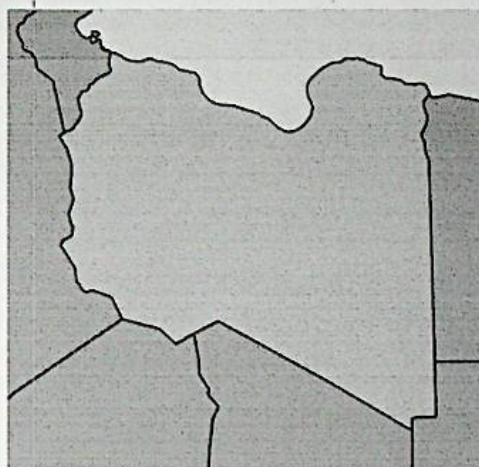

Libya

Mar 20-25

Khalifa Haftar's soldiers were accused of committing abuse and violence in Benghazi this week.



Diplomacy

UN Envoy to Libya Martin Kobler will take part in a meeting on Libya in Cairo together with the Arab League, the European Union and the African Union. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, Arab League Secretary-General Aboul Gheit and the High Representative of the African Union for Libya Jakaya Kikwete will also participate. The "Quartet" intends to support UN mediation and regional efforts, as well as political transition in Libya that respects the country's sovereignty. Kobler praised the Tripoli Presidential Council's role in mediating the ceasefire in the city. The Quartet Meeting on Libya was sponsored by the European Union, the Arab League, the African Union and the UN.

Politics

The High State Council has called for the UN and international organisations to intervene on the "serious violations of human rights and war crimes" committed in Benghazi recently, said the Council at the end of an emergency meeting held by Chairman Abdul Rahman Swehili. The Council said the meeting focused on political and security developments in the country, especially the State Council's position on recent events in Tripoli and Benghazi. The General Command of the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Haftar has ordered commanders of the military units in Benghazi to ensure the perpetrators of the violence committed after the liberation of western Benghazi are immediately brought before the military police. According to an army statement, "it is necessary to adopt adequate measures against those who appeared in the videos while they were abusing the bodies of terrorists in order to bring them before a military court". Libyan independent Benghazi MP Jalal Ashwihdi has called for General Khalifa Haftar to be brought to trial over a series of violations committed by his men last week. In a statement, Ashwihdi accused LNA forces of killing members of families in the Benghazi outskirts and of desecrating the tombs and bodies of Benghazi Mujahedeen Shura Council militants. Speaking to Libyan media, he added that "the violations committed by Haftar's forces go against the principles of Islam and international conventions. Haftar must take responsibility and step down immediately, as the other officials need to take responsibility and launch an investigation". Ashwihdi's statements came after a video was published on Facebook and shared by many of Haftar's supporters showing LNA soldiers setting fire to the bodies of several Benghazi Islamist militants after the battle of Ganfouda. Former Libyan mufti Sadiq al Ghariani, who is considered the religious leader of the Benghazi and Tripoli Islamist militia, has rejected the request to intervene to stop the armed groups. Speaking to "al Tanaseh", he said: "To those who ask me to stop the Benghazi Revolutionary Brigades, I answer that

Khalifa Haftar's forces must ask forgiveness and own up to their actions". Al Ghariani added that the Tripoli Presidential Council "does not actually exist and has no importance in the country. People are dying slowly and they are going unnoticed".

Security

The LNA led by Khalifa Haftar has regained control of the group of "number 12" buildings where several Shura Council of Revolutionaries militants were besieged. The area is located between Bousanib and the village of al Majaris in Ganfouda, west of Benghazi, said LNA special forces on Facebook. Roughly 20 fighters were killed during the operation while fleeing the area and several members of their families were arrested. An LNA Mig-23 plane has crashed in eastern Benghazi, although the reports have not yet been confirmed by Haftar's forces. The last fighters from the Shura Council of Revolutionaries and allied militia are now located in the al Sabri and Suq al Hut districts in central Benghazi.

LNA forces have killed four members of the Islamist group Ansar al Sharia and the Mujahedeen Shura Council during fighting in Dahr al Ahmar south of Derna, a military source told "al Wasat". "LNA forces continue to advance, gaining control of many positions belonging to Ansar al Sharia and the Mujahedeen Shura Council in Derna who have been forced to flee", added the source. The "Quicksand" operation command under the LNA "12 Brigade" has proclaimed the area from al Jufrah to Sabha, central and southern Libya, as a "military zone", said "Quicksand" Spokesman Mohamed Laferes. "Libyan air forces will strike convoys circulating in the area", said Laferes. The developments come after the Sidra and Ra's Lanuf oil terminals in the oil crescent east of Sirte changed hands twice during March. The Benghazi Defence Brigades, an Islamist militia, first took them from Haftar's army which then regained control of the terminals after the Brigades delivered them to the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA).

The bodies of seven soldiers have been found in the "number 12" buildings near Ganfouda, west of Benghazi, said the Spokesman of the LNA special forces Colonel Miloud al Zawi, adding that the bodies were wearing military clothes. "Al Wasat" said that the Libyan Red Crescent has charged a committee with identifying the bodies. On March 18, Haftar's forces regained control of the "number 12" buildings.

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.