

Politics

GNA vs. Haftar and COVID-19

Libyan warlord Haftar is continuing his crimes despite Coronavirus concerns, says Al-Sarraj

The Head of the Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj has said that daily attacks on civilian neighborhoods in Tripoli haven't stopped, adding that several people, including children, have lost their lives in those violations at a time his government is trying to avoid a Coronavirus outbreak.

Al-Sarraj said in a statement that Khalifa Haftar's forces targeted Ain Zara and Old Town (Madina), which is a historical landmark in Tripoli, adding that the UN and several countries had called on Haftar



to commit to a humanitarian halt of hostilities to allow concerned authorities to work on preventing a Coronavirus outbreak in the country, yet "they didn't know that the aggressor (Haftar) had no humanitarian, religious or moral codes anymore."

He also said that the aggressor thought his government was busy in fighting Coronavirus outbreak, so he doubled up his violations in away "as if he allied with the pa mic", adding that the aggressor doesn't care about peace as he looks for returning totalitarian rule even on "Libyans' bodies".

He also said that Haftar continues his terrorism and violations against civilians because he thinks he has impunity with some international condemnation statements that "aliken the aggressor and defender in Libya".

"The international community should take responsibility in Libya by adopting a strict stance regarding the violations of Haftar in the country. We are keeping our right to respond to Haftar's violations in Tripoli as perpetrators will never get away with their crimes." Al-Sarraj remarked.

Politics

Haftar's forces carry out rocket attack on a prison in southern Tripoli



Khalifa Haftar's forces have carried out, for the fourth respective day, rocket attacks on Ain Zara in southern Tripoli despite announcing adherence to a humanitarian halt of hostilities amid Coronavirus concerns.

On Tuesday, Haftar's forces attacked Al-Ruwaimi prison in Ain Zara, where there are about 420 inmates, according to the Ministry of Justice of the Government of National Accord.

The attack injured six people; four judiciary officers, an inmate and a pharmaceutical worker, according to sources from the scene.

The Ministry of Justice has called on the international community to immediately intervene to stop the rocket attacks against the Ain Zara area, including the prison, which it said suffered damages and casualties due to Haftar's shelling.

The Ministry called in a statement for allowing the medics and paramedics to enter the area to help out the injured persons and inmates who are trapped in the prison, blaming the aggression forces for the moral and humanitarian costs of their attacks and warning of a disaster if the shelling didn't stop.

Politics

Cultural heritage of Tripoli is in danger - FM



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Siyala has told the UN Security Council that while the world is fighting the coronavirus epidemic, residential neighbourhoods in Tripoli are under fire, the last of which was the Old City of Tripoli.

"Haftar's continued bombing has crossed all lines," Siyala stressed in a letter addressed to the UN Security Council.

He pointed out that the bombing exposes the cultural heritage and historical buildings in Tripoli to the danger of destruction, calling on the Security Council to assume its responsibilities to deter and condemn the aggression against Tripoli.

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Politics

Several prisoners set free in anticipation of a Covid-19 outbreak



Around 20 prisoners were released from the Jadayida Reform and Rehabilitation Institution, on Monday, after completing their legal procedures.

The institution explained on its Facebook page that all inmates were released upon permission from the Public Prosecution Office.

The Ministry of Justice recently said it was studying the possibility of reducing the number of prisoners, in anticipation of the infiltration of the Covid-19 into the country.

Libya ready to offer large-scale assistance to Tunisia amid Coronavirus outbreak

Politics



The Head of the Libyan Presidential Council Fayeze Al-Sarraj has talked to the Tunisian President Kais Saied on the phone and discussed the preventive measures taken by the two countries against the spread of Coronavirus.

The phone call on Tuesday morning saw the two review the health conditions in Libya and Tunisia as Al-Sarraj said Libyans were in total solidarity with Tunisians against this pandemic.

Al-Sarraj also talked about more cooperation between the two countries, saying Libya is ready to offer all of its capabilities to the Tunisian people to help them overcome this crisis.

Al-Sarraj said a delegation from the Libyan Health Ministry would visit Tunisia to see what Libya could provide to its neighboring country.

Meanwhile, health Tunisian President hailed the initiative made by Al-Sarraj, wishing Libyans safety and stability amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis that is caused by the spread of Coronavirus around the world.

