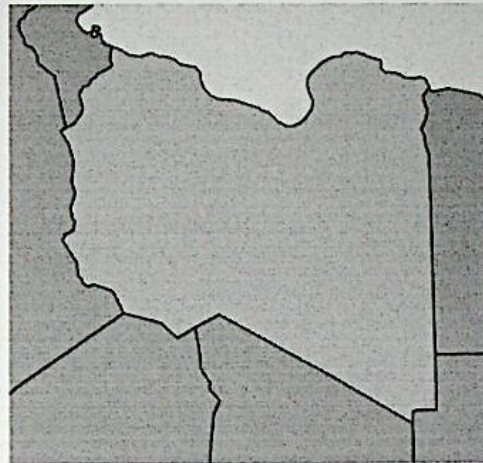

Libya

May 1-6

Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord (GNA) Fayeze al Sarraj and Khalifa Haftar met this week.



Diplomacy

In an important step in Libya's future, GNA Prime Minister Fayeze al Sarraj and Khalifa Haftar met in Abu Dhabi this week, without releasing a joint statement. Al Sarraj said he reached an agreement with Haftar on comprehensive talks, the unification of state institutions and the end of fighting between their forces. According to a statement released by al Sarraj after the meeting with Haftar, "an agreement was reached to launch comprehensive talks and achieve national reconciliation". The statement confirmed the intention from both sides to join forces in order to overcome the obstacles that have prevented the implementation of the political accord and amend the agreement. "We agreed on a ceasefire in the south, on the end of fighting and on the need to find a solution to the state economic and financial situation". At the end of the private meeting, the Emirate press reported the main terms of the agreement: the annulment of Art. 8 of the national reconciliation agreement signed in Morocco on Dec. 17 2015 that confers the control of the armed forces and secret services to the Presidential Council; political elections by March 2018; the dismantlement of militias; the establishment of a unity army; the limitation of the Presidential Council to three members representing the Tripoli GNA, Tobruk parliament and Haftar's forces. According to "al Wasat", the meeting did not establish "a clear roadmap on the timing of implementing the political agreements" while media close to Haftar reported concrete dates, including the holding of elections by March 18, and al Sarraj's statement "did not speak of dates". Local sources said Haftar and al Sarraj chose to release individual statements after a failed attempt to draw up a joint statement.

General National Congress President Nuri Abu Sahmain and the former prime minister of the Tripoli National Salvation Government Khalifa Ghweil, both of which were dissolved following the Skhirat agreements in December 2015, travelled to Conakry, Guinea, this week on invitation from the African Union, said "al Naba". This is Abu Sahmain's first public appearance in a year. Sahmain was expelled from the State Council, the body led by Abdel Rahman al Sahwili that replaced the National Congress.

The United Arab Emirates has called on the international community to prevent further divisions in Libya by accelerating UN Envoy to Libya Martin Kobler's replacement. "The responsibility of the international community must be that of inciting the Libyans to further collaboration; in consideration of the importance of the UN's role, we call for an acceleration of the nomination of Kobler's substitute", said a statement from the Abu Dhabi Foreign Ministry.

Politics

The Foreign Ministry of Libya's unrecognised provisional government based in al Bayda, eastern Libya, has

welcomed the meeting between Khalifa Haftar, Commander of the self-proclaimed Libyan Nation Army (LNA), and GNA Prime Minister Fayez al Sarraj in Abu Dhabi this week. According to a statement, "this is a positive step in the right direction towards restoring trust and laying the foundations for true national reconciliation". The meeting "may lead to political stability and security throughout the entire country".

The Libyan city of Hon, in the al Jufra district south of the Gulf of Sirte, hosted an inter-Libyan reconciliation conference on May 4. The meeting was attended by representatives of 17 cities in southern and south-eastern Libya and chiefs of the Tuareg and Tebu tribes as well as all other clans of the area were scheduled to take part. According to "al Wasat", the conference aims to establish commissions linking the House of Representatives (the Libyan parliament based in Tobruk) and the Presidential Council (the UN-backed body based in Tripoli), as well as the State Council (the advisory body created by the Skhirat agreements) and the LNA led by Khalifa Haftar who does not recognise the legitimate Tripoli government. The goal is for "everyone to sit down at a table and resolve Libya's problems".

Security

The Libyan aviation under Khalifa Haftar has announced it has gained control of the al Kharuba airbase in southern Libya, also known as the al Khaumat airbase, located 100 kilometres south-east of the al Sariri oil field run by the Libyan Arabian Gulf Oil Company (Agoco). Aviation Commander Mohammed Manfour announced his troops took full control of the base after a series of airstrikes on Islamist militia belonging to the Benghazi Defence Brigades led by Zyad Belam. Belam denied the reports, saying the base is occupied by rebel Chadian militia, Haftar's allies.

Economy

The Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) has announced it has resolved its legal dispute with French bank Société Générale (Socgen) with a payment of 1.1 billion dollars in compensation. Socgen announced a decrease in its profits from the first quarter of the 2017 financial year due to the agreement reached with LIA. The LIA accused Socgen of helping companies linked to Muammar Gaddafi's son, Saif al Islam, to pass bribes equal to tens of millions of dollars. The accusation is part of a case presented to London's High Court in which the LIA is suing the French bank for 1.5 billion dollars in damages. According to the LIA, Socgen paid at least 58 million dollars to Leinada, a Panama-based company, for consultancy services linked to 2.1 billion contracts that the LIA signed with Socgen between 2007 and 2009. Socgen apologised to the LIA, saying it was due to negligence from several employees.

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.