

Politics

Turkey and Russia resume talks for political solution in Libya



Turkey and Russia will hold two-day talks on Libya and Syria to discuss peaceful solutions and end to hostilities, the Turkish Foreign Ministry has announced.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry said Ambassador and Deputy Minister Sedat Önal, accompanied by an inter-agency delegation, visited Moscow on August 31 and will remain through September 01, to discuss regional developments, in particular Libya and Syria, with their Russian counterparts.

The Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin is expected to lead the Russian delegation, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, the latest consultations between the two countries took place in July in Ankara. The talks over the Libya issues at the time resulted in an idea of creating a joint working group on the war-weary country.

Russian-Turkish talks in Moscow follow a ceasefire announced by the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli and the House of Representatives in Tobruk.

However, it is worth mentioning that Khalifa Haftar and his militias have rejected the ceasefire and said it was just a propaganda for media and that they will continue with their military build-up in and around Sirte and in the Oil Crescent region.

Politics

Libyan Defense Minister makes first formal overseas visit to meet Turkish counterpart



The newly-appointed Defense Minister of the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) Salah Al-Namroush discussed, on his first formal visit outside Libya as a Minister, with the Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar strengthening cooperation in training and development.

Al-Namroush and Akar reiterated Tuesday the need to continue training in military fields as well as in security and consultation activities.

Turkish media reported that Akar stressed support for Libya's unity, integrity and sovereignty, saying Libyans are the only ones who would achieve stability in their country.

Salah Al-Namroush was appointed Sunday as a Defense Minister of the GNA by the Head of the Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj. He was a deputy minister of defense before the appointment. Al-Sarraj also appointed Mohammed Al-Haddad as a new Chief of Staff of the Libyan Army after promoting his military rank.

Politics

New lawsuit against Haftar and the UAE before the ICC



A Palestinian-American lawyer has filed a lawsuit with the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Khalifa Haftar for committing war crimes in Libya.

Lawyer Akram Abu Sharar told the London-based Alquds Alarabi newspaper that he aims to investigate Haftar and verify the accusations against him regarding his commitment to multiple war crimes, especially following the discovery of mass graves in Libya.

"All documents and statements issued by human rights organizations indicate that he has committed, with the help of the UAE, war crimes, especially after the discovery of mass graves in Tarhouna, following his defeat in the city.

Abu Sharar clarified that he hopes this would "trim the UAE's claws, which is using Haftar as a tool to shed more blood", adding "If Haftar is held accountable, the role of the UAE will recede and the bloodshed will stop."

The lawyer pointed out that in addition to this complaint, there are other cases filed against Haftar before the US federal courts in the civil part.

"Being an American citizen, he could face criminal proceedings under the Terrorism Act of 1996." Abu Sharar points out.

He reiterated he will file a lawsuit next week against the UAE before the ICC, explaining that in the case of the Libyan file, a case may be filed against the UAE under the state-to-state assault.

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"Abu Dhabi backed Haftar with weapons and mercenaries and conducted airstrikes against civilians and civilian infrastructure in Libya, as well as government's HQ, Abu Sharara noted, indicating that members of the US Senate and Congress will receive a copy of the case.

He revealed that his next step will be carrying out an investigation, and if crimes are proven to be committed, a preliminary court will be held, and a decision to arrest Haftar will be issued, and therefore the countries that are part of the Rome Convention are obligated to arrest him, as he put it.

"To merely file a lawsuit is important in and of itself, as it will draw attention to Haftar's crimes, then the matter would be left to the court to investigate these crimes, and put questions to the UAE to answer them in front of world public opinion," Abu Sharara stated.

Politics

GNA appoints new Defense Minister, Chief of Staff



The Libyan Presidential Council of the Government of National Accord (GNA) has appointed the current Deputy Minister of Defense, Salah Al-Namroush as a Defense Minister and Mohammed Al-Haddad as the Chief of Staff after promoting him to a Colonel General.

The decision of appointments was posted on the Facebook page of the media office of Al-Sarraj on Saturday after a meeting with Presidential Council members.

The Presidential Council also formed a committee headed by the member Abdelsalam Kajman and to review the expenditure of the Health Ministry in 2019 and 2020.

