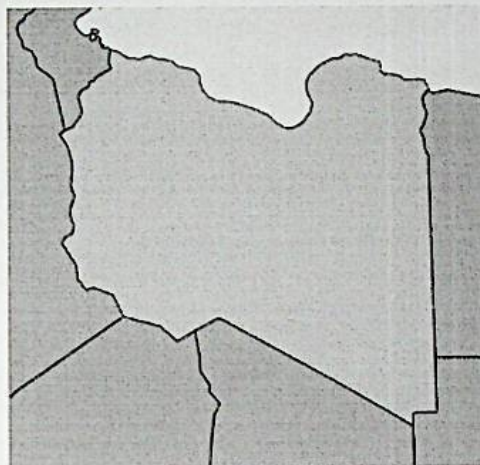

Libya

Jan 30-Feb 4

Summary

An agreement was signed with Italy this week on the flow of migrants while Khalifa Haftar's troops gained control of the Ganfouda area of Benghazi.



Diplomacy

Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni and his Libyan counterpart Fayeze al Sarraj have signed a memorandum of understanding in Rome on the flow of migrants. On Jan. 9, Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti visited Tripoli to lay the foundations of the understanding with the Libyan government on immigration management, border control and fighting human trafficking. "Taking into account the agreements made between Italy and Libya, one in 2008, the other more recently in 2012, we have decided to reach an agreement in the shortest time possible that allows Italy and Libya to fight the smugglers together", said Minniti during a press conference in Tripoli.

Turkey reopened its embassy in Libya this week, more than two years since it closed for security reasons, said the Turkish Foreign Ministry in a statement, adding that Ambassador Dogan followed preparation for the reopening and that the embassy recommenced activity with reduced staff. The statement added that the Turkish consulate in Misrata had remained open without interruption. "The reopening of the embassy will allow Turkey to strengthen its presence in Libya and make stronger contributions to efforts to build peace and stability, as well as reconstruction in Libya", said the statement. The Ministry said that Ankara will continue to support Libya's territorial integrity and national unity. Dogan was promoted to Turkish Ambassador in Tunisia on Apr. 15 2015.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg met with Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) Prime Minister Fayeze al Sarraj at the organisation's headquarters in Brussels this week. Sarraj also met with the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini.

Politics

Libyan Speaker Aguila Saleh has denounced "violations against the human rights of migrants in militant-held areas of Libya outside state control". Referring to the report from the German Embassy in Niger that documented violations against the human rights of migrants in Libya, Saleh told the Libyan media that he was "sorry for what was written in the German report on murders, torture and rapes by the gangs that traffic with illegal immigrants in Libya. These acts must be condemned as they go against the principles of Islam". Saleh considers the militia controlling part of Libya to be "guilty of these violations".

"Al Bunyan al Marsoos" forces, mainly made up of Misrata militia, are engaged in securing various areas of Sirte in order to allow refugees to return to their homes. Since Dec. 17 2016 when the GNA announced the

liberation of the city from the Islamic State, "al Bunyan al Marsoos" men have remained in the area to clear the district from mines and bombs placed by the terrorists. The operation command has also created a commission to prepare for the return of the refugees. A Misrata militia spokesman said the city's houses and roads have been secured and that civilians can now safely return.

Security

The Commander of the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA) Khalifa Haftar has authorised a group of 50 members of the Islamic State to move to western Libya, said the GNA Defence Minister Spokesman Mohammed al Ghasri in an interview with "Shems FM". He said the group included terrorist group Ansar al Sharia leader, the Tunisian Seifallah Ben Hassine, known as Abu Iyadh. Al Ghasri is also Spokesman of the "al Bunyan al Marsoos" operation that has spent the last nine months fighting the Islamic State in Sirte.

The LNA has liberated a new position in Ganfouda, in the Benghazi outskirts. The number 12 complex of apartment buildings was the final hideout for Islamist militia who were unable to flee after the district was taken over by Haftar's men. The head of Benghazi special forces, Fadel al Hasi, told "al Wasat" that this week his men forced the terrorists to withdraw from a position within the complex. "The soldiers seized weapons and vehicles", said al Hasi. Five LNA soldiers were killed this week in Benghazi's outskirts, said the Spokesman of Haftar's forces Ahmed al Mismari, adding that the soldiers were killed in armed clashes with a group of Islamist militia they were chasing in the area of Ganfouda.

Libyan military sources have said that around 70 LNA men are being treated in hospitals in Moscow, said "al Wasat", adding that this is the first time Libyan soldiers have been transferred to the Russian capital for medical treatment. Some of the soldiers left from Egypt while others departed from Benghazi airport. The transfer is part of the current cooperation between the LNA and Moscow. Haftar recently visited Russia to launch cooperation between the sides.

Economy

A member of the Libyan National Oil Company (NOC) board of directors Jadallah al Awakili has said that Libya's oil production has tripled since last September thanks to the stabilisation of the situation in the oil crescent, that is now controlled by Haftar's forces, "where export operations are underway in full security and freedom". According to "al Wasat", al Awakili added that "the oil crescent was controlled by militia who prevented oil exportation and its liberation in September by the army allowed us to resume production, tripling it".

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.