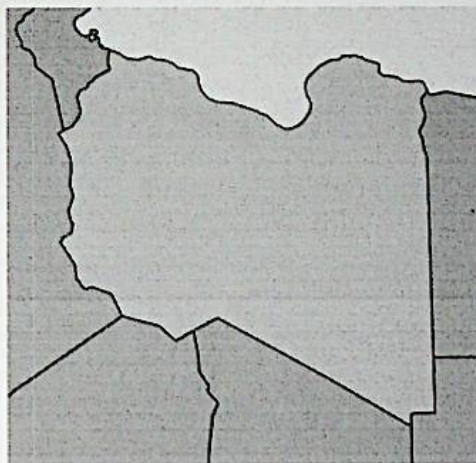

Libya

Mar 27-Apr 1

Tripoli Prime Minister Fayez al Sarraj attended the Arab League summit in Jordan this week.



Diplomacy

Government of National Accord (GNA) Prime Minister Fayez al Sarraj visited Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamed al Thani in Doha this week. Sheikh al Thani reiterated during the meeting that his government “will support no other party in the Libyan conflict than the Government of National Accord”. He also called on the international community to consider only the decisions made by Tripoli and “punish those who obstruct the stability process in Libya”. Al Sarraj’s government press office published photographs on Facebook of the meeting that focused on bilateral relations between the two countries. The Libyan delegation was welcomed at the Doha international airport by Qatari Foreign Ministry high-level official Ambassador Ibrahim Yousif Fakhro and the Charge d’Affaires of the Libyan Embassy in Doha Moammed Amer al Zaydi. The President of the Libyan State Council Abdel Rahman al Sahwili and Sheikh al Thani met on Mar. 13 to discuss recent developments in Libya and bilateral relations. Al Sarraj said that “the political agreement in Libya has become essential for a political solution that brings stability to the country and completes the constitutional path”. Speaking at the 28th Arab League Summit in Jordan, al Sarraj added: “My government is responsible for building this agreement and addressing all challenges in order to implement the political agreement”. He also launched an appeal for all parties involved in Libya “to sit down and launch talks to put an end to the language of threats and military escalation and start using a language of wisdom”. Al Sarraj said “there can be no military solution” and that he has no intention of “leading a war government but has been charged with leading a government of accord between all Libyans”, praising Tunisia, Egypt and Algeria for their initiatives in this direction.

The resolution contained in the final document of the Arab League Summit in Jordan calls for Libyan assets in foreign banks and all blocked assets to be unfrozen “as they belong to the Libyan people”. The resolution also urged the Libyan parliament, the Central Bank of Libya and Libyan economic institutions to work together to resolve the country’s economic problems and resume the Rome Charter issued in November 2016. The Arab League encouraged “Libyan forces to unite under the political direction of the Tripoli Presidential Council” as the only way to restore stability in the country. “We support the civil and military institutions that work with the Presidential Council”, says the document. The organisation said it was “deeply concerned over the security situation and threat of terrorism in Libya”.

Politics

The Liberian-flagged Greek oil tanker Demetrios has docked in Sidra port in Libya to load 630,000 barrels of crude oil and head to China. This is the first shipment to leave Sidra since the recent clashes in the oil crescent,

said "Libya Observer". The Sidra and Ras Lanuf terminals changed hands twice during the month of March. First the Benghazi Defence Brigades, an Islamist militia, took control of the ports from the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Haftar who then regained control after the Brigades handed them over to the GNA. The Sabratha municipal council has condemned the intensification of fuel contraband that has "increased recently due to the protection given to an armed militia". The council said in a statement published on Facebook that "this contraband has become a large trade involving numerous smugglers and this undermines the Libyan economy, it reduces fuel stocks, raises prices and causes petrol stations to close and long lines in the few places where fuel can still be found".

National Oil Company (NOC) Chairman Mustafa Sanallah has said that the "Tripoli Presidential Council cannot modify the structure of the company". "Only the Tobruk parliament may intervene in this way", said a statement. Sanallah added that "the Presidential Council must withdraw its decree that redistributes the responsibilities and power that belonged to the Oil Minister between the Presidential Council and the oil company. The Presidential Council does not hold the legal authority to change or restrict NOC's powers or responsibilities".

Mohammed al Dairi, Foreign Minister for the unrecognised Libyan transitional government based in al Bayda, has said that GNA Prime Minister al Sarraj's presence as Libyan representative at the Arab League Summit in Jordan is "a violation of constitutional legality". Speaking to "al Wasat", he added that "the Presidential Council so far failed to swear an oath of fidelity to the Constitution, therefore inviting al Sarraj to the summit as the representative for Libya is a violation of constitutional legality that only worsens the crisis in the country".

Rival clans that have been fighting over interests and territories in southern Libya have reached a reconciliation agreement in Rome during a meeting between representatives from the Awlad Suleiman, Tebu and Tuareg tribes. Negotiations began last Sunday and, according to Libya media, focused on the various issues regarding southern Libya such as development and illegal immigration. Tripoli Deputy Prime Minister Abdelsalam Kajman was present at the meeting as mediator.

The partial closure of the al Sharara and al Wafa oil fields over action from a local militia caused a two percent increase in oil prices on international markets this week. NOC sources told Libya media that the event triggered a fall in production at the two sites equal to roughly one third of the total production in Libya – 252,000 barrels per day.

Security

Islamic State terrorists are regrouping south of Sirte after the liberation of the city in December 2016, Mohammed Gunono, Spokesman of the UN-backed GNA emergency control room, told "Libya Observer", confirming the Commander for US Africa Command Thomas Waldhauser's comments. Gunono added that the jihads are located between Sirte and al Khums to the east and between Sirte and al Jufra to the south. "We have studied these areas and are certain that the terrorists are still free", said Gunono.

Libyan Red Crescent in Benghazi representative Qais al Fakhry has said that a Red Crescent-mediated prisoner exchange has taken place in Sidra, 180 kilometres east of Sirte, between Khalifa Haftar's LNA forces and the Benghazi Defence Brigades. The Brigades released three soldiers taken prisoner during the recent clashes in the oil crescent while the Army liberated five women and a child taken prisoner in Ganfouda.

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.