Politics

China offers to give Libya's Health Ministry Coronavirus training program

Briefing & Exchanges on China's COVID-19 Experiences

INSIGHT COVID-19 Global Public Health Management Training Program

 Dr. Zhong Nanshan Leader of China's COVID-19 Expert Team Renowned Epidemiologist & Pulmonologist	 Dr. Li Lanjuan Leader of China's COVID-19 Expert Team Renowned Epidemiologist & Hepatologist	 Dr. Qiao Jie President of Peking University No.3 Hospital Leader of The Hospital's Aiding Team to Wuhan
 Dr. Zhu Chouwen Vice President of Zhongshan Hospital Leader of The Hospital's Aiding Team to Wuhan	 Dr. Zhang Junhua Director General, Health Human Resources Development Center of China National Health Commission	

The Libyan Health Ministry said the Chinese Health Ministry had offered to give training to the Libyan medical cadres in tackling the possible outbreak of Coronavirus.

The Health Ministry said on Monday that the Libyan Foreign Ministry had informed it of the offer that includes an international training program to familiarize Libyan medical specialists with the protocols China used in diagnosing and treating COVID-19 cases.

The training program is an online one, according to the Ministry, which added that the training would tackle all issues regarding the pandemic symptoms.

The Chinese training program is made up of specialists medic in respiratory diseases, pandemics, kidney diseases, and a team of specialists in Coronavirus treatment as well as the Director of Beijing University Hospital and Head of support and assistance in Wuhan, among others.

The Ministry has informed the Chinese counterpart that it had made a request to the Libyan National Center for Disease Control to nominate specialists for the training program.

Meanwhile, the Head of the Presidential Council Fayeze Al-Sarraj informed China's President of Libya's request to use the assistance of Chinese medics to thwart an outbreak of Coronavirus in the country.



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Economy

Libya's Central Bank: State employees' January and February salaries in payment



The Central Bank of Libya (CBL) has said that salaries of state employees for January and February are now being paid while March salaries are in the process.

In a letter by the governor of the CBL Al-Siddiq Al-Kabir to the Head of the Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj on Tuesday, the governor said they had approved letters of credit for the medical supply apparatus as well as the fuel imports' orders.

"The CBL awaits Presidential Council's orders of increasing fees on foreign currency purchase transactions in order to reopen the transactions, as per the previous meetings between CBL and Presidential Council officials." Al-Kabir said.

He said there is no need to use Coronavirus preventive measures as an excuse for low performance by state sovereign institutions, saying all institutions should unify efforts at this critical time.

Meanwhile, Al-Sarraj called on Monday on Al-Kabir to release the salaries of state employees for January, February and March and to open the letters of credit system for foods and health materials' imports.

The Presidential Council called on the CBL to urgently implement the 2020 financial arrangements as approved earlier last month, amid other procedures that help the country implement its emergency plan amid the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Economy

Chamber of Commerce calls on store owners not to use coronavirus to price-gouge and extort



The Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture called on Wednesday, on all commercial businesses; in particular, food and medical stores not to hoard goods or manipulate the prices of products in light of the repercussions of the coronavirus crisis.

"There is an ample amount of products in storage that meets the market's demand for a period exceeding two months," the chamber stated.

It ensured consumers that measures have been put into place to ensure the flow of supplies into the local market, urging them not to be dragged behind rumors.

Economy

Shipping operations at Misrata Free Zone continue as normal



The Misrata Free Zone Port Administration has confirmed that all shipping operations at the port are as normal and uninterrupted by the tightening of restriction measures due to the risk of the Coronavirus epidemic.

The Administration also noted that they were confident that all shipping agents and investors could continue their trade without any delays or restrictions through working with their departments.

It added that the Minister for Transport has excluded the closure of air cargo and sea ports for the transport of freight and fuel.

Education

Education Ministry launches distance-teaching programs due to COVID-19 concerns



The Ministry of Education has launched a distance-learning program by broadcasting TV lessons for various stages of schooling in cooperation local TV stations.

The step is part of the ministry's efforts to find alternatives to in-person lessons due to COVID-19 concerns.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Adel Juma, said that the ministry is in constant communication with all organizations related to this field, in particular the UNESCO.

"UNESCO has cooperated with a number of international institutions among them Google, which provides several platforms that are used throughout the world in this regard," the education ministry official explained.

He encouraged students to follow up on these lessons, which will cover all school curricula in various stages of education, indicating that students will be able to ask questions, in order to be answered in a later session.

