

Politics

Sarraj announces end of hostilities in Libya



Chairman of Presidential Council, Fayeze Sarraj, has given orders for the Libyan army forces under the Government of National Accord to implement an immediate ceasefire and end all hostilities in Libya.

In his new initiative to end the Libyan crisis, Sarraj said the immediate ceasefire would mean demilitarizing the city of Sirte and Jufra region while police forces of both sides to the conflict set up the security arrangements to secure both areas.

"The final goal of the ceasefire is to restore full sovereignty over the Libyan soil and expel foreign forces and mercenaries," Sarraj indicated.

He called for resumption of oil production and export through Tripoli-based National Oil Corporation (NOC) while revenues go to a special bank account for NOC to be distributed fairly according to a political settlement based on Berlin Conference outcomes.

Sarraj also called for presidential and parliamentary elections next March.

It's not known whether warlord Haftar and his foreign allies would accept the initiative.

Sarraj's initiative came two days after the declaration of warlord Haftar's forces that they will not give up an inch of Sirte and Jufra.

Haftar's spokesperson Al-Mismari said Wednesday that their forces won't retreat from Sirte and its surroundings and won't surrender the city to "invaders", a statement that seems to respond to international calls, especially US and Germany, to demilitarize Sirte and Jufra for a political solution in the country.

Politics

Anti-corruption protests in Tripoli, Misurata and Sabha



Hundreds of protesters marched this week at the Martyrs Square in Tripoli to protest the endemic corruption in the state, demanding accountability and the dismissal of those responsible.

At the same time, massive demonstrations took place in Misurata and

Sabha, in support of the demands of those in Tripoli, stressing the need to punish the corrupt and improve living conditions.

The crowd of demonstrators in Tripoli raised banners calling for a referendum on the constitution and an end to the transitional stages.

The slogans raised included demands for the dismantling of the country's ruling class and holding legislative and presidential elections on a constitutional basis.

However, riots broke out at the end of the demonstration in Tripoli as a group described to be "thugs" took advantage of the gathering and began chanting slogans in support of the former Gaddafi's regime.

They reportedly attacked journalists of the Libyan Al-Ahrar TV channel, while videos and images posted on social media showed them destroying public and private property.

In light of this shift in events, clashes took place between security men and some armed rioters, which resulted in the injury of at least one person, while a source close to the Tripoli Protection Force has confirmed the arrest of some rioters on the background of the violent acts that took place yesterday.

Politics

Mitig, Sayala discuss latest Libya developments in Malta



The member of the Libyan Presidential Council Ahmed Mitig and the Foreign Minister of the Government of National Accord Mohammed Sayala discussed with Malta's Foreign Minister Evarist Bartolo the latest developments in Libya, especially the ceasefire agreement by Presidential Council and House of Representatives' leaders.

The two Libyan officials met also with the Maltese President George Vella and discussed the situation in Libya and reiterated the important role of the National Oil Corporation and Central Bank in ensuring a stable economy for all Libyans.

The Maltese President reiterated his country's support for a Libyan political solution, saying resuming negotiations under the auspices of the UN and as per Berlin conference is the best way out for Libya.

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Politics

GNA says no place for war criminals in upcoming political process



The Head of the Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj has reiterated the need to base the resumption of the political process in Libya on the right foundations excluding anyone who was part of shedding the blood of Libyans.

In a meeting on Saturday for the Presidential Council members, Al-Sarraj added that presidential and parliamentary elections aim to take Libya into a lasting stability and security phase.

