



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Libya – January to June 2025

30 June 2025

24 March 2025

UNSMIL alarmed by nationwide wave of arrests

In a statement released on 22.03.25, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expressed concern about the wave of arbitrary arrests and detentions being carried out by law enforcement and security actors across Libya. These actors are using their powers of arrest and detention "to target individuals for their alleged political affiliations, to silence perceived dissent and to undermine judicial independence." According to UNSMIL, these unlawful practices create a climate of fear and erode the rule of law.¹

07 April 2025

Authorities expel ten international aid organisations from the country

On 02.04.25, Salem Gheith, spokesperson for the Libyan Internal Security Agency (ISA) of the internationally-recognised government based in the capital Tripoli, announced that ten international NGOs alleged to be involved in "hostile actions that undermine national security" would be expelled from the country.

The list also includes the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Terre des Hommes and the Italian non-governmental organisation CESVI. Gheith accused the EU of exploiting the instability in the country and of using NGOs as a "tool" to force the settlement of African migrants. He also accused the aid organisations of money laundering and interfering in internal affairs.

The announcement comes after 17 mainly European ambassadors and a senior UN official had accused the ISA in a letter of acting with increased harshness towards NGOs and humanitarian aid workers. Libyan authorities were said to have interrogated at least 18 employees of six different aid organisations in recent weeks, seizing some of their passports and urging them to sign a declaration undertaking to never work for an international NGO again.²

05 May 2025

UN: political divides and competition for economic resources plague transition process

Hanna Tetteh, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Libya and Head of the UN Support Mission UNSMIL, reported to the UN Security Council on 17.04.25 about the situation in the country. The ongoing competition between rival forces for Libya's oil wealth is said to lie at the heart of the country's political and economic challenges. She warned that a continuation of the wasteful spending policy without an agreement being

reached on the budget between the competing institutions could lead to an economic collapse, and called for this to be urgently addressed.

The latest report on Libya from the UN's Panel of Experts, released in December 2024, highlighted the alarming situation more than a decade after the toppling of former ruler Muammar al-Qaddafi. According to the report, armed groups had further solidified their hold on politics, consistently weakening the already fragile public institutions, one key factor being the systematic smuggling of oil. The recent surprising devaluation of the Libyan dinar by the central bank in early April, which is most probably the result of excessive public expenditures by Libya's two rival governments, has led to a tangible deterioration in purchasing power among the Libyan population.

Whilst the 2020 ceasefire agreement continues to hold, the general security situation remains precarious, according to Tetteh, amid regular tensions and outbreaks of violence at local level. The recent mobilisations by armed groups in Tripoli are said to have rekindled concerns about a renewed outbreak of the conflict in the capital. Arbitrary detention continued to be widespread, with legal professionals and political opponents among those targeted. Many of them continued to be held in unlawful detention without due process.

The broader human rights situation also remained deeply concerning, particularly regarding the treatment of migrants and humanitarian workers. Xenophobic comments were said to be further inflaming social divisions and jeopardising the safety of vulnerable communities. Women in particular faced threats from gender-based violence, and had virtually no access to protection.³

12 May 2025

Videos circulating of abducted member of parliament Ibrahim al-Darsi

Member of parliament Ibrahim al-Darsi was abducted in the city centre on 16.05.24 after attending a military parade for the General Command forces in Benghazi. Security authorities in Benghazi stated at the time that the incident was "criminal" and that the MP had been kidnapped for robbery.

A year after his disappearance, leaked videos have now begun circulating on social media, showing a man widely identified as the missing MP. The recordings show him nearly naked, sitting on the ground, chained with iron shackles, and in a visibly poor condition. According to media reports, the footage was recorded inside a secret detention centre in Benghazi operated by the Tariq Bin Ziyad militia, which reports directly to Saddam Haftar and has previously been accused of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances of political opponents. Other video sequences show al-Darsi apparently pleading with Saddam Haftar to show mercy, spare his life, and release him.