The committee includes Presidential Council member Ahmed Hamza, Finance Minister Faraj Bumatiri, and Health Insurance Fund Talal Ajaj. It should report results in 15 days.

The Presidential Council also formed a committee tasked with creating job opportunities for the unemployed among youths as per of urgent measures to heal the ailing economy and services.

Politics

Tunisia's top officials agree on launching of initiative to resolve the Libyan crisis



The Speaker of Tunisian Parliament, Rached Ghannouchi said that he concurred with the President of the Tunisian Republic, Kais Saied, for the launching of an initiative to help solve the existing crisis in Libya.

Ghannouchi added that the launching of such an initiative comes by way of assisting the Libyan brothers to end the present crisis and also to develop cooperation between the two countries and the entire region.

He said that Tunisia welcomed the recent declaration of a ceasefire, saying that such a declaration would contribute to restoring confidence between both sides and establishing a comprehensive, long lasting political settlement to the crisis, aimed at reinstating harmony and stability to all areas throughout Libya.

Economy

Government forms specialized committee to hire and train unemployed youth



The Presidential Council (PC) has issued a decision to form a committee to hire and train unemployed young citizens.

This came during the third meeting of the PC, in a series of meetings held over the past four days, chaired by Fayez Al-Sarraj, the Head of the PC.

Also attending the meetings were members of the Council, namely Ahmed Mateeq, Abdelsalam Kajman, Mohamed Amari Zayed and Ahmed Hamza.

The participants discussed urgent means and measures related to the economic situation and the services sector, following up aspects of public spending, according to a statement issued by the Media Office of the PC.

Economy

Losses due to forced closure of oil facilities reach nine billion dollars



The National Oil Corporation (NOC) has estimated the losses of revenues due to forced closure, by Khalifa Haftar's militias of oil installations since January 18, at nine billion dollars.

The NOC said on Friday that the recorded losses were estimated within a time span of 224 days of disruption to production and export operations throughout Libya.

Warlord Haftar has been using oil facilities as a political card after losing his war on Tripoli.

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Economy

Libya, Indonesia discuss economic, trade cooperation



The CEO Deputy of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Tripoli, Naji Abu Halalah has discussed with the Chargé d'Affairs of the Embassy of Indonesia to Libya, Mohammad Amar Ma'ruf, joint cooperation, and development of work programs between the Chamber of Commerce in Tripoli and its counterpart in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Abu Halalah explained to Ma'ruf the work of Libya's chamber of commerce and expressed the desire to open up new spheres of cooperation between the two chambers in order to enhance trade and economic exchange in favor of both countries.

Both sides agreed to further bilateral consultations and to organize exchange visits between delegations in the commercial and economic fields, especially by chambers of commerce and businessmen.

For his part, Ma'ruf confirmed his country's readiness to open areas for communication and work on setting up joint programs between the two countries and the two chambers of commerce.

Economy

Libyan Export Promotion Centre studies exporting fish products to the EU



The Libyan Export Promotion Centre is reviewing granting licenses for exporting Libyan fish products to Europe.

In a statement, the center clarified it had held a series of meetings, to discuss means of developing the fish industry in Libya, to guarantee it fulfills the EU market standards.

An expanded meeting was held at the center's HQ a few days ago, which included officials from the Libyan Center for Marine Biology Research and members of the permanent committee for authorizing institutions to export Libyan seafood.

Members of the permanent committee for granting licenses will determine the testing required by the European Union countries, to accept Libyan fish products exports.

The European Union is by far the world's biggest importer of fish and seafood, making it a preferred investment destination for the country with the longest Mediterranean coastline among African nations.



Al-Sarraj discusses with Turkish firm resumption of suspended projects

The Head of the Presidential Council Fayeze Al-Sarraj held a meeting with a delegation from Turkish firm, Kalyon, to discuss the resumption of infrastructure projects which were suspended over the past years.

Al-Sarraj's media office said the meeting went over the need to resume infrastructure projects both the suspended ones and the urgent, especially in energy, electricity, health and transportation fields.

They also discussed investment cooperation as part of discussions on resuming work by Turkish firms on suspended projects in Libya.

