoli Central Hospital says 1186 people checked in for psychotherapy in 2019



Tripoli Central Hospital announced on Tuesday that it had received 1186 psychiatric cases during the year 2019, 11 of which were under the age of 18.

The hospital explained on his account on Facebook that 596 of the cases registered were females, noting that some cases were treated by psychologists and others required assistance by specialists in other fields.

Given to the hospitals' location, most of the patients were from Tripoli with 929 cases, according to the hospital.

Second came Tarhouna with 50 cases, followed by Janzur 42 and Tajoura 34 cases, while 29 of them came from Qasir Bin Ghasheer district, southern Tripoli.

The hospital confirmed that its outpatient clinics and departments had received around a quarter of a million cases during last year.

**Health**

### Woman released from ICU after ten years, doctors say she's doing well



Misrata Medical Centre has celebrated the recovery of a woman who was hospitalized for nearly ten years in the Intensive Care Unit.

The hospital did not confirm her full recovery or release from the hospital but explained that she is responding very well to the treatment.

The center published a picture showing the woman,

identified to be Mrs. Hawa, surrounded by doctors, medical staff and workers at the hospital, who provided treatment and care for the lady all these years.

by doctors, medical staff and workers at the hospital, who provided treatment and care for the lady all these years.

A source at the center has explained that the patient was suffering from "myasthenia gravis"; a neuromuscular disease that leads to muscle weakness and also affects swallowing and breathing, which in turn, requires the patient to be placed on Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

The woman has luckily received free medical care at the centre throughout these years despite the underfunding problems the hospital had experienced in the past years.

According to the medical source, treatment and care for a similar case in private health facilities will cost around 3000 dinars per day.

**Health**

### Field Medicine Center says 30 % of injuries caused by Haftar's attacks are civilians



The General Manager of the Field Medicine and Support Centre, Tariq Hamshari, remarked on Sunday that 30 % of those wounded so far are civilians, adding that the Centre has managed to evacuate approximately 90 % of the trapped families in the conflict zones.

Hamshari also said in a press statement, that the centre initially employed 200 staff; however, it now has increased to 1,000 medical staff and administration personnel.

He was further indicated that the center operates 13 field hospitals and 20 ambulance bases covering all areas from Abu Shaybah, south of Gharyan, to the outskirts of Sirte.

**Health**

### Chinese goods are safe



The director of the National Center for Disease Control, Badr Al-Din Al-Najjar, has assured citizens that the Chinese goods imported into Libya are safe and don't pose a threat to the public's health due to the outbreak of coronavirus in China.

Al-Najjar confirmed that Libya is free of the coronavirus despite its outbreak in the neighbouring countries of Italy, Algeria and Egypt.

Life

## Libyan Wildlife Trust voices concern over illegal bird killing



The Libyan Wildlife Trust for protecting wildlife in Libya has expressed concern about the growing phenomenon of killing birds in Libya, saying that the absence of a deterrent punishment against wildlife crimes is what made these offenders go this far.

The association posted pictures on its Facebook page Tuesday, showing a number of flamingo migrant birds shot down while making their journey through Libya.

It labeled the images of the dead birds with "killing for pleasure", underscoring that action should be taken to combat this threat.

"The guns of Libyan hunters have become of greater risk than the natural enemies of this species, which could indeed lead to its extinction from the Libyan coast," the association explained.

Culture

## Children participate in art and cultural evening at Al-Quba Al-Falakia hall



Al-Quba Al-Falakia the (planetarium) hall hosted an art and cultural evening on Sunday. The event was organized by the General Authority of Culture, in cooperation with "Amalna" organization for media and comprehensive development.

The evening featured a wonderful performance by a group of children, who managed to keep the audience entertained throughout the evening.

The children had an open opportunity to showcase their talents in music and poetry, and at the same time to voice their dreams and pain in the shadow of the ongoing war waged by Khalifa Haftar on Tripoli.

For his part, member of the Steering Committee of the General Authority for Culture, Mr. Mohamed Al-Haddar emphasized support for such events, especially programs of interest to children.

He stressed it is of particular importance to continue to hold similar activities, given the positive impact it would have on the population as a whole.

Media

## TV presenter sacked by pro-Haftar channel for "crossing red lines"



TV presenter, Fatima Mirimi has been sacked by pro-Haftar "Libya TV" channel, after asking an official at the east-based interim government a straightforward question about a considerable sum of money allocated for a government-planned project. The TV presenter questioned in her program a decree issued by the interim government to fund a training project set by the "Leadership Training Centre" owned by power players in Al-Thini's government

In a video clip on her Facebook page, she explained that she was fired by a telephone call outside the established procedures.