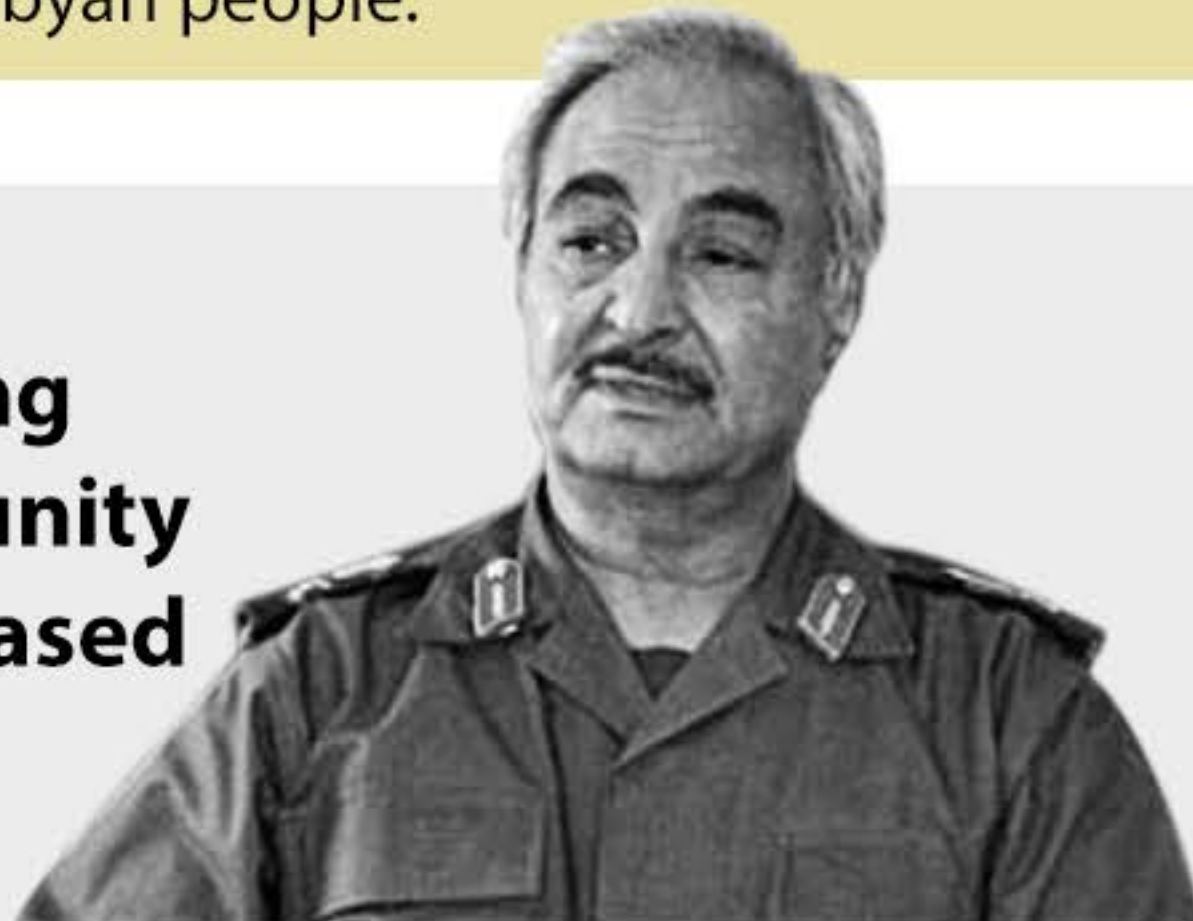
The meeting went over the latest developments in the country and the international as well as the regional reactions to the latest ceasefire announcement.

The Presidential Council members stressed that Libya will always be a civilian state and that the military rule will never be an option, saying they will do all it takes to honor the sacrifices of the martyrs.

The meeting also saw reiteration on the desire to see a positive role by Egypt in Libya in the upcoming stage, hailing the roles of Turkey and Qatar in their support for the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan people.

Politics

AP: Haftar tries using head-of-state immunity scam to avoid US-based lawsuits



Khalifa Haftar, who previously lived for decades in Virginia, has said he deserves immunity from a pair of civil lawsuits in the US accusing him of atrocities and indiscriminate killings because he is Libya's head of state, the Associated Press reported.