Health

Patients suffering from Coronavirus increase at Benghazi's Al-Hawari Hospital



The Director of Al-Hawari General Hospital in Benghazi, Abdul Rahman Al-Sharif, announced a high volume of stress due to a steep increase in the number of patients being admitted to the hospital with Coronavirus infection.

Al-Sharif said in a media statement that seven cases, presently in the intensive care unit, have been placed on ventilators, whilst 15 others were placed on external oxygen breathing units, stressing that there is no longer any space to accommodate new patients.

He added that the hospital is suffering from problems with electricity supply, along with services such as sanitation, lack of water and other basic needs, noting that the Hospital's Emergency Room is still being inundated with new COVID-19 cases, regardless of the extreme conditions being experienced by the medical staff and patients alike, as he put it.

Opinions

Will Libya's latest ceasefire bring about a lasting political settlement?

By **Ferhat Polat**

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Credit: This article was first published by TRT World Research Centre on August 27, 2020



The agreement between the UN-recognised government in Tripoli and the Tobruk-based legislature to demilitarise Sirte is an important step towards peace but obstacles remain primarily in the form of the renegade warlord, Khalifa Haftar.

Fayez al Sarraj, the prime minister of Libya's UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), and Aguila Saleh, the speaker of a rival Tobruk based parliament in eastern Libya, both recently agreed to a UN plan to pull military forces away from Sirte and the eastern oil crescent, where much of Libya's oil infrastructure is based.

As things stand, these oil terminals and ports are occupied by the warlord Khalifa Haftar, an ostensible ally of the Tobruk entity but who in practice acts independently when it suits him.

The warlord and his self-declared 'Libyan National Army' (LNA) have characteristically dismissed the ceasefire announcement with its spokesman Ahmed Mismari describing the agreement as a "marketing" stunt.

Haftar's actions in the coming days, as well as those of his patrons in the UAE, will be the key issue to watch, as they stand the most to lose from the demilitarisation of the area surrounding Sirte.

The ceasefire call is nevertheless a significant breakthrough and indicates an opportunity for renewed efforts to achieve a political settlement. This is the result of a recent diplomatic push by Germany, Turkey, and the US.

That diplomatic leverage has been made possible thanks to heavy defeats inflicted on the LNA by GNA forces.

Over the last few months, with Turkish support, the internationally recognised government in Tripoli has managed to push Haftar to the borders of the coastal city of Sirte, some 450km east of Tripoli, and al Jufra airbase in central Libya.

Strategic significance of Sirte and al Jufra

Sirte is vital for the UN-backed GNA for two primary reasons. First, the city has great economic importance as a gateway to Libya's oil crescent region. Since January this year, Libya has lost at least \$8bn as a result of Haftar's oil blockade. Oil and natural gas revenues represent almost 90 percent of the government's revenue.

The Libyan people have suffered profoundly as a result, with large-scale electricity, water, and gas cuts. A lack of funds in the government treasury has made it harder for Libya to pay for imports, such as medical supplies, which in turn has made it harder to battle the coronavirus.

This helps to explain recent protests where people in the capital marched last Sunday to voice displeasure about failing public services and constant power cuts.

A ceasefire that succeeds in preventing fighting and resuming oil production is therefore seen as an important development by countries who support opposite sides in the Libyan civil war.

Secondly, taking Sirte would enable the GNA to seize control of the Libyan coastline stretching from the capital in the west to Benghazi to the east.

Al Jufra is another strategically placed asset but in central Libya. The air base has been used as the primary operational hub for Haftar's LNA to advance into western Libya, as well as an effective launch pad for any offensive on Tripoli.

In the past few weeks, Russia has reportedly increased the number of mercenaries it has in the country. Forces from the Wagner group were mobilised to support Haftar's LNA in Sirte in order to protect its economic and political interests in eastern Libya. The military build-up and the transfer of equipment to Sirte is therefore expected to continue despite the ceasefire.

The loss of Sirte and the al Jufra military base, in particular, to GNA Forces would severely hamper the strategic objectives of Haftar's backers in the country. For this reason, any tangible progress taken towards demilitarising Sirte will be the real measure of the ceasefire agreement.

Stephanie Williams, the acting special representative of the United Nations for Libya, called the coordinated announcements a sign of political "courage," adding that she hoped they would finally lead to the departure of all foreign forces and mercenaries.