According to media reports, al-Darsi's abduction by Libyan security forces stemmed from his outspoken criticism of the so-called "Benghazi Reconstruction Project". He is said to have accused influential figures close to the Haftar family, notably Belqasem Haftar, of embezzling millions of Libyan dinars for private projects, which are then rebranded under the reconstruction initiative. Al-Darsi's accusations came at a sensitive time, amid growing reports of massive amounts of public funds being funnelled into private companies linked to the Haftar family. He had disappeared just days later. Neither the house of representatives nor the public prosecution office had issued a statement on the incident or demanded consequences.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expressed "deep concern" over the circulating footage, confirming that it clearly showed signs of torture and abuse. The mission called for an immediate, impartial, independent investigation, emphasising that enforced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial killings constituted grave crimes potentially prosecutable by the International Criminal Court. In a joint statement, the EU missions also strongly condemned the arbitrary detention of political opponents by Libyan authorities, and stressed the need to hold those responsible for al-Darsi's disappearance accountable.

The Libyan NGO Libyan Crimes Watch confirms that serious human rights violations in Libyan prisons, in particular

in the east of the country controlled by Haftar's forces, are the order of the day. According to a report of 11.05.2025, Faisal Awad Abshish, a detainee at the Garnada military prison, only recently died due to medical negligence.⁴

12 May 2025

Influential militia leader killed, heavy fighting in the capital Tripoli

Militia leader Abdelghani al-Kikli, also known under the pseudonym "Gheniwa", was killed on the evening of 12.05.25 during a meeting at the Tekbali military camp in southeastern Tripoli, a facility run by the rival 444 brigade, under the leadership of Mahmoud Hamza. According to media reports, the meeting had been convened to dampen down mounting tensions among the various armed factions in the capital, but escalated when guards from rival groups exchanged fire outside the gathering.

Al-Kikli was one of the most influential militia leaders in western Libya. His power extended well beyond Tripoli into Gharyan in the west and Zliten in the east, and he was widely seen as one of the city's four major militia commanders, alongside the leaders of the Special Deterrence Force (Rada), the 444 brigade, and the 111 brigade. His Stability Support Apparatus (SSA) militia is under the presidential council, which came to power in a UN-recognised process in 2021 with the Government of National Unity (GNU) of Abdul Hamid Dbeibah. The SSA was deeply entrenched in its state institutions, and had installed loyalists in key positions across the banking, telecom and administrative oversight sectors, and even within top diplomatic functions. The SSA had however recently become increasingly involved in disputes with rival armed groups.

Heavy gunfire and explosions were subsequently reported in several Tripoli neighbourhoods, particularly Abu Salim, a densely-populated southern district of the capital, where the SSA is headquartered. The GNU stated on the morning of 13.05.25 that its security forces had taken full control of Abu Salim, and that action would be taken against armed groups. The interior ministry urged residents of the capital to stay at home and avoid movement, warning of further instability, whilst the ministry of education suspended classes across Tripoli, citing the deteriorating security situation. Mitiga International Airport also had to suspend operations until further notice.

A total of six people had been killed in the clashes in the night of 11.-12.05.25, according to the emergency medicine centre, although it remained unclear whether they were members of the security forces or civilians. After it had initially been quiet during the day, fighting broke out once more in the night of 13.-14.05.25 between the Dbeibah-aligned 444 brigade and the Rada, the last large armed group in Tripoli which is currently not part of the GNU camp around Dbeibah. On the afternoon of 14.05.25, the GNU finally announced a ceasefire. The authorities did not initially provide any information regarding the number of injured and fatalities, but the UN Support Mission UNSMIL spoke on 15.05.25 of at least eight civilians killed.

According to analysts, Al-Kikli's death and the capture of SSA territory by the Dbeibah-aligned 444 and 111 brigades have served to shore up Dbeibah's position, as this is said to have enabled him to rid himself of a powerful rival. The consolidation of Dbeibah's power in western Libya is hence said to follow the pattern of the east, where commander Khalifa Haftar took control a decade ago by eliminating his rivals and forcing other armed groups under his rule. The most important armed group remaining in Tripoli which is not regarded as being closely allied with Dbeibah is the Security Deterrence Force, also known as Rada, under the leadership of Abdul Raouf Kara. It continues to control the most important airport Mitiga and other parts of the city centre.⁵

Protesters call for Dbeibah's resignation, police officer killed

On 16.05.25, after the situation in the capital had calmed once more in the wake of the fighting which had taken place in the preceding few days, hundreds of protesters gathered on Martyrs' Square and in front of the prime minister's office, calling for the resignation of prime minister Dbeibah and his GNU government and for new elections to be prepared. Economics and trade minister Mohamed al-Hawij, local government minister Badr Eddin al-Tumi, and minister of housing Abu Bakr al-Ghawi, resigned in solidarity with the protesters, as confirmed by videos released by two of those ministers as well as local media reports. The government had previously denied reports of the two ministers' resignations.