Family members who say their loved ones were killed or tortured by Khalifa Hifter's forces have filed two separate lawsuits against him in federal court in Alexandria. The lawsuits seek millions of dollars in damages that could be recovered from property Haftar, a dual US and Libyan citizen, and his family still own throughout northern Virginia.

The report said that Haftar did not initially respond to the lawsuits in Virginia, and a magistrate in one of the cases had recommended that the plaintiffs be awarded a default judgment.

"But earlier this month, lawyers representing Haftar sent a letter to the judge saying he wanted to defend himself. Haftar's opponents who support the lawsuits against him say he changed tactics in the lawsuit after suffering military setbacks that might at some point force him to flee Libya." The report adds.

In court motions filed Thursday, Haftar's lawyers said he "merits head-of-state status that would render him immune from civil suit under US law."

"The US actually supports the United Nations-backed government that has been fighting Haftar. But Haftar's lawyers point to an April 2019 phone call President Donald Trump placed to Haftar in which Trump reportedly praised him for his efforts to fight terrorism." The Associated Press added.

Faisal Gill, a lawyer for plaintiffs in one of the lawsuits, rejected the notion that Haftar deserved a head-of-state immunity, saying an off-hand comment from President Trump is not official US policy.

Haftar has made other arguments seeking dismissal of the suits, including claims that he has not been properly served notice of the lawsuit and that the issues delve into a "political question" which courts are unsuited to resolve.

Haftar's lawyers also said the allegations of indiscriminate killing and torture are not valid and that the US law designed to protect torture victims is "not intended to create liability for collateral civilian casualties resulting from legitimate military operations undertaken in a civil war."

A hearing on the motions to dismiss is scheduled for September 15 in Alexandria, according to the Associated Press.

Politics

Yemeni Sources: UAE recruiting dozens of Yemenis to fight alongside Haftar



Security Sources from Yemen informed the Al-Jazeera news agency, that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has recruited dozens of Yemenis to participate in the conflict in Libya, to fight against the forces of the Government of National Accord (GNA).

The same sources indicated that the Yemenis, recruited to fight for Haftar received professional training at the Belhaj Base in southern Yemen and the UAE's Assab Base in Eritrea and according to reliable Yemeni security sources, the local authorities in Yemen, including the Presidency, had full knowledge regarding the recruitment process, however, did not act on the information.

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Economy

Shakshak discusses the return of Turkish companies to Libya



Libya's Audit Bureau head, Khaled Shakshak, has visited Istanbul to discuss the suspended Turkish projects in Libya.

The talks attended by Libya's Minister of Finance, Faraj Abu Matari, and Consul General in Turkey, Fathi Al-Sharif, reviewed the obstacles to the return of Turkish companies and ways to get them back functioning as soon as possible.

The Audit Bureau described the meetings as positive, after Turkish partners showed their willingness to return to Libya and complete the stalled projects, provided clearing up pending issues between Turkish firms and Libyan employers.

Turkish "ENKA" discussed its prior receivables with the GECOL and signed an agreement to complete work on several projects, top of which, the West Tripoli Station, Misurata Station, and the Ubari Station.

In this context, Turkish Çalik Energy firm has also expressed its readiness to work in Libya, after resolving ongoing issues with the GECOL. The company will commence work on the East Tripoli project and complete the maintenance of the Al-Khums plant, which has been out of service for two years, according to the Audit Bureau information office.

Moreover, the AKSA Power Generation Company expressed its desire to contribute to the developing process in Libya, stressing it is poised to implement projects that would help meet Libya's needs. For his part, Shakshak stressed that priority would be given to those who supported Libya during these difficult times, noting that at present, the Audit Bureau will only grant approvals to companies that have agreed to work in Libya during these challenging times.

