

Politics

Libyan Defense Minister: Aqila Saleh has no authority on the ground



Libyan Defense Minister, Salah Al-Namroush said that the Speaker of Tobruk Parliament, Aqila Saleh, has no authority in reality as Khalifa Haftar is the real boss on the ground.

Talking to the "Libya Al-Ahrar" channel, the defense minister confirmed that they have doubts regarding Haftar's commitment to the cease-fire.

"Currently, there is a ceasefire under the auspices of the international community, which war criminal Haftar tried more than once to break it, and the operations and mobilization of troops continue from his side, but we are ready to repel any aggression," he said.

He stressed the Libyan army supports the ongoing political process by adhering to the ceasefire. "We want a civil and a democratic state, we support the political process, but we will not give up Sirte and Jufra, or any inch of Libya," he added.

Al-Namroush explained that the Sirte and Jufra operations Room is an integral part of the Libyan Ministry of Defense, revealing communicating and reinforcements are going on, to advance towards restoring control of all Libyan soil.

Regarding the developments of the mercenaries file including the Russian Wagner Group, he said that the Ministry of Defense has enough evidence that proves the existence of Russian Wagner fighters in Libya, noting that the information on this regard will be forwarded to the international organizations to decide on this file.

He also recalled the AFRICOM's detection of several Russian planes landing at Al-Jufra base and Sirte, led by Russian mercenary pilots, but "despite all these documents, international organizations are moving slowly, and their response does not measure up to the event," as he put it.

Cavusoglu: Turkey never feels undermined by relations between GNA and France



The Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that France's coordination with the Government of National Accord (GNA), created no conflict with Turkey, adding in an interview with one of the private Turkish Channels, that Ankara considers the meeting between French officials and the Head of the Presidential Council (PC), Fayez Al-Sarraj, a step in the right direction.

Cavusoglu emphasized Turkey's sincere goal to achieve a permanent ceasefire in Libya and to bring about a political solution to the present crisis, indicating that his country's intervention had prevented the possibility of a civil war.

Politics

Al-Thani's government resigns as public anger mounts in the eastern region



The Interim Government headed by Abdullah Al-Thani, a parallel administration based in eastern Libya, has resigned amid mounting anger and protests for the third straight day in the eastern region.

Al-Thani's resignation was submitted on Sunday to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Tobruk, Aqila Saleh, according to a statement by the Tobruk-based HoR.

The HoR confirmed the resignation will be presented to the parliament for consideration, but did not specify a date.

The government announced it would step down, upon an emergency meeting convened by the HoR Speaker of Tobruk to discuss the public fury that triggered the protests in several cities in the eastern region.

Angry residents in the eastern region took to the streets blaming their authorities for the poor health services, lack of electricity, and cash.

Aqila Saleh's media advisor, Hamid Al-Safi, said that Al-Thani's government will stay on in a caretaker capacity until a new cabinet is formed.

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Politics

Turkish Defence Minister: We totally support Libya to establish a regular army



The Turkish Defence Minister, Hulusi Akar confirmed his country's support for all Libyans to achieve unity in their country and assist them in establishing Libya's regular army to preserve Libyan security and sovereignty.

Akar said, during an interview with the Turkish Anadolu Agency, that many countries and institutions sustained silence regarding Haftar and his militia's attacks in Libya.

Earlier this month, Akar confirmed, during a meeting with his Libyan counterpart, that Ankara would continue its training and consultation activities in both the military and security fields in Libya.

Politics

Tunisia appoints first ambassador to Libya since 2014



The Tunisian President Kais Saied has appointed Al-Asad Al-Ajili as an ambassador to Libya to be based in Tripoli for the first time since 2014.

The Tunisian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the appointment of the ambassador comes as part of the annual diplomatic appointments.

Tunisia's embassy in Tripoli has been vacant since 2014 and the consulate since 2015 due to bad security conditions. Tunisia summoned its then ambassador Rida Bukadi over the kidnap of two Tunisian diplomats in Libya.

