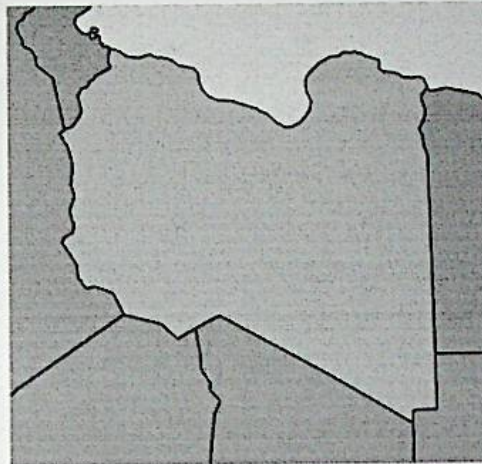

Libya**Apr 24-30**

Tobruk Speaker Aguila Saleh and State Council President Abdel Rahman al Sahwili met in Rome this week while an airstrike was conducted on the Sabha prison.



Diplomacy

Tobruk Speaker Aguila Saleh and State Council President Abdel Rahman al Sahwili, members of the two rival factions in Libya, met in Rome this week to find a solution to the crisis in the country, said "Libya Herald". The newspaper printed a statement from the State Council that said the "meeting was friendly" and was held in a climate of "openness". The statement stressed that there could be further "consultations" between the parties for the reconciliation of the country and to end the fighting. The meeting in Rome, said "Libya Herald", was sponsored by Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano.

A Russian diplomatic delegation led by Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov landed at the Mitiga airport in Tripoli this week on a one-day visit. Gleb Nikitin, Russia's First Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, was also on board the direct flight from Moscow, said the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) press office. According to the Libyan ministry, "this visit aims to support bilateral relations between the two countries".

Politics

The Tobruk presidency office has selected the 24 members of the commission for dialogue with other Libyan institutions. According to Art. 2 of the nomination decree, "the commission will abide by the principles of political dialogue based on decisions made by the parliament". The commission will take part in political dialogue with the Tripoli Presidential Council to amend various parts of the agreement signed in Morocco in December 2015. The official appointment of the 24 commission members comes after the meeting on Apr. 21 in Rome between the Speaker of the internationally recognised Libyan parliament Aguila Saleh and the President of the State Council Abdel Rahman al Sahwili.

The Tripoli Presidential Council has issued decrees nominating Mohammed Abdel Wahab Abdel Hamid Mohammed as GNA Justice Minister and Colonel Rashid Mohammed Kaakul al Rajbani as head of investigators. The two decrees are part of a series of ministerial decisions made by the Presidential Council in order to strengthen the Tripoli government's actions.

The chiefs of the Tebu and the Awlad Suleiman tribes in Sabha, southern Libya, have said they are "determined to respect the national and tribal reconciliation agreements signed in Rome last month". In a joint statement released at the end of a meeting held this week, the two tribes said they discussed the security situation in Sabha and called on "all militants to return to their previous positions". After three days of intense negotiations, the heads of southern Libya's main tribes, Awlad Suleiman and Tebu, signed a reconciliation agreement on Friday Mar. 31 at Rome's Interior Ministry in the presence of Tuareg leaders and

Libyan Vice President Kajman. The same tribes asked Italy, represented by Interior Minister Marco Minniti and Foreign Ministry Secretary General Elisabetta Belloni, to guarantee the pact.

On Apr. 25, over 30 Libyan MPs suspended their membership in the assembly in protest against a decision by the parliament to postpone the elections of a new central bank governor. The MPs accused the parliament presidency office of "once again failing to respect the rules and laws that regulate the work of the parliament". There was strong dispute during this week's House of Representatives session in Tobruk when members disagreed on the rules for appointing the new central bank governor. Tripoli Presidential Council member Ali al Qatrani said that "what happened with a minority of MPs prevents the nomination of a new central bank governor and is due to corruption". He said he respects the governor candidate Mohammed Ahukry, "because he was present at the parliament session although I do not know him personally", adding that the postponement of the parliament session over the protest from 56 MPs against the appointment of the new governor was "a sad day for Libya".

Speaker Aguila Saleh has spoken in Gubba (al Quba, north-east Libya) on occasion of a meeting with local tribal chiefs to discuss the political situation in the country. In reference to the summit held in Rome last Friday with Tripoli State Council President Abdel Rahman al Sahwili, he said that "this was a meeting mediated by Italy and Tunisia to discuss national reconciliation, the return of refugees to their homes, especially those from Tawergha, and the amendment of the political agreement but no agreement was announced". The cities of Misrata and Tawergha entered into conflict in 2011, at the time of the revolution against Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Hundreds of families from Tawergha fled their homes and still live in refugee camps in Tripoli.

Security

The Commander of the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA) Khalifa Haftar's warplanes have conducted a new series of airstrikes on Derna, eastern Libya, targeting the high grounds surrounding the city and the coastal road, while local Islamist militia in the city are preparing to repel an imminent ground attack from Haftar's forces. LNA troops intend to expel the Derna Shura Council of Mujahideen militia, who are accused of having terrorist links, from the city. Haftar's planes conducted similar strikes over recent days to weaken enemy defences.

Further people have died in Benghazi this week due to mines scattered by Islamist militants before their retreat. A mine exploded this week, striking a car in the western outskirts of the city. A member of the demining team in Benghazi, Khalifa al Obeidi, told "al Wasat" that "some districts of the city are scattered with mines and there are explosions almost every day". Tensions are high among the group of 24 volunteers currently engaged in demining the city as six of them have died while clearing the area that was previously controlled by the Islamic State before it retreated, scattering mines all over the area to stop the advance from the Haftar's forces.

An airstrike in southern Libya killed five people this week. According to "al Hayat", the raid hit a prison in Sabha where Tripoli-affiliated Third Force militants have been engaged in combat with 12 Brigade forces under Khalifa Haftar for the control of the strategic area for the past three weeks. It is still unclear who ordered the strike. Three prisoners and two guards were killed while four people were injured.

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.