"The boss told me don't show me your face again" Mirimi claimed. "I was told that I have put the guest in a very uncomfortable position and made him angry," she added, quoting her boss as saying "It is not your job to interrogate him".

Mirimi explained that she was only passing the viewers' questions who are eager to know where all these sums go, as they have not been translated into reality on the ground.

Since the takeover of Benghazi by Haftar's militias, the new authorities have waged war on media and press, harassing, arresting and even torturing and killing journalists, the same is happening in Sirte now after its fall in Haftar's hands, as the local radio station in Sirte was burned to the ground just days after the city was seized.

Sports

## Libyan Archery Indoor Championship concludes in Tripoli



Tripoli Grand Hall for Sports hosted the closing round competitions of the Libyan Archery Indoor Championship for women, men, and juniors.

The competition was marked with impressive performances and everyone did great, the Libyan Olympic Committee said on Facebook. In the men's category, Sabri Shniba from Sidi Salim Club got first place, Magdi Geaba of Ahli came second, while Muhannad Megresy of the Military Union Sports Club finished third.

The women's category was topped by Gazala Elmawhob, second came Amany Fares, and third was Donya Tawerge, while Abdulmalek Abo Seda and Ebtehal Gorwash were crowned champs for the junior category.

Technology

### Libya's first International Forum on Information Technology held in Tripoli



### Tripoli Weather This Week

Fri 03/13	Sat 03/14	Sun 03/15	Mon 03/16	Tue 03/17	Wed 03/18	Thu 03/19
Mainly sunny	A mix of sun and clouds	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny	A mix of sun and clouds	Mainly sunny	Mainly sunny
22°	25°	20°	22°	21°	21°	23°

The Teachers' Union in Tripoli has hosted Libya's first International Forum on Information Technology.

Specialists and interested stakeholders attended the forum and exchanged views on information security in the new era, its role, and how to build a strong security policy.

The forum covered topics such as the importance of information security in institutional building, security standards, and the types of control systems, in addition, to the national security strategy against cyber-security.

The forum was jointly organized by the Information Technology Center of the General Authority for Communications and Informatics, the National Authority for Information Security and Safety, and the Al-Madar Al-Jadid Company.

### Photo of the Week:

Traditional horse riders parade at sunset, Tripoli.



Features

## The Beauty of Libya's Murad Agha Mosque



Murad Agha Mosque is one of the most splendid pieces of Islamic architecture in Libya. It was built by Murad Agha, an Othmani Basha commander of the military campaign sent by Sultan Sulaiman in 1510, in response to the people of Tripoli's appeal against Spanish invaders.

The Mosque stands on a raised platform in the middle of Tajoura, a suburb of Tripoli.

The building includes a house prayer, which centers a large courtyard and a separate minaret. The current minaret is relatively modern, the original one collapsed in an earthquake in 1901.

The minaret is square shaped as in Moroccan style. It was derived from the one built in Alqayrawan's Mosque. The prayer house is 33.00x38.50 m; which makes it form a rectangle shape.

Creative architecture has made the outside walls thick from beneath and gradually decreases as they extend up high to create a spectacular corn vision. Carved wooden doors and arches, marble columns that hold up a splendid ceiling are all highly cherished by the visitors and art lovers.

Murad Basha settled in Tajoura in preparation to free Tripoli from its occupiers.

The huge mass of the building besides its schematics from the inside show that the building was first designed and constructed to be a military fort.

Unlike other mosques, the wall that the people face while praying which points to Kiblah (direction of Mecca) is smaller than the other walls. The rooms that were distributed throughout the Kiblah wall are thought to be places for soldiers to rest or storage rooms for army supplies. Wall to wall flyovers locate the marble columns. The wooden doors above that open out at all directions meant to be lookouts for security guards.

The well inside the prayer house is also unfamiliar to mosques architecture, historians indicate that the well was the main source of drinking water for soldiers residing the fort.

These kinds of buildings were positioned throughout the coastline in North Africa at that time to resist the Norman sea raids. When the war ended, the fortress was converted into a mosque in 1552.

After four decades, the Mosque still stands as a symbol of resistance. In 2011, at the same place in a different era, people marched from the Mosque in a rally, triggering the revolution in Tripoli and the entire western region, which led to the dismantling of the dictatorship military rule.

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