The government announced late in the evening via the government-affiliated media platform that a police officer

had been killed during the protests as an unidentified group of armed persons had attempted to storm the prime minister's office.⁶

26 May 2025

Dozens of corpses found in hospitals in the territory of the SSA militia

After militias allied with prime minister Dbeibah (Government of National Unity, GNU) had assumed control of the territory of killed militia leader Abdelghani "Gheniwa" al-Kikli and his Stability Support Apparatus (SSA) during fighting in Tripoli last week (cf. BN of 19.05.25), authorities announced on 17.05.25 that nine unidentified corpses had been found in a morgue at Al-Khadra Hospital, located in the Abu Selim neighbourhood. On 19.05.25, the ministry of the interior announced that at least 58 more unidentified bodies had been found in the morgue of the Abu Selim Accident Hospital. As part of the statement, photographs of some of the corpses were also released which were either severely decomposed or burned. The authorities had initiated investigations to identify the corpses.

Human rights organisations accused the SSA and its killed leader al-Kikli of committing war crimes and grave human rights violations, including torture, arbitrary detention and unlawful killings.⁷

Renewed demonstrations in western Libya

Thousands of Libyans rallied once more on 23.05.25 in mass demonstrations in the capital Tripoli, as well as in Misrata, Sabratha and other areas in western Libya, demanding the resignation of the GNU government, of the parallel government in the east, as well as of all other political bodies, and the dismantling of the country's armed militias. According to reports, protesters expressed their rejection of the legitimacy of the current political structures, and demanded that an end be put to the transitional phase and that elections be held. Unlike the protests which had taken place in the previous week (cf. BN of 19.05.25), this time there were no reports of violence, either on the part of protesters, or of the security forces. The chairman of the presidential council, Mohamed Menfi, commended the peaceful demonstrations, and encouraged all Libyans across the country to continue them in order to build a modern state that reflects the hopes of all citizens.⁸

02 June 2025

Protests continue against the government of national unity and prime minister Dbeibah

Hundreds of protesters gathered in central Tripoli on 30.05.25 on the third Friday in a row to demand the resignation of the prime minister of the government of national unity (GNU) Abdulhamid Dbeibah, following recent clashes between opposing militias in Libya's capital (cf. BN of 19.05. and 26.05.25). According to reports, they also blocked major roads and intersections, set car tyres on fire, and denounced the worsening economic and living conditions. Security forces had been deployed to prevent the crowds from advancing to the prime minister's office. Several human rights organisations and civil society figures condemned the use of vandalism during the protests, warning that this would undermine the legitimacy of the movement. The "Sooq al-Jumaa movement," a key group behind the ongoing mobilisation, denied any involvement in acts of sabotage, and reiterated its support for peaceful protest.⁹

16 June 2025

HRW: New report laments dysfunctionality of the judiciary

In a report on Libya's justice sector released on 02.06.25, HRW reached the conclusion that the fragmented justice sector is suppressing fundamental freedoms and obstructing accountability for human rights abuses.

The 39-page report entitled "Injustice By Design: Need for Comprehensive Justice Reform in Libya" documents

amongst other things outdated and repressive legislation, a lack of fair trial rights, rampant due process violations, unsafe conditions for judicial staff, abusive military trials of civilians, and inhumane conditions in prisons.¹⁰

Blockade of a Gaza convoy by eastern Libyan security forces

In the late evening of 12.06.25, security and military forces of Khalifa Haftar's eastern administration halted a convoy consisting of 150 vehicles and approximately 1,700 activists from Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia which had started from Tunis on 09.06.25 at the east entrance of Sirte, some 450 kilometres from Tripoli.

According to media reports, local security officials told the convoy's organisers, the Joint Action Coordination for Palestine, that they must await formal approval from authorities in Benghazi before proceeding. Internet services were also said to have been temporarily cut off across the area. Faced with the unexpected blockade, the convoy's organisers decided to initially camp at the edge of Sirte and await the approval of the eastern Libyan authorities. Not having received permission to continue by 15.06.25, they decided to fall back, initially to Misrata. They also denounced the detention of several convoy members, including at least three bloggers who had been documenting the journey since its departure from Tunisia.