Light, life, and peace in Libya

Opinions

By Gerardo Noto, Resident Representative, UNDP Libya

Conflict, divisions and war have affected Libya for many years. International actors and the United Nations have certainly not stood idly by. They have committed to support Libyans as they build a peaceful, inclusive state. The recent Berlin Summit has opened a new window of opportunity engaging international actors and the UN to support Libyans to build a peaceful and inclusive state. Conditions for a guaranteed ceasefire, an effective arms embargo, and inclusive economic, political, security, human rights and international humanitarian law tracks. Now International actors must honor their commitments in the Berlin Communique, and people in Libya must engage in real dialogue to build peace and unified state institutions for the benefit of all.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya and UNDP, as well as other UN agencies, have been present all this time. UNDP has supported public institutions, local governments, civil society and communities to continue building up basis for inclusive development that will only be possible with a sustained peace.

Our programme, with the support of the international community and the Government of Libya, invested US\$50 million in 2019 with the aim of achieving stabilization, resilience and recovery and contributing to conflict management and social cohesion.

Throughout the country, wherever help is needed

We are working from Tripoli to Benghazi and Sebha, from Bani Walid to Kufra and Ghat, namely in the west, east and south. We are supporting 40 municipalities and plan to add 20 more in all regions where approximately 75 percent of people live.

I have directly witnessed the impact of our contribution in the township of Tawergha. As a result of the conflict, 40,000 residents were forced to leave their homes becoming displaced for more than seven years. The UN and others worked for several years with Misratans and Tawerghans to build reconciliation. In 2018, they reached an agreement to allow their safe return.

Since I arrived in Libya in March 2019, I recognized the reconciliation process between Tawergha and Misrata people as a paradigmatic peacebuilding case.

I decided to personally push for contributing to safe returns. Despite security restraints, I was able to visit both towns in August. I talked to leaders and tried to facilitate understanding. They welcomed my visit and shared their strong commitment to rebuilding their communities. I witnessed also the commitment of the Government of Libya to help people from Tawergha by supporting the reconstruction of key infrastructure.

I also visited the Mental Health and Psycho-social Support centre in Tommina, a town between the two cities, that UNDP helped to establish with Italian Cooperation support. People from Tawergha and Misrata were even afraid to sit down together, now in the centre women from both cities are studying together and even creating joint businesses and social initiatives. I heard women heartbreaking stories of abuse and amazing stories of recovery.

I returned in early December, and was able to confirm how many more families have returned, how many more students are learning in the only school so far in the township and how key infrastructure are being rehabilitated by the Government of Libya and the people from Tawergha, the public clinic and the hospital, and electrical grid. Security is being provided by the national police with new facilities and equipment.

Let there be light

In UNDP, we were eager to help and immediately we set about the task of consulting with the community on which were their most urgent needs.

We provided an ambulance for the clinic and we are working on rehabilitating three schools and providing the existing school with a mobile computer lab powered by solar energy. Now all students can go online, which will reduce inequalities.

Something that many may see as a small step have changed lives and is a call for those who are yet to come. One of the best-received projects was the installation of solar lights at the main entrance road of the township.

I felt touched reading people's comments on the Facebook page of the Chair of the Tawergha-Misrata reconciliation committee, widely welcoming the solar streetlights, and praising our Stabilization Facility for Libya. These lights are bringing a sense of security to an area, and are also hope for a bright future.

Returning life to communities

Stabilization and resilience are contributing to shape the conditions for peace. We are looking with hope, and actively supporting together with UNSMIL and others in the UN family, the dialogue tracks set by the Berlin Process. We know the challenges are big, but so is the will and commitment of Libyans.

As I have seen in Tawergha, the lights and other support we are providing are helping Libyans to return life to their communities. In this transition period, international support and expertise continues to be essential, to contribute to effectiveness, transparency and building of modern and inclusive institutions.

We are here to contribute to peace that will unleash the creative power of Libyan society and move towards the inclusive and sustainable development that the country deserves.