The Tunisian embassy and consulate were reopened in April 2016 without appointing an ambassador based in Libya. In 2018, Tawfiq Al-Kasimi was appointed as a consul in Libya.

Politics

US assistant secretary of state: The scene in Libya is complex but no mili- tary solution to the crisis



The US assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs, David Schenker has said "the situation is difficult in Libya", and warned that the country is on the verge of turning into another Syria.

Schenker confirmed in a press statement that the regional and international differences had made the landscape in Libya more complex, describing the players involved in the Libyan conflict as "very stubborn", making the situation more difficult.

He explained that he spends quite a long time with US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo discussing the Libyan crisis file, emphasizing there is no military solution to the Libyan dispute.

Schenker added that there are relentless efforts made by US diplomats to push the GNA headed by Fayez al-Sarraj and Khalifa Haftar to engage productively in the negotiations, noting in this regard, that he is "discussing with his British and French counterparts this matter continuously."

The US official also revealed that they will appoint a special representative for the Libyan negotiations, besides the UN envoy, "who is doing a great job," as he put it.

Economy

Sanallah: The oil blockade comes in favor of a narrow class backed by foreign coun- tries at the expense of the Libyan people



The head of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Mustafa Sanallah, accused some parties of placing their interests and those of foreign countries above the favor of the Libyan people, stressing it is making every effort to alleviate the plight of Libyans.

"The illegal closure of oil facilities has depleted the fuel importing budget and disrupted the state's economy which in turn affected the living conditions of the population," a statement by the NOC said.

The NOC described the illegal oil blockade as a criminal act, indicating it came at a time the country is suffering from an epidemic outbreak and its consequences thereof.

It also pointed out to some outlaw groups who "smuggle fuel and make money at the expense of the Libyan people", calling on the authorities to tighten control on borders and bring the perpetrators to justice.

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Economy

**Audit Bureau warns to
call off deal between
GECOL and Turkish
Galik**



The Audit Bureau has warned it would withhold its consent from a contract submitted by the GECOL with a foreign company to develop the East Tripoli station, due to the GECOL's "unexplained behavior" in this regard, which places it under suspicion of extortion.

In a statement, the Audit Bureau demanded the GECOL to clarify the reasons for not signing the East Tripoli Station with the Turkish Jallic Company, despite the Bureau's approval of the deal, and the company's willingness to begin implementation immediately without any preconditions.

"In the absence of serious reasons for not signing the agreement, the GECOL must make a final decision on the contract, whether by concluding or canceling the deal within a period not exceeding twenty days," the Audit Bureau said.

It emphasized the deal will be called off if the GECOL does not make a move soon, warning that the GECOL management would bear full responsibility and consequences of their actions.

"The GECOL's approach places it in suspicions of blackmail and extortion at the expense of the state's urgent need for energy during this period, which will not be allowed," the Audit Bureau stated.

It called for a 20-day period to be given to ANCA Power firm to start new contracts west of Tripoli-Misurata, indicating that if the company fails to do so the project will be passed on to the German Siemens to implement the two projects through another contractor.

The bureau also requested that Jisco -the main contractor for Ubari station- be given a period of 20 days to complete the remaining works. Otherwise, the deal will be "called off and passed to another "capable company."

Economy

**Ministry of Labor: Unem-
ployment level in Libya
presently at 14%**



The Ministry of Labor and Rehabilitation in the Government of National Accord (GNA), published a recent report prepared by its Information and Documentation Center, in which it assessed that the number of citizens in Libya, whose ages fall into the workforce category, is approximately four million and 750,000, which is an estimated rate of around 61%.

The Ministry further indicated that 86% of the actual workforce in Libya is based in the public sector, adding that the percentage of unemployment in the country is estimated at 14%.

The study further indicated that estimates of the unemployed population indicated that the factual number is in the region of 380,000.



Economy

**Libya to strike a deal with Belarusian
industrial MTZ firm**

Libya is reviewing striking a deal with the eastern European country of Belarus, to purchase heavy machinery, including tractors, said the national news agency of the Republic of Belarus "BelTA".