In a statement, the Joint Action Coordination Committee for Palestine demanded the immediate release of 13 participants still held by eastern Libyan authorities.¹¹

23 June 2025

At least 60 people missing after two shipwrecks off the coast of Libya

Media have reported, citing a report by the IOM of 17.06.25, that at least 60 people had gone missing following two shipwrecks off the coast of Libya in recent days. The victims, including women and children, come from Eritrea, Pakistan, Egypt and Sudan, amongst other countries.

According to the IOM, on 12.06.25, 21 people were reported missing after a shipwreck near Alshab port, where only five survivors were found. The second incident occurred on 13.06.25 approximately 35 kilometres west of Tobruk. According to the sole survivor, who had been rescued by fishermen, 39 people had lost their lives. Three bodies washed ashore in the days that followed, two on Umm Aqiqih beach on 14.06.25, and another on Elramla beach in downtown Tobruk on 15.06.25. Efforts to identify the bodies are said to be ongoing.

So far in 2025, at least 743 people are said to have lost their lives attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe, including 538 on the Central Mediterranean route alone. This remains the deadliest known migration route in the world, marked by increasingly dangerous smuggling practices, limited rescue capacities, and growing restrictions on humanitarian operations.¹²

Seven detained members of the Gaza aid convoy released after negotiations

The "Sumood Convoy", which had attempted to reach the Egyptian border to the Gaza Strip over land from Tunisia as part of the Global March to Gaza, announced the release of seven of its members who had been detained near Sirte by the forces of Khalifa Haftar, following days of negotiations and communication with various parties (cf. BN of 16.06.25). Both organisers and participants of the convoy reported of a "methodical siege", in which deliveries of food, water and medical supplies to the approximately 1,500 participants had been prevented and access to the internet had been cut off, and that there had been violent assaults by the eastern Libyan security forces.¹³

30 June 2025

Greece to deploy navy vessels off Libya's territorial waters

Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis stated on 23.06.25 that Greece would be deploying two frigates and one other vessel off Libya's territorial waters in order to deter migrants from arriving at the southern islands of Crete and Gavdos. The move would be in coordination with Libyan authorities and the rest of the European forces operating in the area.

On 26.06.25, Mitsotakis stated that authorities in Libya should cooperate with Greece to stop those concerned sailing from there, or turn them back before they exit Libyan territorial waters. He added that the EU's migration

commissioner and the respective ministers from Italy, Greece and Malta would travel to Libya early in July to discuss the issue.

The number of migrants trying to reach Europe by sea from the coasts in northeastern Libya has surged in recent months. According to Greek authorities, more than 800 persons had tried to reach the southern islands Crete and Gavdos in the period from 19.06. to 23.06.25 alone. Smugglers, who have long exploited Libya's western coast as the main departure point for Italy and Malta, appear to be shifting eastward in response to tighter European surveillance of the traditional routes to Europe. The east is politically fragmented, and its coast is less monitored so far.

Also in this context, the Council of the European Union decided on 26.06.25 to renew the mandate of the European Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya) for a further two years until 30 June 2027, and to provide it with a budget of nearly 52 million EUR for this period. According to the press release, the Mission contributes to fighting cross-border crime, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and counter terrorism activities, ensuring full respect for international human rights standards.¹⁴

Protests at UN headquarters in Tripoli, political figures call on UNSMIL to withdraw from the country

According to media reports, protests took place on 24.06.25 outside the UN compound in Tripoli, where demonstrators called for an end to the transitional period and the holding of national elections. The protests had escalated when a group breached one of the outer gates of the Mission's headquarters.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) criticised in a statement of 27.06.25 statements purportedly from some Libyan political figures actively encouraging the population to engage in violent actions against UN personnel and property.

Osama Hammad, the head of the parallel government based in eastern Libya, had previously called for the immediate departure of the Support Mission, and accused it of bias, interference and undermining the country's sovereignty. He specifically denounced the UN Security Council's review of the budget for the reconstruction fund, which is headed by a son of field marshal Khalifa Haftar.¹⁵

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