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
Map of the Coronavirus in the Arab World and Eastern Mediterranean region

World Health Organization REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Eastern Mediterranean	COVID-19 Daily Update 24 March 2020 18:00 GMT+2		
	Cumulative no* of confirmed cases	Cumulative no* of recovered cases	Cumulative no* of deaths
Afghanistan	42	1	1
Bahrain	390	177	3
Djibouti	3		
Egypt	366	68	19
Islamic Republic of Iran	24811	8931	1934
Iraq	316	75	27
Jordan	127	1	
Kuwait	191	39	
Lebanon	304	8	4
Libya	-		
Morocco	143	5	4
Oman	84	17	
Pakistan	887	6	6
Occupied Palestinian Territory	60	17	
Qatar	501	37	
Saudi Arabia	767	28	1
Somalia	1		
Sudan	3		1
Syrian Arab Republic	1		
Tunisia	114	1	3
United Arab Emirates	248	45	2
Yemen	-		
TOTAL (*as per information shared by ministries of health)	29359	9456	2005

Health
WHO: coronavirus testing in Libya is conducted properly



The World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed that the coronavirus testing carried out in the "Marjai" laboratory of the National Center for Disease Control in Tripoli is being conducted properly.

The organization said upon an inspection visit to the laboratory on Thursday, that the technicians at the "Marjai" laboratory are well trained to carry out such tests, according to the information office of the National Center for Disease Control.

Health
Health ministry receives high-tech laboratory device to diagnose Covid-19



Minister of Health, Ahmed bin Omar has confirmed that the ministry had imported 150 ventilator, as part of its measures to counter the threat of corona's infiltration into Libya.

Speaking earlier yesterday, Omar clarified that the ministry is in the process of establishing centers in a number of regions to house any suspected cases of coronavirus.

He indicated that medical teams in Libya are undergoing training in cooperation with international organizations prior to their deployment to the centers dedicated to Covid-19 patients.

Health
Libyan Pharmacists Association: Anti-malaria drug "Plaquenil" showed promising results for Covid-19 patients in France

The French pharmaceutical company "Sanofi" has announced that the "Plaquenil" drug produced by the company for malaria treatment has shown promising results in treating Covid-19 patients, according to Libyan Pharmacists Association Facebook page.



"The anti-malarial drug Plaquenil is made up of hydroxychloroquine molecules used to treat malaria caused by mosquito bites, in addition to autoimmune diseases like lupus or rheumatoid arthritis," Libyan Pharmacists Association explained.

In this context, an AFP official revealed that studies on patients with coronavirus using Plaquenil had come out promising, adding that the company is ready to offer millions of doses of Plaquenil, sufficient to treat 300,000 COVID-19 patients as a first stage.

This Plaquenil drug is in good supply and affordable in many Arab countries, as it is has been used for decades for treating malaria cases, according to the Libyan Pharmacists Association.

Health
Libya imports additional ventilators against possible COVID-19 outbreak



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WHEN TO USE A MASK

For healthy people wear a mask **only if you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection**

Wear a mask, **if you are coughing or sneezing**

Masks are effective only when used in **combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water**

If you wear a mask then you **must know how to use it and dispose of it properly**



Culture

Peace Festival wraps up in palm oasis of Edri



The Peace Festival hosted by the natural desert palm oasis of "Edri" in Barak Shati region, wrapped up Tuesday, with diverse forms of art and cultural events presented by talented people who gave the festival what it wants.

The festival provided a visually-striking look at the desert culture and the myriad dance forms and folklore shows for which the region is known.

The event was marked with broad attendants, many of whom were wearing masks due to the coronavirus scare.

The displays took the guests on a journey through the history and diverse culture of the region, represented through dancing, folk songs, poetry, costumes, food, and crafting, creating an awe-inspiring experience they will remember for years to come.

Moreover, the festival featured a painting exhibition organized by artists and enthusiasts. Also new to such festivals, a special exhibition showcasing banners displaying traditional proverbs to ensure the preservation of these popular sayings within the young generation.

Life

Authorities take further steps to restore normal conditions in Tawergha



Since the return of Tawergha's IDPs, following the agreement signed with Misurata, officials have taken steps to restore normal social life in the town, with some utility services back in operation, schools reopened, and the town is showing signs of revival.

In this context, maintenance work had begun in Tawergha's court and prosecution premise under the supervision of the planning department of the Ministry of Justice.

According to the ministry, the judicial facilities will undergo a major overhaul with a functional approach.

"The project comes as part of the ministry's efforts to develop the infrastructure of its institutions, and to provide an appropriate environment for the judicial staff," the ministry explained on its Facebook page.

