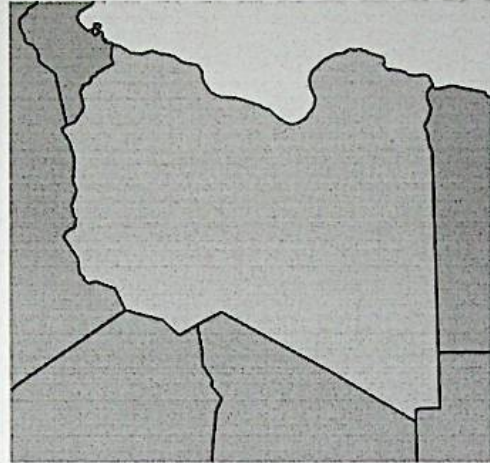

Libya

Jul 3-8

Summary

Khalifa Haftar's troops gained control of all Benghazi districts this week.



Diplomacy

The Commander of the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA), Khalifa Haftar, has welcomed the appointment of Lebanese Ghassan Salamé as the new UN Envoy to Libya, said "Asharq al Awsat", quoting LNA Spokesman Ahmed al Mismari. "Whoever intends to solve Libya's problems should distinguish between the population and terrorism. The problem is not with the Libyans, their tribes or cities, but with terrorism, the Muslim Brotherhood, al Qaeda and the Islamic State", said al Mismari during a press conference in Benghazi. He expressed hope that Salamé can reach a solution "within six months", otherwise the LNA "will be forced to intervene" to unblock the situation.

LNA Spokesman Ahmed al Mismari has excluded the possibility of a new meeting between Haftar and UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) Prime Minister Fayez al Sarraj. Speaking during a press conference in Cairo, al Mismari stressed that further meetings will not be held unless al Sarraj accepts the conditions proposed by Haftar during the last meeting organised in Abu Dhabi on May. 2.

A meeting between representatives from the Italian Interior Ministry and the Libyan Local Government Ministry will be held in Tripoli on Jul. 13 to discuss illegal immigration towards Italy, GNA Local Affairs Ministry Commissioner Bidad Qanasu told "al Wasat". Representatives from Tripolitania and Fezzan, respectively the western and southern regions of Libya through which illegal migrants pass on their way to Europe, will also take part in the meeting. The work will focus on initiatives aimed at stopping immigration and collaborating in the fight against illegal immigration.

Politics

After roughly three years of fighting, Khalifa Haftar's LNA forces have gained complete control of the al Sabri district, the last Islamist stronghold in Benghazi, said the LNA press office this week on Facebook. Civilians were cleared to enter the liberated areas only once demining operations had been completed. In a statement, the internationally recognised Tobruk parliament congratulated LNA troops on "the end of hostilities" and took the opportunity to "call on the international community to lift the arms embargo on the Libyan army". The parliament also made special mention of the "people of Benghazi who have lived under difficult circumstances for a long time and of the victims of the conflict".

LNA Commander Khalifa Haftar has given Libyan political factions six months to find a solution to the crisis that has been underway in the country since 2011. If the situation has not been resolved by the deadline, which coincides with the end of the GNA mandate, Haftar has threatened to conduct military intervention, said "Asharq al Awsat", quoting LNA Spokesman Ahmed al Mismari. "The army will not allow

others to insult the Libyan people", said al Mismari during a press conference in Benghazi. He added that, if a political agreement has not been reached within six months, "the army will intervene". Libyan parties have until January 2018 to resolve the situation and avoid military intervention, stressed al Mismari.

Security

A former security official in Muammar Gaddafi's regime, Hassan al Madani, has been released from Misrata. According to "Libyan Observer", al Madani was released on Saturday Jul. 1 together with a further 46 prisoners from Tawergha, Zliten, Tripoli and Sirte. Over half of them were locked up in Misrata's prisons during the 2011 revolution. The news comes after reports on the release of Gaddafi's son Saif al Islam by Zintan militia and the transfer to other prisons of Gaddafi's son Saadi, former prime minister Baghdadi al Mahmoud and former intelligence head Abdullah Senussi.

A convoy carrying GNA Education Minister Othman Abdel Jalil was targeted by gunshots this week while passing through the southern entrance to the city of Sabha, southern Libya. According to the ministry's Facebook page, the convoy was headed towards the city of Marzaq. The attack occurred after militants attempted to assault the minister and deputy minister but were held back by bodyguards. The minister then left the area while the militants detained other members of the delegation travelling with Jalil on the scene for roughly an hour. In the statement, Jalil did not identify the attackers but said the delegation was released thanks to an intervention from Tebu tribal chiefs who allowed the convoy to conclude its journey in safety.

Southern Libyan tribes announced they have handed over the Sabha airport to Tripoli GNA security forces. The airport has been closed for two years due to fighting between tribes in the area. A statement signed by the Tebu and Awlad Suleiman tribes said "the Sabha airport was handed over pursuant to the reconciliation agreement signed by the two tribes in the Italian capital, Rome, last Mar. 29 during a meeting sponsored by the Government of National Accord Presidential Council". "This is an important step forward for all southern residents and is based on Art. 7 of the Reconciliation Agreement signed in Rome", added the statement. The southern Libyan tribes thanked the Presidential Council and Italy for supporting the success of the reconciliation.

An explosion on Jul. 5 in the marina district of Tripoli has killed 5 and injured 18 after, according to the GNA Health Ministry, a rocket fell on the area.

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.