Haftar's reaction to the ceasefire could underline divisions between the Tobruk-based parliament and the warlord. Given his history of undermining political solutions and doing what he wants, it could be harder for sincere diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in Libya.

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If that is the approach Haftar chooses, the ceasefire will not succeed unless Sirte and al Jufra airbase are freed from his militias. It would otherwise seem difficult to reach a sustainable peace in Libya.

Considering this and the multitude of actors engaged in the Libyan conflict, what happens next will more likely take the form of conflict management than a stable ceasefire.

Will the ceasefire in Libya be implemented? It's too early to tell, but if there was genuine action, it would be a constructive step towards a long-lasting settlement effort.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Libya Observer



National Medical Supply Agency receives measles vaccination shipment

The Ministry of Health has shipped vaccinations against measles, mumps, and rubella, in an effort to maintain essential health services even as the country battles to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. The shipment arrived on Wednesday and will be handed over to the national Medical Supply Agency in Tripoli on Thursday evening, said a statement by the Health Ministry on Facebook.

The current shipment contains 51,131 doses and is among other vaccination consignments that reach Libya successively, according to the ministry, noting that the distribution process will be implemented in cooperation with its branches across the country.



Health

Shipment of medical supplies to combat the Coronavirus pandemic arrives in Tripoli

The Ministry of Health announced the arrival of a large shipment of medical supplies at Mitiga International Airport to assist in confronting the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Ministry explained that the shipment, which arrived on a plane for the air ambulance, carried a cargo which included Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing devices along with a number of nasal swab testing kits.

The shipment included many medical items such as general supplies, various devices, personal protection suits and attire to protect valuable health practitioners working in various isolation sites and centers and also included disinfectant, sterilizers, medical items and medications.

According to the Ministry of Health, it has enhanced the country's strategic medical stockpile of various medical supplies, in preparation and in response to the emerging ominous Coronavirus Pandemic. It stated that it had established an air and sea bridge with France, Belgium and Turkey to import medical equipment for the isolation centers across the country.



Health

Ministry of Health prepares isolation center in Misrata

The Ministry of Health of the Government of National Accord (GNA) has prepared and equipped the new health isolation center at the National Institute for Oncology in Misrata, which has been adapted as a screening center and diagnostic clinic for Coronavirus cases, along with all those suffering from acute respiratory symptoms.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry, the center was launched with a capacity of 102 beds, with 50 beds specifically allocated to intensive care patients.

The center has also been equipped with a 'one megawatt generator', oxygen equipment, along with access to the internet.

Dialysis machines have also been supplied and a new isolation department for children was opened, along with a pharmacy, laboratory, laundry and storage facilities for medical supplies and equipment.

Transport

Maintenance of Mitiga Airport runway completed



The Airport Authority of the Ministry of Transport announced the completion of maintenance work for the runway at Mitiga International Airport.

The Authority explained that the maintenance work included the removal of a layer of asphalt along the runway, at a length of 2150 meters, with a width of 16 meters, along with the restoration of part of the foundation paving layers of the runway.

Paint and marking removal work also took place to allow for re-planing and remarking the runway, whilst repairing the lighting system along the runway.

The Authority added that aircraft of all dimensions were now capable of using the runway without any difficulty.

Education

Ministry of Education holds meeting with representatives of schools for the blind



The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, Adel Jumaa received heads of special schools for blind persons in the cities of Misurata and Al-Khums.

The undersecretary of the ministry welcomed at the outset of the meeting the headteachers and emphasized the ministry's interest and support for this segment.

He confirmed that teachers in schools providing special services have been included in the ministry's decision, regarding teacher pay raises, while their educational institutions will have their share of the operational budget as other mainstream schools.

Jumaa emphasized that the Education Ministry will follow up on the distribution of books specially printed for this sector to make sure every school receives a sufficient share.

The meeting was attended by Salama Kartal, Director of the Department of Education and Integration of Special Groups, Al-Taher Habib, Director General of the Educational Curricula Center, as well as the Director of the Department of Administrative and Financial Affairs and Director of the Department of Planning and Strategies at the ministry, according to the Education Ministry's Facebook page.