Economy

Number of registered job seekers in Libya exceeds 125,000



The Director of the Information and Documentation Center at the Ministry of Labor and Rehabilitation, Masoud Gadaffi said that the amount of job seekers registered on the system is 126,000, of whom, approximately 72,000 are from the western region.

Gadaffi indicated that the registered number is unrealistic, citing a lack of data for job seekers at Labor Offices nationwide, particularly those located in the eastern region, but also to the reluctance of job seekers themselves to register, due to lack of job opportunities.

Economy

CBL head: ABC group recorded losses of 67 million USD



The Arab Banking Corporation ABC has recorded a net loss of 67 million USD, said the CBL head and CEO of the ABC group, Saddek Elkaber, on Saturday.

Elkaber indicated that these losses were derived from unnatural circumstances, as a result of factoring substantial allocations for future credit losses, a large amount of it was related to a massive fraud operated by one customer.

However, the CBL head emphasized that despite the losses suffered by the bank, its general balance sheet and operations showed its great capabilities to deal with these circumstances, noting that its capital and liquidity levels remained very high, as its credit rating is still at the level of investment grade.

Economy

Germany establishes 0.5 million euro demining project in Tripoli



The German government has established a demining project worth 0.5 million euro, aimed at clearing the landmines, planted by Haftar's militias in Tripoli.

The project was inaugurated by German Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas, during his recent visit to the capital Tripoli, according to the German Ambassador to Libya, Oliver Owczar.

"The Humanitarian Demining will address one of the most urgent needs in Libya," German Ambassador tweeted. He explained that the project will demine contaminated areas in southern Tripoli, with the assistance of young Libya men, who have been trained for this task.

Meanwhile, the Geneva-based Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, confirmed in its recent report this month that the landmines southern Tripoli have killed or injured about 160 persons, including mine-clearance workers. It indicated that the types of landmines used were designed to kill or cause permanent, catastrophic disabilities.

Opinions

Libya belongs to Libyans!

By **Selçuk Türkyilmaz**, Columnist

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Credit: This article was first published by Yani Safak on August 20, 2020



The statement, "Libya belongs to Libyans," made by our National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar contained a claim, while it also emphasized a new style of politics for the future. It does not hurt to refer to history to reveal the meaning of the statement. The statement, which was the slogan of a new struggle against the French and British hegemony in Egypt in the 1880s, also guided the way for the anti-colonialism activities that flared up in the early 20th century. Egypt's independence became the slogan against British dominance. There have been those who explain the activity in the 1880s with anti-Ottoman sentiment, however, Egyptians were in trouble with European bankers during the debt crisis that reached intolerable heights in the 1870s. Thus, those who took seriously the slogan "Egypt belongs to Egyptians" were the British, and they invaded Egypt to suppress the movement.

At the time the slogan "Egypt belongs to Egyptians" emerged, Europeans had divided all of Africa among themselves. Africa was being divided, and though it was invaded in 1798 by France, it was the British who established sovereignty in Egypt at the end of the 19th century. The idea that Egypt belongs to Egyptians was guidance for Egyptians in the 1920s as well, however, Gamal Abdel Nasser's term had to start in order for it to reach its peak. The idea reached a fever pitch during the nationalization process of the Canal. Events that erupted against the British and French signified the start of a new period in the Middle East. The U.S. had shown presence as a global power. Though it is said the idea that Egypt belongs to Egyptians was successful during this period, it did not mean the Egyptian public gained power. The gap between the executive class and the people increasingly grew. The new political structure that formed under the influence of the U.S. was also established over the elites' hegemony. While it was strongly emphasized once again through the Arab Spring that Egypt belongs to Egyptians, they showed with the military coup that public activities would not be permitted. Though it was the bearer of Arab nationalism during one period, Egypt withdrew into its shell towards the late 1970s. This meant disassociation from the ideology that encompassed the whole Arab region.