According to BelTA, The Libyan delegation asked the Belarus-based Minsk Tractor Works (MTZ trademark) to prepare commercial bidding containing the machines' characteristics, in preparation for concluding contracts in the short term.

MTZ Deputy Director-General for Marketing, Mikhail Kadnikov reiterated the plant's aspiration to close the deal with the Libyan partner, reaffirming that their offers will suit the demands of the potential client.

MTZ also expressed readiness to provide sales and after-sales services to the machines as well as training courses for Libyan agricultural workers.

The Libyan delegation was given a tour of the MTZ museum, the assembly workshop, and the exhibition of machinery to get familiar with the history of the plant.

The cooperation between MTZ and Libya goes back to 1965, with around 125 tractors shipped to Libya since 2012.

Economy

**Ministry of Finance: 14.4 billion dinars spent on
public sector salaries over an eight-month period**



The Economic and Financial Analysis Department at the Ministry of Finance has issued data on the value of the state's public spending revenue, between the period of January and August last.

The data showed that the total amount collected by the public treasury amounted to 38.5 billion dinars, which includes a loan granted to the Government of National Accord (GNA), by the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) to the tune of 17.8 billion dinars.

Oil revenues alone were recorded at 5.1 billion dinars and the data also indicated that spending, during the first eight months of the year amounted to 23.3 billion dinars, of which 14.4 billion dinars was allocated to cover the salaries of government employees of the state.

Opinions

Is the battle to replace General Khalifa Haftar already on?

By **Dr Mustafa Fetouri**, a Libyan academic and freelance journalist

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Credit: This article was first published by The Middle East Monitor on September 10, 2020



Hardly mentioned in local media and rarely appearing in person, Major Hassan Maatouk is being groomed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for a possible leading role within General Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA). Since the LNA lost its offensive to take Tripoli last June, when it retreated instead to the Sirte-Jufra region, there have been whispers about the fate of the octogenarian general and whether he could continue his divisive role in war-torn Libya.

Many young officers have been blaming him for their defeat at the gates of the capital. They point to his "lack of effective leadership", as one officer recently told, and to his leadership from afar, instead of being situated on the battlefield for the moral support of his troops.

With a new round of talks between Libya's warring factions, starting on 7 September in Morocco, the question of Haftar being part of any political settlement is again being raised. The Government of National Accord (GNA) has been threatening that it will not accept any deal that could give Haftar a role. His supporters, including Speaker of the Tobruk-based parliament Aguila Saleh, have not been on good terms with the general recently. The recent court filing against Haftar in the US, accusing him of crimes against humanity and extrajudicial killings, further complicates his situation.

The possibility of distancing Haftar from his position as commander of the self-styled LNA army is opening the door for new faces to step forward and fill his shoes.

Possessing good connections with foreign backers is an advantage, and Major Hassan Maatouk appears to enjoy good relations with the UAE. This association means financial and material support for Libya's open proxy war.

While still loyal to Haftar, Maatouk is known to travel to the UAE almost once a month. He also has access to "loads of cash that can only come from abroad", as one of his close associates anonymously told me. The young officer began shining during the LNA's campaign in southern Libya, between 2017 and 2019.

Maatouk spearheaded many of the operations particularly in Sabha, the strategic regional capital, and Murzuq to the south. His tribal credentials seem to be right too. Originating from the Awlad Suleiman tribe, concentrated in Sabha, gave Maatouk the advantage of familiarity with internal local politics and the "who's who". Most of his tribal men in the region, already allied with the LNA, supported him not only because he is one of them, but because having him will strengthen their local control. Awlad Suleiman's local militias were already in control of most of Sabha, specifically former army barracks and security buildings. If Maatouk can succeed in climbing the ladder within the LNA – or even better, if he ascends to the top – it will benefit his tribe in a society sharply divided along tribal lines.

