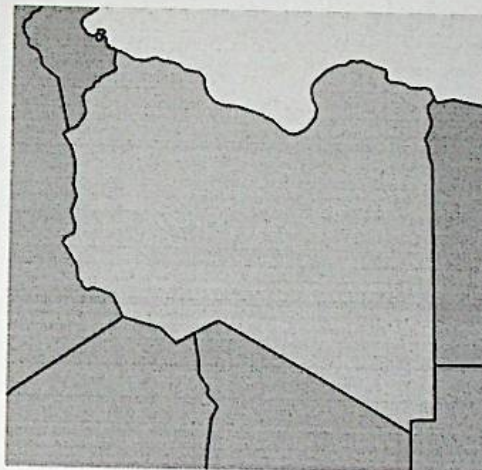


Libya

May 29-Jun 3

Khalifa Haftar's forces conducted an offensive on central Libya this week.



Diplomacy

The Algerian, Tunisian and Egyptian Foreign Ministers, Abdelkader Messahel, Khemaies Jhinaoui and Sameh Shoukry respectively, will meet in Algiers on Jun. 5 and 6 to discuss the situation in Libya following the recent escalation of violence in Tripoli and Egyptian airstrikes on Derna, said Algerian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abdelaziz Benali Sahrif during a press conference in Algiers. He added that the meeting follows "the latest political and security developments". Diplomatic sources told "Echourouk" that Algeria has called on Cairo to put an end to the airstrikes on eastern Libya as "it will not resolve the security crisis underway in Egypt". Website "Middle East" confirmed that Egypt's recent strikes in Libya pushed Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to contact Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al Sisi, urging him to put an end to the bombings in Libya. The same sources said that Bouteflika told al Sisi that "bombing Libya will not resolve Egypt's security issues". After the bombings, Tripoli Government of National Accord (GNA) Prime Minister Fayez al Sarraj, head of the Libyan Presidential Council, held telephone conversations with Algerian President's Office Director Ahmed Ouyahia and asked him to mediate with Cairo authorities to guarantee an end to the airstrikes. GNA Prime Minister al Sarraj held a telephone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron this week to discuss the activation of training programmes for the Presidential Guard and joint coordination for the construction of the unity army and police forces and securing land and sea borders. Macron reiterated French support of the GNA and efforts to restore security in Libya.

Politics

The Tobruk House of Representatives "fully" supports Egypt's decision to carry out airstrikes on terrorist and extremist positions in Libya, said Libyan Parliament Spokesman Abdallah Bilhaq in an interview with Russian news agency "Sputnik". "For sure, we support these airstrikes and it is not the first time", he said, adding that the raids were carried out in coordination with Khalifa Haftar's self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA). "It is known that the town of Derna where the airstrikes took place has been under siege of the Libyan armed forces for two years", said Bilhaq. He excluded the possibility of Egyptian ground operation, since the Libyan army is able to block terrorists in Derna.

GNA Presidential Guard forces have taken control of Tripoli's international airport on orders from PM al Sarraj. This is the first in a series of measures the GNA intends to implement in Tripoli to guarantee the control of the city following recent clashes with former prime minister Khalifa Ghweil's forces. After two days of clashes, that began when Ghweil's men attempted to launch an offensive from the suburbs of Tripoli towards the centre of the city, GNA militia have regained complete control of the city and can now execute a global

security plan. Ghweil's forces, that do not recognise the UN-backed political agreements signed in Skhirat, Morocco, in December 2015, have withdrawn from the city.

The Justice Ministry envoy of the unrecognised transitional Libyan government based in al Bayda, Isa al Saghir, visited Seif al Islam Gaddafi in Zintan. At the end of the meeting, Saghir called for the release of Muammar Gaddafi's second son, based on the general amnesty law issued by the Libyan parliament that granted release to numerous prisoners in Libya. Saghir asked Colonel al Ajami al Athari, the head of the Abu Bakr al Siddiq brigade in Zintan and Seif al Islam's imprisonment, to release him so he can move around the country or abroad. Seif al Islam Gaddafi has been released by Zintan militia and it now in a secret location, Saghir told "al Arabiya". His release was later denied by Zintan forces.

Security

Libyan group Ansar al Sharia, affiliated to al Qaeda and considered a terrorist organisation by the United Nations and the United States, has announced its "dissolution" in a statement published this week, said "al Arabiya". Ansar al Sharia said in the statement that the group was "weakened" by recent clashes. In April, LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive to liberate the group's final strongholds in Benghazi. The terrorist organisation suffered a heavy setback in late 2014 when its leader Mohammed Azahawi was killed in fighting with Haftar's troops in Benghazi. Most of the group's fighters were then killed in clashes with the Islamic State for control of eastern Libya. This weakening and shortage of men pushed leaders of the group to join the Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries, a local alliance of Islamist militia.

LNA forces now control a wide area of southern Libya after the retreat of Tripoli's Third Force fighters and Misrata militia. After clashes in Tamhanint and Brak al Shati, that culminated in a massacre two weeks ago when militia close to Tripoli killed dozens of Haftar's soldiers, the Third Force withdrew from both its bases in Fezzan, also due to pressure from local tribes who asked them to leave the area. The same tribes supported the return of Haftar's troops that now control both bases in Fezzan.

GNA-affiliated "al Bunyan al Marsoon" operation militia have recorded the presence of Islamic State men in the outskirts of Sirte. The operation command Spokesman Mohammed al Ghasri told "al Wasat" that "members of the jihad group are moving in various areas south of Sirte and in Wadi Jaraf and in Bani Walid outskirts". Islamic State activity has also been recorded in the villages of Abu Najim, al Fawar, Zakir and al Baghla.

Based on news from the following Libyan newspaper and websites: Ean Libia, al Wasat, Libya al Mustakbal, Libya Herald, Libyan News Agency Lana, al Hayat, al Quds al Arabi, al Arabiya, Sky Arabia, al Youm.