Egypt was the only country that had the potential to lead an idea that could include the whole Arab region. There was no other country, including Gulf countries, that held the promise of a unified Arab region promise. However, Gulf countries and Egypt jumping forward when the success rate of public ideologies in Libya was revealed with Turkey's support is quite meaningful. It can be said that these countries, which started to imply that they are acting in the name of Arab nationalism, are concerned about Libya's success. It is clear that countries, whose authority over even their own tangible assets is limited, will not take action to seize Libya's fortunes. Once it became clear that the anti-Turkey ideas, which were strengthened with mandate governments' propaganda, are baseless, they tried to form a new front. There is no other reason why Gulf countries are prioritizing anti-Turkey sentiment. They must have thought that the success of a form of government, despite having no dependency relations with Europe and the U.S., will lead to the questioning of their existence.

Akar's statement, "Libya belongs to Libyans," points to a new idea in our near region. It should be noted that this statement, which indicates sovereignty for Libyans, corresponds to a new government understanding in the modern sense. While this statement excludes general ideas such as Arab nationalism, traditional structures are also left in the past. When this is discussed within the context of the ideas that developed after the French Revolution, it is clear that we are talking about a new idea for Libya. The real emphasis of the statement is to Libyans' sovereignty. We had previously noted that Europeans divided the entire African continent among themselves in the 1880s. From then onward, France, the U.K., and Italy tried to establish sovereignty over Libya. Italy invaded Libya with the U.K.'s support, while the process that concluded with the War of Independence started for us. Today, imperialist forces, primarily France, want to seize Libya's wealth all over again. It is obvious this understanding disregards Libyans. Akar's statement reveals a more powerful meaning within this context. It is also a declaration that the colonial period is in the rearview mirror for Libya.

We can talk about the new ideas that are spreading across our near region. This signals a new circumstance. It is clear that we cannot possibly understand this period with the parameters of the 21st century.

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

Health Services Office of the Tripoli Municipality appeals to those recovering from COVID-19 to donate blood



The Director of the Health Services Office in the Tripoli Municipality, Mohamed Abboud, has appealed to the patients who are fully recovered from the Coronavirus to donate blood plasma to other individuals infected with the virus.

Abboud said in a press statement that social events are the main reason for the spread of the disease.

The National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), has announced that each individual, who has recovered from the virus, could contribute to the recovery of at least six people per month, by donating blood plasma for clinical treatment through transfusion to infected patients.

Health

Turkey delivers three intensive care type ventilators to Libya amid Covid-19 spread



Turkey has handed three intensive care type ventilators to the Ministry of Health of the Libyan Government of National Accord of Libya, in what it has described as a sign of cooperation and solidarity in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, according to its embassy in Libya.

The Turkish embassy said the respiratory devices manufactured in Turkey were delivered by Turkish Ambassador Serhat Aksent to the Director of Administration and Financial Affairs of the Ministry of Health of the GNA, Fawzi Awnis.