Some members of Awlad Suleiman also live in a little town called Harawa, 70 kilometres east of Sirte, on the Mediterranean Sea. In fact, Maatouk and his extended family live there, and it was in Harawa that he started his army career with the LNA around 2014. He first used cash provided by his older and richer brother, Salem, who lives abroad, to form a local militia to protect the town. He got in touch with the LNA offering his services around 2016, and when the LNA troops arrived in 2018, his militia was incorporated into what became known as Battalion 128.

Maatouk led his Battalion 128 into Sabha, which he acquired without fighting – thanks to his tribal men already being in control. Awlad Suleiman has dominated Sabha, since the 2011 toppling of the late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. On many occasions, they have clashed with their former ally, Gaddafi's tribe Al-Gaddafi, as well as the Toubou tribe.

After Sabha, he advanced to Murzuq in August 2019, where his men are alleged to have committed a series of crimes against the local Toubou tribe. Fearing the backlash, Maatouk quickly distanced himself from the supposed extrajudicial killings that took place in the town. He even apologised to locals for the events.

Lieutenant Colonel Abdulsalam Zadmah also enjoys a special status. Late security officer Zadmah was very close to Gaddafi and quite popular among Libyans, despite his harsh tactics. During the early 1990s troubles in Benghazi, it was Zadmah who managed to bring the city under control. He went to the city with an open mind, seeking cooperation with the locals. He quickly gained popularity and trust, enabling him to relax much of the firm security grip blamed for much of the disturbances in the region. However, he was heavy-handed with Islamists operating in eastern Libya. Well-known in Benghazi and across Libya for his kindness and courage in solving problems, he is still remembered with respect. His sudden death in 1998 while horse riding in his hometown of Harawa, greatly saddened the late Gaddafi.

Earlier in June, Maatouk, sensing that Harawa could become a frontline after the LNA retreated from Tripoli to Sirte, ordered the evacuation of his family to the relative safety of Benghazi. One of his relatives communicated to me: "In the early morning hours, a convoy of armed cars arrived and started picking up the family." My source added that the size of the convoy and its security provision: "Says much about how well-financed Major Maatouk is." In the process, his troops, mostly Chadian mercenaries, rounded up two dozen young men, but released them shortly afterwards.

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Does Haftar approvingly know what is going on, or does he merely ignore what is happening? Sources close to Haftar report rarely seeing Maatouk around the headquarters. This means little is occurring in terms of coordination, or any close personal relationship between the ageing general and the aspiring rising major.

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

Libya CDC holds lecture on infection control inside mosques



The National Center for Disease Control of Souk Al Jumaa branch has organized a lecture on infection control and how to prevent the coronavirus spread inside mosques.

The lecture is part of the center's campaign to educate and raise awareness among citizens on how to manage the spread of the Covid-19 and stay safe, the National Center for Disease Control explains.

The lecture, which was held in coordination with the Endowment Office in the municipality focused on the role of imams and preachers in educating citizens to combat the Covid-19.

The team campaign distributed paper "Sajjada" to be used in Friday prayers, as a step to help reduce the risk of transmitting the infection, besides explaining the importance of maintaining safe distances between worshipers during prayers and to use masks inside the mosques.

Libya was one of the last countries in Africa to record an outbreak of coronavirus, with its first case detected on March 25th, after a Libyan citizen returned from Saudi Arabia.

Prior to this outbreak, the Government of National Accord had taken certain measures to limit the spread of the disease, such as closing borders, suspending commercial flights, and imposing a lockdown, which included calling off congregational prayers at mosques.

However, the government loosened the measures in June by allowing mosques to open its doors for Friday and Fajr prayers, under strict guidelines and measures.

They said one of the Tripoli hospitals should be allocated for Covid-19 cases, urging for opening laboratories in all Tripoli municipalities to contain the spread of the virus.

The mayors complained about the lack of mechanisms to fight Covid-19 and lack of capabilities at quarantine centers as well as the delay of test results, and bad handling of positive cases, causing a number of deaths among the infected patients. They added that the municipal councils didn't even receive budgets allocated to fight the pandemic.

