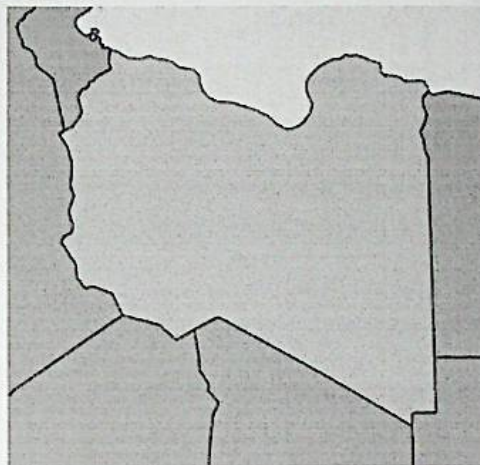


## Libya

Jan 9-14

### Summary

Former National Salvation Prime Minister Khalifa Ghweil attempted to carry out a coup this week with his militia occupying the disused offices of four of Fayez al Sarraj's Government of National Accord ministries, although he failed to gain power throughout Tripoli.



### Diplomacy

Libya's stability, the fight against illegal immigrations, southern border control, the fight against terrorism and support of military operation "al Bunyan al Marsoos" fighting against the Islamic State in Sirte: these were the main topics discussed during talks held in Tripoli by Italian Interior Minister Marco Minniti, according to a statement from the Government of National Accord (GNA) on Facebook. "Italian-Libyan relations continue, strengthening bilateral cooperation in economy and services", said Minniti during a joint press conference with Libyan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mohamed Taha Siala. "We are working towards activating this support through agreements signed between the two countries", added Minniti. Italy and Libya never formally suspended the agreement signed in 2009 with Muammar Gaddafi on Italian investment in infrastructures worth some 5 billion euros while the Libyans agreed to make efforts to stop the flow of migrants.

Khalifa Ghweil, former prime minister of the dissolved Libyan National Salvation Government, has called on Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni to withdraw the military contingent based in Misrata. According to "al Marsad", Ghweil, who is considered close to the most extreme Islamist factions and who still considers himself to be the legitimate PM of Libya, compared Italian presence in Misrata to the Fascist colonisation. The Italian Ippocrate mission based at the Misrata airbase is made up of 65 healthcare units (field hospital), 135 command/control and logistical units and 100 units for the protection of all components of the hospital.

### Politics

Khalifa Ghweil's militia have attacked the offices of three ministries in Tripoli: Defence, Justice and Economy. According to "afrigatenews.net" and "al Arabiya", Ghweil's men took control of the three offices. According to "Erem News", Ghweil should make an announcement shortly from the general headquarters of Tripoli's Defence Ministry.

The Mujahedeen Shura Council, an armed Islamist formation established in Cyrenaica in March 2014, has condemned PM al Sarraj's government as well as the head of the Libyan Army Khalifa Haftar, defining both as "traitors" and calling on them to "ask Allah for forgiveness". In a statement, the Council said "both Haftar and al Sarraj have betrayed the Libyans and there is no place for them in the history of our country if they do not ask Allah for forgiveness". The group also announced it intends to follow former Libyan mufti al Sadiq al Ghariani. The Council was established in March 2014 and its first armed convoy entered Derna on Apr. 2014 flying the al Qaeda flag. The group then rebelled against the Islamic State and joined the pro-Islamist



---

Government of National Salvation that was dissolved when al Sarraj entered Tripoli. GNA Presidential Council member Ali al Qatrani has called on all GNA members, especially PM al Sarraj, to resign. Speaking to "Libya al Hadath", al Qatrani called for al Sarraj "to be tried for what he has done to the Libyan people, bringing back colonisation through unannounced agreements he feared would be rejected by the Libyan population and stipulated with the Italian Interior Minister on illegal immigration". He also said Tripoli's work "goes against the interests of the people and only works in the interests of its members. They need to be tried because they attempted to create a divide in Brega after the recent nominations that stirred up anger amongst our people and that were immediately withdrawn".

The President of the Libyan Justice and Development party controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammed Sawan, has announced that members of the commission for political dialogue held a meeting this week in the Ghadames airport, western Libya, to discuss obstacles hindering a political agreement in Libya. The meeting was postponed by the local council in order to "complete the administrative and logistical aspects of the meeting", said a statement released on Tuesday evening. The politicians taking part in the meeting decided to gather anyway in the Ghadames airport together with a group of MPs and five new political figures.

Tribal chiefs from Brega, eastern Libya, have nominated Ali al Qatrani, current Presidential Council Deputy Prime Minister, as their national and international candidate for any appointment in a future government. The decision was made during a meeting held this week in Benghazi: "We choose this national figure and we put all our faith in him as he has taken brave positions in the past on the fight against terrorism and it is a choice that goes beyond political parties", said a statement.

#### Security

The Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries, an Islamist militia in Cyrenaica fighting against Khalifa Haftar's troops, has said it is "disappointed and betrayed" by the Islamic State's decision to withdraw from the al Sabri district and buildings in the city's Chinese quarter. In a statement, the armed formation asked for help, admitting it is in "a difficult situation" and facing Haftar's advance. In the statement, the group added that "the Islamic State retreat has left us disorientated and it is a betrayal". Haftar's army "is attempting to destroy the Mujahedeen in Benghazi", said the statement.

The self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA) has published images of this week's visit by Haftar to the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov. During the visit, Haftar held a videoconference with Russian Defence Minister Sergej Shoigu and discussed the fight against terrorism in the Middle East. The Admiral Kuznetsov aircraft carrier is permanently based in the Mediterranean Sea. It left Syrian waters at the beginning of January after a visit with a Russian team in November 2016 to support Syrian forces fighting the terrorists. Haftar already met Shoigu at the end of November 2016 in Moscow where they discussed Libyan armament.

*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.*