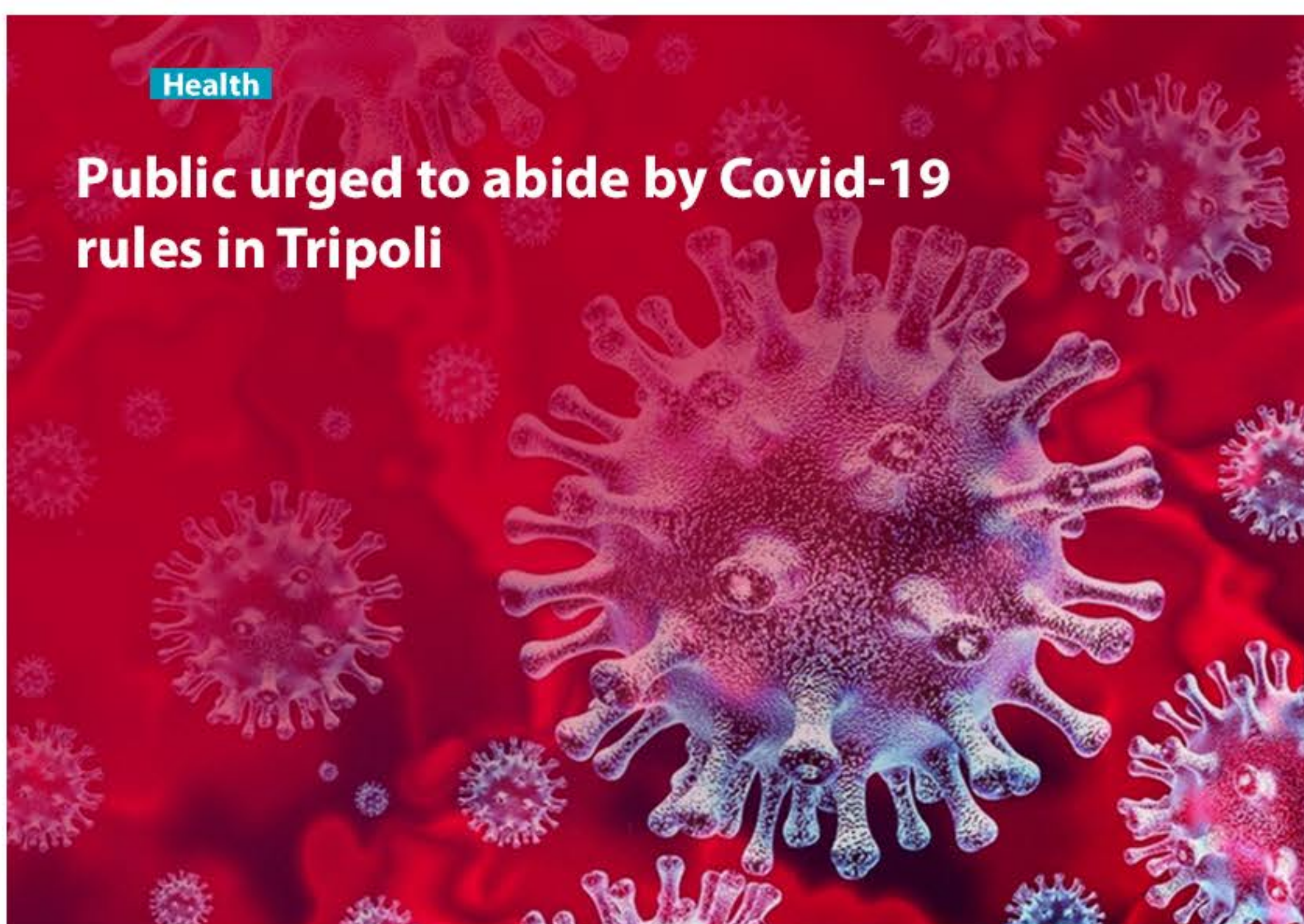
In support of the fight against COVID-19, Turkey previously sent two dispatches of medical equipment to Libya, the first delivered on 11 April and the second on 14 May 2020.

Additionally, on June 2nd 2020, Turkey delivered 1000 packages of food and 1000 packages of medical and sanitary material through Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) Tripoli Program Office to be distributed to the people and families in particular who have been displaced due to the attacks on Tripoli.

Meanwhile, Libya has so far recorded 9068 Covid-19 cases after registering 489 new coronavirus positive cases on Tuesday.

Health

Public urged to abide by Covid-19 rules in Tripoli



The Municipality of Central Tripoli urged all members of society, to adhere resolutely to all measures put in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus, after several neighborhoods in Tripoli witnessed a sudden spike in infections recently.

Areas of Sidi Khalifa, Zawiya Street, Bin Ashour, and Zawayat al-Dahmani witnessed a surge in Covid-19 cases during the past few days, says the municipality.

"People must abide by basic precautions, including disinfection, washing hands, wearing masks in public and social distancing," a statement by the municipality said on Facebook.

