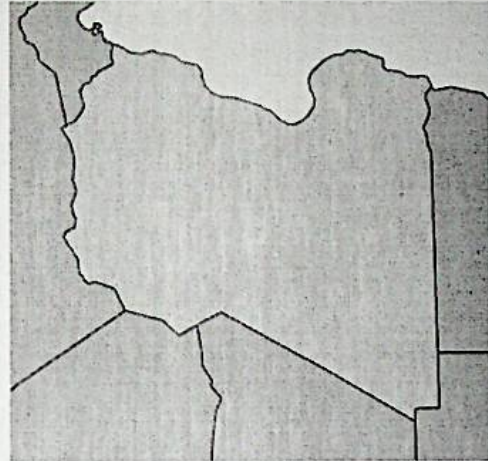


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**Libya**

**May 15-20**

Tripoli forces attacked the Barak airport controlled by Haftar's troops this week.



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**Diplomacy**

The Government of National Accord (GNA) Foreign Ministry has announced that 13 Libyan ambassadors and consuls have reached the end of their terms or reached pension age, those in: the United Kingdom, Hungary, Serbia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Slovakia, Qatar, Canada, Panama, Holland, Greece, Ethiopia and the Vatican. General consuls were also removed in Jeddah, Istanbul, Alexandria (Egypt), Dubai and Milan while chargé d'affaires were dismissed in Croatia, Oman, Belgium, Cyprus, Australia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Ivory Coast and Nicaragua.

**Politics**

Khalifa Haftar has said: "We will not leave Tripoli, our beloved capital, to a group of terrorists". During a military parade organised at the military academy in Tocra (located between Benghazi and Derna) on occasion of the third anniversary of Operation Dignity against Islamist militia, Haftar added that "the Libyan Army is stronger than divisions and terrorism". Speaking to 50 cadets graduating from the military academy and therefore becoming officers, he said that "we want to build a rule of law and institutions. The army is united throughout the country and we will not leave any armed formation alive". Roughly 12,000 soldiers loyal to Haftar took part in the celebrations. Operation Dignity began in May 2014. Ahmed al Mismari, the Spokesman of Haftar's self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA), said 450 officers and 1,200 soldiers have joined the LNA. Speaking to the cadets, he said that "these celebrations of the third anniversary of Operation Dignity are also attended by Marine Forces off Tacra and the Air Forces as well as intelligence units and the various army departments". The parade was transmitted by local Libyan broadcasters. There was dispute between the guards of Libyan Speaker Aguila Saleh and those of Khalifa Haftar during the organisation of the parade in Tocra. According to "al Jazeera", this explains why Saleh failed to attend the parade, even though he had been invited and was at the military base until a few hours before it began. "Al Jazeera" added that his absence points to differences between the two political leaders. Further sources say that Saleh left the ceremony due to a series of delays in the programme, although his presence was planned from the beginning. Parliament Spokesman Abdullah Belahiq said Saleh did not release official statements regarding the third anniversary of Operation Dignity as the media had released a statement signed by Saleh that his spokesman said was "fake". Saleh's absence aroused suspicion among Libyan observers while doubts circulated on social networks as to the state of relations between Saleh and Haftar. LNA Chief of General Staff Abdel Razzq al Nadori told local media that "the absence of Libyan Speaker Aguila Saleh at the ceremony marking the third anniversary of Operation Dignity held in Tocra is due to a technical glitch over a lack of coordination between

several officers". He added that "an investigation has been opened to find the guilty party and punish him". LNA Spokesman al Mismari added that "Haftar spoke to his team and reiterated that Saleh has supported us politically for three years, rejecting those who opposed the army, and only he can be defined as the head of the army as the President of the Parliament". The recent dispute between Saleh and Haftar "is due to the fact that Saleh is attempting to eliminate Haftar from the political scene", said Libyan political analyst Abdel Salam al Rajihi in an interview with "Arabi21". He added that "this military parade clearly brought to light the extent of differences between Haftar and Saleh after the latter failed to appear next to Haftar during the ceremony". A group of Tripolitania army officers has called for the dismissal of GNA Foreign Minister Mohammed Siala and has rejected his comments on Khalifa Haftar. During a press conference in Algiers last week, Siala said Haftar is the head of national armed forces. The group of officers met this week in Zuara to take a strong position on Haftar and the recent rapprochement in relations between the LNA commander and Tripoli. The officers reiterated that they do not recognise Haftar's leadership and accuse his forces of "committing a series of crimes, including kidnappings and murders, in several areas of Libya".

#### Security

Militants belonging to the Third Force, made up of Misrata militants loyal to the GNA, have entered the airport of Barak located 600 kilometres south of Tripoli and 60 kilometres north of Sabha in central Libya. Due to reinforcements sent by Tripoli, the troops, led by Ahmed al Hasnawi, took control of the airbase previously held by the 12th Brigade under LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar. The airport was taken by Haftar's troops on Dec. 8 2016 without clashes as the Third Force, tasked with defending southern Libya, had withdrawn after occupying the base in 2014. Since then, Haftar's forces had used it as a base for the control of Fezzan, the south-western region of Libya. The Mayor of Barak al Shati, Ibrahim Zami, told "al Wasat" that the Tripoli attack killed 74 of Haftar's men and injured 18 and that "five of these soldiers had their throats slit while most were killed by bullets to the back of the head". Speaking to Libyan TV broadcasters, the Third Forces said they found mainly Sudanese rebel militants inside the airport who were working as mercenaries alongside Haftar's forces. Haftar's armed forces command has vowed to "harshly and decisively" retaliate to the killing of the 12th Brigade soldiers during the attack and released a statement in which it "commemorates the 12th Brigade soldiers who have become martyrs in defending their country" and the "innocent civilians who died in the evil attack by terrorist militants on the Barak airbase". Speaker Aguila Saleh declared three days of mourning for the "souls of the martyrs" killed in the attack, Tobruk Parliament Spokesman Fathi al Marimi told Libyan media.

*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.*