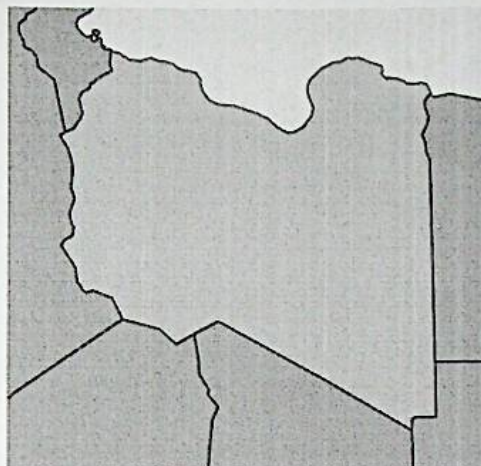

Libya

Oct 12-18

Summary

Debate and dispute continued this week within both the Tripoli and Tobruk parliaments on the agreement and national reconciliation government proposed by UN Envoy Bernardino Leon on Oct. 8 in Morocco that took most of the political world by surprise and was met with little support.



Diplomacy

As the deadline draws near of Oct. 20, the last day to find an agreement and establish a Libyan reconciliation government, divisions within the two main formations are increasing. A member of the Tripoli Congress participating in the talks in Morocco has accused UN Envoy Leon of "amending the Skhirat agreement document without consulting anybody". In an interview with "Ean Libya", the Tripoli MP said that he is "turning down the appointment of President of the State Council Leon nominated me for because it is unacceptable that my name be used without my knowledge or permission. Leon has no right to nominate people to posts of this kind. Political appointments must be decided by members of the institutions participating in talks following an agreement". The agreement proposed by Leon establishes a national unity government led by a prime minister and three deputy prime ministers with right of veto who will make up the core of a Presidency Council with other ministers chosen by the future parliament. Doubts have mainly arisen over the fact that the prime minister and his three deputies will have to make unanimous decisions. Forty MPs from the Tripoli Congress will be incorporated into the Tobruk House of Representatives, forming a parliament of 192 members. The most important decisions will be passed with a majority of 150. The agreement also creates a State Council made up of 90 members from the Tripoli Congress and 30 independent figures.

Politics

The Libyan Tobruk parliament has postponed until next week the vote of confidence on the national unity government presented last week in Morocco. The decision was made after two days of discussions and no agreement. Internal sources in the parliament have told "Akhbar Libya 24" that the problem is the future army chief, as there are doubts about General Khalifa Haftar. Many MPs said that "without guaranteeing the future of the army and its chief, we will not take a vote of confidence on the national reconciliation government. We will not give up the army as it guarantees the territorial integrity of the country". For this reason, the Prime Minister of the national reconciliation government Mustafa Sirraj, who was nominated during talks between the parties in Morocco, has decided to postpone the long-awaited speech on his appointment. According to "Al Wasat", Sirraj has decided to wait for Tobruk's decision. The Municipal Council of Misrata, the Libya Dawn stronghold controlling Tripoli, has given the go ahead for the national unity government, said "Al Wasat". The President of the General National Congress Nouri Abusahmain has turned down Leon's invitation to sign the final agreement with Tobruk to establish the reconciliation government. Abusahmain criticised the fact that he was "invited to go to New York in the presence of the

Tobruk Foreign Minister supported by an illegal parliament dissolved by the Constitutional Court, a Libyan delegate for the UN removed by the Congress and the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, countries that supported a military intervention in Libya by bombing our cities and helping the rebels". The Tobruk parliament has harshly criticised Leon's work. Libya's Ambassador to the United Nations Ibrahim al Dabashi said that "his method is often confused and did not help the sides engaged in dialogue to reach a solution." In a statement, al Dabashi said he wondered if "what we have seen is the result of Leon's own personal work or whether he acted on the dictates of the major powers". He added that "Leon made an error when he tried to convince the Tripoli Congress to sign the agreement, making amendments without consulting Tobruk, and now he is trying to convince them to participate in the government despite the fact they are opposed to the agreement". The Libyan Muslim Brotherhood is in favour of the establishment of a national reconciliation government but has expressed reservations. The Libyan Justice and Construction Party has released a statement in which it says it is opposed to the Congress' decision to withhold its candidates for the unity government because it will produce an unbalanced government. "We urge the parties to return to the talks to resolve these last problems and create a more balanced government", says the statement. The Islamist party also has reservation regarding the authority given to the presidency council in the new government and on the name of the president of the council and his authority.

Security

A Sharia court has begun operating for the first time in Sirte, set up by the Islamic State that controls the city. According to "Al Wasat", after reorganising the offices and courtrooms in a former hall of power from the Gaddafi regime, the group will also build cells for prisoners. The first sentence handed down by the court concerns the dispossession of a piece of land belonging to a Sufi Sheikh Mohamad Faraj al Qasi. The Imam's ideology is hostile towards the jihad group. He is considered a fugitive as he fled from the city after the arrival of the group and "Property of the Islamic State" is now written on the exterior walls of his house. An 81 year-old Sufi Sheikh was arrested by the group and is accused of witchcraft.

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.