It also warned against gatherings, which represent a major cause of transmitting infections, emphasizing the importance of restricting customs to the limit under the current exceptional circumstances.

"There will be no wedding festivals or funeral gatherings, congratulations and condolence could be offered via the telephone or online services," the statement added.

Health

Man regains hearing after successful operation in Tripoli



A member of the Advisory Committee set up to confront the Coronavirus pandemic, Dr. Ali Al-Muqadami, said that the epidemiological situation in Libya remains at the fourth stage, which is the horizontal transmission stage in the nation, considered to be extremely dangerous for the Libyan population.

Al-Muqadami added in a press statement on Monday that most children do not show symptoms straight away; however they may carry and transmit the infection to many people, as the pathological symptoms differ from one individual to another.

He also called on all citizens to fully adhere to preventive measures, social distancing and to maintain strict personal hygiene at all times.

Education

Education Ministry: Anti-Coronavirus Scientific Committee hails return of study next Saturday



The Libyan Education Ministry said the Anti-Coronavirus Scientific Committee has welcomed the return of study in secondary schools scheduled for next Saturday as per the precautionary measures against Covid-19.

The committee sent a letter to the Education Minister Mohammed Emmari, hailing the return of study as per a timeline placed by the ministry given the serious stage of coronavirus pandemic that Libya has been going through.

It said the execution of the study return timeline was connected to the readiness of education institutions to implement anti-coronavirus measures, referring to its mid-August meeting with deputy minister of education in which it called for intensive examination period for secondary school students.

Primary schools to resume study on September 12, while secondary school students will resume study on August 29, while the final exams of the secondary schools will be on October 03 to 15, according to the education ministry.



Science

AU virtual meeting on science and technology role in fighting Covid-19

African Education Ministers and experts, including Libya's Minister of Education, Mohamed Amari Zayed, discussed the role of science and technology in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa.

This came during the virtual African Union (AU) meeting devoted to sharing experiences and best practices on national science, technology, and innovation in response to Covid-19 Pandemic.

Discussions focused on the development of a Covid-19 vaccine and the efforts of some African countries in this area.

In his submission, the head of the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) touched on the latest developments and work of countries and international companies to develop safe and effective vaccines against Covid-19 disease, and in this regard, he presented the CDC's strategy in facing the pandemic.

The participants emphasized the importance of fostering Pan-African research cooperation in this field, and to work towards enhancing Africa's ability to harness science, technology, and innovation to defeat the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nature

Acacia trees in Libya face extinction, activists warn



Green activists have voiced concern about the increasing phenomenon of axing the acacia tree, which grows in the southwest of Libya, known as "Al-Widyan" region.

In a long post on its website, the Libyan Wildlife Trust said that the number of acacia trees in Libya is declining rapidly and could face extinction very soon.

It warned that the process is going on in the absence of any action from the relevant authorities and amid lack of public awareness, who do not realize the environmental risks of such acts, and the impact it has on the ecological balance and climate. "Without them, we would lose extraordinary and essential resources that support desert life," the Wildlife Trust said.

The acacia tree which grows in the semi-desert and desert climate is considered one of the perennial trees that are resistant to drought.

Its carob fruit and tender leaves provide high-value food for livestock and camels. It is also a home for countless species, while its leaves and gum is used by local people for curing many diseases.



Community

Sabha's youth demand security and better living conditions

Hundreds of protesters in Sabha, gathered in the city's main square to vent their anger at a political elite they blame for the deteriorating security and living conditions in the region.

The organizers of the protest, who called their move "The Revolution of the Poor", insisted they do not follow any political or military party.

"The term poor meant poor services and security conditions and not financial poverty," says one of the organizers, indicating that the people of the western region are living in harsh circumstances, lacking most basic services and infrastructures.

The crowd of protesters underscored that their "revolution" will continue until their voices are heard and their demands are met. For his part, a member of the Elders and Wise Men Council of Sabha, Youssef Abdel Rahman said that these protests have "stirred up stagnant water".