Life

Sabha receives sewage suction pumps from UNDP

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Libya has provided local authorities in Sabha's city, south of Libya, with mobile sewage suction pumps.

The new equipment will allow the General Water and Sewage Company in Sabha to conduct a cleanup operation of the city sewage network, and help it to uphold sanitation standards to serve its people.

The step is part of a broader UNDP development plan to enhance the services delivered to around 200,000 people in the south, by providing adequate infrastructure, sanitation facilities, and encouraging hygiene, which is key in times of COVID-19, says the UNDP.

Crimes

Haftar's militias kill young man in Sirte, launch large scale arrests

The city of Sirte, controlled by Haftar's militia, has been witnessing tension and skirmishes lately, mainly between members from the Qadhadfa tribe and forces affiliated with Haftar.

Sources from the city said that clashes erupted between the two sides after Haftar's gunmen killed a young man from the Qadhadfa tribe in the city.

Haftar's militias had allegedly run the man over with an armored vehicle while cracking down a demonstration in support of Saif, the son of dictator Muammar Gaddafi, according to the same sources.

After this incident, the relatives of the victim clashed with Haftar's forces, which opened fire in response and arrested a number of them.

In light of these dramatic events, Haftar's militias cut off communications and internet services in the city and carried out a widespread campaign of arrests, most of which targeted members of the Qadhadfa tribe.

Migration

First IOM migrant repatriation flight takes off after five-month pause



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) announced that its first repatriation flight from Libya had been carried out, after the Voluntary Humanitarian Return Programme (VHR) had been put on pause for five months.

The flight brought 118 Ghanaians - including seven women, three children, and two newborns - back home, after being stranded due to the pandemic.

According to IOM, all of the passengers underwent a health screening prior to boarding the flight and they were given personal protective equipment including face masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer. The migrants also received psychosocial support.

In a statement, IOM said it will continue to provide support during a 14-day quarantine period in Ghana and later, reintegration assistance.

IOM spokesperson Safa Msehli said conflict and COVID-19 have severely impacted the livelihoods of migrants in Libya. She said that her agency had received many new requests for help from migrants who want to go back home in recent months.

Other voluntary repatriation flights are planned, but a flight scheduled for next week to Mali had to be postponed, IOM said. The VHR program began in 2015. According to IOM, the program has helped 1,466 migrants return home from Libya in the first quarter of 2020. In 2019, the program assisted 9,800 people in their return to 34 countries of origin in Africa and Asia.

weather



Tripoli Weather Forecast








Fri 04	32°/24°	 Partly Cloudy	10%	ENE 28 km/h
Sat 05	31°/24°	 Partly Cloudy	10%	ENE 24 km/h
Sun 06	33°/25°	 Sunny	10%	E 26 km/h
Mon 07	34°/25°	 Sunny	0%	E 27 km/h
Tue 08	34°/24°	 Sunny	0%	E 26 km/h
Wed 09	33°/24°	 Sunny	10%	ENE 21 km/h
Thu 10	32°/24°	 Sunny	10%	ENE 18 km/h

Photo of the Week: Farwa Island, Zuwara



Features



Libyan Cuisine: Sharba

The classic Libyan soup, Sharba, is an inevitable dish on the Libyan Ramadan table. It's a starter to the rest of the menu and intended just to whet the appetite.

It is all about combining various ingredients in a large pot to create a nutritious simple to-make dish.

Sharba contains meat of any sort, could be lamb, beef, chicken or fish, grains of chickpeas, onion, tomatoes and spices that are usually used in most Libyan dishes, no creamy consistency involved, typically, Libyan soups are mainly broths.

This soup has a base of only water with no extra stock needed. As the soup cooks, flavours from those ingredients are released into the broth, whichever meat you choose to throw in, the flavor will show off and make the taste, and if you could add a few chunks of liver and kidney with the lamb meat, enjoy! It truly is a mouthwatering dish to make.

After the meat is cooked, add birds tongue noodles, as called in Libya, tiny pieces of pasta shaped like a birds tongue, gently simmer for another five to seven minutes, then finish with a hand full of fresh chopped parsley, leave to stand and sprinkle some dried, grounded mint leaves on top, serve hot or warm along with bread and lemon zest.

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