"We urge the Ministry of Health to support municipal councils to provide the needed capabilities for isolation and quarantine centers." The statement added.

Health

Libya registers 12.000 recovered Covid-19 cases after adopting new protocol



The Libyan National Center for Disease Control has announced the recovery of 12.000 Covid-19 cases after adopting the new recovery protocol, thus leaving the country with 9.894 active cases.

The new protocol of the scientific commission of the center contained the description of several cases, especially those with apparent symptoms, who should be called "recovered cases" after ten days from the day on which the symptoms first appeared plus three days without any symptoms.

The protocol adds that the recovered cases should not do an RT-PCR test after 10 days of testing positive with Coronavirus, except for some critical cases which need negative results to be announced as recovered.

The commission said there should be no need for RT-PCR test to end the home isolation while the positive cases with no symptoms who are at home isolation should end the isolation after ten days with one more day without any high temperature without the use of medical pills.

"Those who have severe symptoms should stay at home 20 days since the start of their symptoms." The center added.

The previous protocol was to re-test which is something the patients with mild or no symptoms don't do. This made the recovery rates very low compared to 22.348 total cases.

Health

Heads of municipal councils in Tripoli urge GNA to declare health emergency

The heads of municipal councils in Greater Tripoli have called on the Presidential Council of the Government of National Accord (GNA) to declare a health emergency due to the terrible epidemiological situation in Tripoli, saying towns and cities should be isolated so the coronavirus cannot spread more.

In a statement Tuesday, the mayors called on the GNA to appoint a new health minister who would be qualified for the position amid the ongoing health situation and would work transparently and do an honest service to the country and people away from regional or tribal considerations.

Health

Tribute paid to the recovery of 65 medical personnel from the Coronavirus

Subsequent to the recovery of 65 medical personnel from the Coronavirus and their return to work in the city of Misrata, the Ministry of Health applauded them in appreciation of their significant efforts and suffering.

The Ministry of Health honoured the medical staff at the headquarters of the Misrata Medical Center where they were awarded certificates of appreciation and thanks by the Ministry of Health and the Medical Professions Union in the city.

The Ministry indicated that the city of Misrata had recorded approximately 100 cases of Coronavirus amongst medical personnel, the majority of whom were working in isolation, early detection, and health centers throughout the city.



Education

Education Ministry postpones classes after virus spike

The Education Ministry has postponed the reopening of schools, in response to the advice of the Medical Advisory Committee for confronting Covid-19 to cancel classes set to start next Saturday for several education levels, including the junior certificate stage.

"Classes will be delayed to reassess the epidemiological situation," said Minister of Education, Mohamed Ammari Zayed, noting that the National Examination Center will release the schedules of exam taking into consideration the physical and social distancing in classes.

Ammari Zayed explained in a statement on Facebook he would communicate with the Minister of Local Government to issue a circular to the mayors of municipalities, asking them not to take any decision to suspend classes, except after referring to the Ministry of Education.

"The Ministry will consider the budget allocated to provide the needs of private schools in terms of confronting the Coronavirus pandemic, in order to ensure the safety of students, a statement by the Ministry of Education said.



Migration

160 Sudanese citizens evacuated from Libya in coordination with the IOM

The Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday, announced the evacuation of 160 of its citizens from Libya, in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), together with the Khartoum Embassy in Tripoli.

The Ministry said in a statement that in cooperation with the IOM, it has been arranging evacuation trips for Sudanese citizens from Libya, since June 1, 2019, pointing out that the evacuation flights totaled 13 to date, carrying in excess of 5,000 Sudanese migrants back to their homeland.

In addition to the organized flights, 15 vehicles carrying an unspecified number of Sudanese migrants traveled by road from the eastern regions of Libya through the Umm Musaed crossings, along with Salloum and others, however, there was no number verified for these road trips.



Crimes

Arrest of 13 members of 'Al-kani' militia gang

The Libyan Army announced on Saturday, the arrest of a villainous gang, consisting of 13 members of 'Al kani' militia, in the city of Tarhuna in the western region.