"The youth have succeeded where the notables, the wise men, and the councils have failed," said the council member, cautioning authorities "if the demands of these young people fall on deaf ears, the peaceful protests might not finish well," as he put it.

Tripoli Weather Forecast



Fri 28	34°/25°		Sunny	0%	ENE 21 km/h
Sat 29	36°/26°		Sunny	0%	E 23 km/h
Sun 30	36°/25°		Sunny	0%	E 23 km/h
Mon 31	33°/24°		Sunny	10%	ENE 25 km/h
Tue 01	31°/24°		Sunny	0%	NNE 19 km/h
Wed 02	34°/26°		Sunny	0%	ENE 20 km/h
Thu 03	35°/25°		Sunny	10%	NE 20 km/h

Photo of the Week: The Gaberoun Lake



Features

Gharyan troglodyte house

The troglodyte cave house is one of the tourist attractions in the mountain city of Gharyan. The house is a cave with several rooms opening into an open courtyard. One house is accessed by descending down a tunneled passageway leading to a large circular pit. The house is decorated in Traditional Berber culture decorations.

These cave houses are reported to have been in existence for hundreds of years, and are still in use to this day.

Gharyan is one of the largest cities in Nafousa Mountain and is best known for its underground cave houses. Incidentally, the 'Ghar' part of this town's name is said to mean 'cave', an indication that these troglodyte dwellings are an important aspect of the city. As the Nafousa Mountain is composed mainly of limestone and marl, it is not too difficult for people to dig into the mountain rock to form their cave houses.

The troglodyte cave houses of Gharyan are reported to have first been made during the 16th century AD by Jewish refugees. In 1510, Tripoli was captured by the Spanish, which caused the Jews living there to flee from the city. Some of them migrated southwards into the towns of the Nafousa Mountain, such as Tigrinna, Banu Abbas, and Gharyan.

In Gharyan, the first Jewish community was established. The new Jewish residents of Gharyan began to build their dwellings in the town by digging into the mountain's soft limestone.

The troglodyte cave houses of Gharyan come in different forms. Some, for example, are simple cave-like homes made by digging horizontally into the slopes of hills. Others are more elaborate, with a network of rooms clustered around a central pit serving as a source of light. These dwellings are produced by digging vertically into the ground, and then forming the adjacent rooms by digging horizontally underground. One of the advantages of such houses over conventional ones situated above ground is that they are kept insulated during the winter, and remain cool during the summer.

These cave dwellings are reported to be hundreds of years old and have been used by many generations. One of these troglodyte dwellings, for instance, is said to have been built in 1666, and has been occupied by the same family for generations. Still, not all of these cave houses have been inhabited for a continuous period of time. For example, the majority of Gharyan's cave houses were abandoned during the 1950s. At that point of time, many Jews had left Gharyan for Israel, whilst others decided to live in houses above the ground. Some of these houses have been left empty, whilst others were turned into storage for goods, or even livestock. During the Libyan Civil War of 2011, many of these dwellings were reused by civilians escaping the shelling.

There are those who are still fighting to keep these traditional dwellings alive. In fact, some are even converting these unique houses into tourist attractions, with the hope that this dying way of life may be preserved for future generations. One man doing so is Al-Arabi Belhaj, who, with his family, decided to open up their underground home to tourists several years ago. Prior to the war in 2011, foreign tourists could sleep in the rooms and eat food cooked by the family for 100 Libyan dinars. Following the war, however, the number of foreign tourists has dropped drastically. Nevertheless, tourists from within the country have come to visit, in order to gain a better understanding of their country's heritage.

In an article from 2013, Belhaj and his family are reported to have made plans to open a hotel by excavating more rooms in their subterranean home. In this way, they would be able to accommodate more tourists, especially foreign ones, which they hope will return to Libya when peace is restored in the country.

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