It is noteworthy that the dispute between the two cities goes back to 2011 when Tawergha lined-up with Gaddafi's forces against the revolutionaries who toppled Gaddafi's regime.

In 2018, the two parties held direct talks away from external interference. The negotiations culminated in June of the same year with an agreement that ended the suffering and displacement of around 30,000 people from Tawergha.

Sport

National football team cancels training camp in Tunisia due to coronavirus



The coronavirus chaos around the world has cast a shadow over sporting events all over the world, and Libya was no exception.

In this regard, the national football team management has announced the suspension of the team's camp in Tunisia due to the repercussions of the epidemic. This came after the Confederation of African Football announced the postponement of the third and fourth rounds of the African Cup qualifiers.

The team is expected to arrive in Tripoli by road, as Libya suspended all international flights to and from the country.

Life

Derna Scouts launch sterilizing campaign to prevent COVID 19 outbreak



The Scout Movement of Derna launched a campaign on Saturday to cleanse and sterilize public places in the wake of coronavirus scare.

"The campaign will target public places and government facilities, in addition to mosques and other gathering places," the movement said on Facebook.

The scouts posted images on their Facebook account during their work, showing the volunteers sterilizing grocery stores, parks, Mosques, and etc., expressing their willingness to subordinate themselves fully to the homeland and safeguard public health, according to their statement.

The Presidential Council has approved a number of measures to combat the threat of COVID 19 outbreak, including suspending classes and closing the country's outlets, in addition to delaying cultural and sports activities.

weather

TRIPOLI WEATHER FORECAST



DAY		DESCRIPTION	HIGH / LOW	PRECIP	WIND	HUMIDITY
FRI MAR 27		Mostly Sunny	20°/10°	10%	WSW 24 km/h	43%
SAT MAR 28		Sunny	19°/12°	10%	WNW 23 km/h	57%
SUN MAR 29		Mostly Sunny	22°/15°	0%	E 17 km/h	53%
MON MAR 30		Partly Cloudy	24°/15°	10%	SE 18 km/h	50%
TUE MAR 31		Mostly Sunny	24°/16°	10%	SSE 16 km/h	53%
WED APR 1		Partly Cloudy	25°/16°	10%	WSW 17 km/h	48%
THU APR 2		Partly Cloudy	22°/15°	10%	NW 19 km/h	56%

Photo of the Week : The Libyan Desert



Features

Libya's traditional tea with foam



In the past few years, the tea set known as "Alla" was part of the landscape of the Libyan house, either you live in a villa or a small flat, or whether you're a family of two, or your home is packed up with 10, you have to make space for the Alla in your living room.

Libyans have known tea since the nineteenth century, but back then, it was only limited to the Pasha, his family, and his guests. With time, Libyans developed their own way of presentation and "Shahi al-Alla" traditional Libyan tea became the thing that never absence any family gathering.

The Alla is a traditional set of tea utensils, might be made of stainless steel or other kind of metal, coloured and decorated from the outside in addition to other items that include three other containers in different sizes.

The large container is for the sugar, the middle is for tea, while the smallest one is for the incense, which Libyan mums like to finish with, in every family session.

The accessories of Alla form an integral part of the bride preparations too; mothers of the brides are very keen on choosing the best type of bedspreads, mattress and the cover of the stove. There is a wide range to choose from, some are made with Crochet and some are Embroidery on canvas, the style changes from time to time according to fashion.

Shahi al-Alla is a characteristic of generosity and warm welcome. The time it takes and the way it's made gives the guest a wide berth, and makes him feel as not to be in a hurry.

It is a strong drink, boiled on low heat and served in three courses; the third course is presented with roasted almonds or peanuts along with mint leaves or other herbs for flavour.

In the recent past, it was rude to present tea in the European style. It was regarded as a message for the visitor to not stay for long.

Mastering Shahi al-Alla needs a lot of skill and practice, pouring tea from the steel mug to the teapot and vice versa to form that white smooth foam and without spilling any of it on the rest of the tea set is quite challenging, especially if you're doing this in front of a critical audience! The last thing a lady would want is to end up being the talk of the women's gossip in the neighbourhood!

It is not sure how or who came up with the idea of the foam, which characterizes the Libyan tea, but some say it derives its origins from the desert society where the foam is formed to prevent any sand or dirt going into your glass. The dirt will comment in the foam on the top, allowing you to sip a nice clean cup of tea.

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