The Media Center for the Volcano of Rage Operation stated that the forces tasked with the protection and security of the Costal Road (Treeq Al-Sahali), arrested the gang members while they attempted to hide in the Hawatim area of Tarhuna.

The Media Center added that the gang consisted of criminal elements who trawled the Al-Sahali Road, engaging in kidnappings and murder of passers-by, just as was their practice during the aggression on Tripoli.



Local

Protests in Tripoli against latest decisions made by Al-Sarraj

Several people protested in Tripoli against the decisions made by the Head of the Presidential Council Fayez Al-Sarraj, including the appointment of a former Gaddafi revolutionary guard member, Mohammed Bayo, as Head of Libya's Media Institution.

The protesters, who gathered in front of the Presidential Council headquarters, called for better living conditions and services.

Meanwhile, the gathering of Volcano of Rage Operation injured fighters as well as civil societies and journalists also rejected the appointment of persons who support Haftar, especially Mohammed Bayo, who has been a mouthpiece for Haftar and his war on civilians in Tripoli.

They called for ending corruption and holding the corrupt officials accountable as well as to speed the process of adopting a constitution that allows the transitional phase to end so elections can be held. They urged to activate the National Guard decision to contain all revolutionary fighters and Volcano of Rage operation fighters as well.

They called on the Presidential Council for better living conditions and handling power cuts, lack of cash at the banks. They also touched on the injured treatment issue, asking administrative control authorities to help prevent tampering with this file.

weather

The
Weather
Channel

Tripoli Weather Forecast


Fri 18	31°/21°	 Sunny	0%	NW 12 km/h
Sat 19	30°/21°	 Sunny	10%	NNW 15 km/h
Sun 20	30°/22°	 Sunny	10%	E 16 km/h
Mon 21	31°/22°	 Sunny	10%	E 19 km/h
Tue 22	31°/22°	 Sunny	0%	E 20 km/h
Wed 23	31°/22°	 Sunny	0%	E 19 km/h
Thu 24	31°/23°	 Mostly Sunny	0%	E 19 km/h

Photo of the Week: Leptis Magna



Features

The traveler Gustav Nachtigal and some of his paintings in Libya



Travel books are considered a combination between literature and history, and it has attracted a wide range of readers 'interest in the whole world through the ages. And those who are interested in the Libyan history they are going to find in front of them good amount of books by travelers who has been visited Libya and wrote their dairies, books and studies about it.

The journeys that targeted Libya flourished in the nineteenth century, sometimes in a direct way and sometimes as a road to Africa as some travelers called it "the gateway to the desert."

One of the most prominent results of this interest is the establishment of the London Association Specialized for Exploration in Africa, which has dispatched dozens of travelers to various African countries, and attracted to it most Europeans interested in exploration and history and those with a wide knowledge of the conditions and history of Africa. Colonial trends may be one of the motives for creating such an association which has allowed for its pioneers to gather information of the geographical, historical, social and economic of the African countries.

At the same context still the interested and the readers of today owes a lot of credit to those travelers for knowing many of the conditions, history and events of the past two centuries in particular, for what their books contain.

Gustav Nachtigal

The health condition of German explorer, Dr. Gustav Nachtigal, led him to settle in North Africa. His journey in Libya began in 1869 where he visited Tripoli, Bani Walid, Murzuq, Sabha, Al-Qatron and many cities in Al-Jufra and Fezzan.

His book "The Desert and the Country of Sudan" is a detailed account of a six-year journey across the Sahara Desert that was undertaken between 1869-1875.

Nachtigal was born as a Lutheran pastor in the town of Eichstedt in the Prussian province of Saxony-Anhalt, trained to become a doctor and practiced for several years as a military surgeon in Cologne. After contracting an incurable lung disease, he has traveled to Pune (present-day Annaba), Algeria in October 1862, in the hope of getting recovered in a warm, dry weather. A year later he traveled to Tunisia where he lived for several years to practice medicine and learn the Arabic language.

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