



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Libya – January to June 2024

30 June 2024

08 January 2024

UNSMIL urges comprehensive probe into the death of former Defence Minister

On 21.12.23, the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) expressed concern on social media about the death of Mahdhi al-Barghathi, a former Minister of Defence in the former Government of National Accord (GNA), and six other people held in custody. Al-Barghathi was forcibly arrested in early October 2023 by units of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) in his hometown of Benghazi along with numerous other people, including family members, and was taken to an unknown location (cf. BN of 16.10.23). UNSMIL has called on competent Libyan authorities to conduct an independent and transparent investigation into these deaths and to provide information on the fate of those still missing.¹

Protests in southern Libya are hindering crude oil production

According to media reports, oil production at the Sharara oil field in southwestern Libya was halted on 02.01.24 due to local protests. On 07.01.24, the National Oil Company NOC subsequently announced that it had been forced to suspend all of its contractual oil deliveries to the oil market. The protesters at one of Libya's largest oil fields criticized the disruption of fuel and gas supplies in numerous southern Libyan cities lasting several days as well as the lack of public services in the south of the country. According to the protesters' demands, their region is in need of more development, inter alia, in the area of public infrastructure, such as the expansion of healthcare, the maintenance and expansion of road networks and the creation of jobs for young people. In the past, the closure of oil production facilities and other infrastructure objects has been used regularly to assert political interests.²

15 January 2024

Further oil and gas production facilities face closure

According to media reports issued on 11.01.24, protestors have threatened to shut down two oil and gas production facilities west of the Libyan capital if their demands are not met. In addition to the creation of further employment opportunities in the region and stricter environmental controls, the protestors are demanding the removal of the chairman of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Farhat Bengdara. The latter is said to have committed serious violations in his capacity as chairman. Oil production had to be suspended at one of Libya's largest oil fields in the south of the country at the beginning of the month due to protests (cf. BN of 08.01.24).³

GNU announces arrest of leading ISIS member

According to an announcement made by the Government of National Unity (GNU) on 04.01.24, units of the Special Deterrence Force (SDF, also known as the Rada militia) are said to have arrested a leading member of ISIS, Hashim

Abu Sidra, in Libya. According to local authorities, all leading ISIS members in Libya are either dead, in prison or on trial.⁴

19 February 2024

Internal Security Agency violating human rights, AI says

In a report published on 14.02.24, the human rights organisation Amnesty International (AI) accused the Tripoli-based Internal Security Agency (ISA) of violating the rights of numerous men, women and children through enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and torture in 2023. In May 2023, the General Authority of Endowments and Islamic Affairs signed a decree establishing a programme to protect Islamic virtues and values and to combat what it called religious, intellectual and moral deviations. According to AI, against the backdrop of this decree, the ISA has intensified violations of freedom of expression and freedom of belief and has committed the above-mentioned human rights violations against people who are opposed to the sometimes very conservative Islamic beliefs prevailing in the General Authority of Endowments and Islamic Affairs. Among other things, the detainees were allegedly accused of apostasy, illicit sexual intercourse and promoting views aimed at overthrowing the political, social or economic order of the state. The ISA rejected the information published in AI's report as false and accused the human rights organisation of attempting to divide Libyan society.⁵

26 February 2024

Ten individuals shot dead in Tripoli

According to media reports, at least 10 people were shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the Abu Salim district of Tripoli on 17.02.2014.

Among those killed were two members of the militia known as the Stability Support Apparatus, which is said to control the Abu Salim neighbourhood and is considered to be one of the largest armed groups in Tripoli.⁶

According to an agreement, armed groups are to leave Tripoli by mid-April 2024

During a press conference held on 21.02.24, Imad Trabelsi, Interior Minister of the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), announced that an agreement had been reached following months of negotiations with the ruling armed groups in Tripoli. According to the deal, armed militia will leave the capital by the end of this year's Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, will return to their headquarters and be replaced by regular police forces.

The militias with whom the government struck a deal are the Stability Support Apparatus, Special Deterrence Force, General Security Force and the 444th and 111th Brigades. However, media reports are already expressing doubts about whether the agreement will be fully implemented, as the latter can only go hand in hand with a comprehensive agreement on Libya's political future.⁷

04 March 2024

Sufi sheik abducted

According to NGO sources, the sheikh of a Sufi order was abducted from his home south of Benghazi on 04.02.24 by armed groups known for their Salafist ideology.

He had already faced previous threats by persons who feel a connection with the Salafist ideology, which is said to have led to the confiscation of his madrassa and forced him to move the facility to his private property.⁸

Two killed and several injured following fighting in Zawiya

According to media reports, violent clashes broke out on 02.03.24 between two armed groups, both of which support the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), in the middle of residential neighbourhoods in the western Libyan city of Zawiya.

A dispute between armed members of the two militias escalated when other fighters from the groups intervened using various types of weapons, resulting in the death of two militiamen and the injury of a further six militiamen. However, no civilians were harmed.

Due to the fighting, the coastal road between Zawiya and the capital Tripoli was closed for a short time.⁹

18 March 2024

Chairpersons of the most important legislative institutions agree to form a unified government

According to media reports, the head of the country's Presidential Council, Mohammed Mnefi, the head of the High State Council, Mohammed Takala and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aguila Saleh, met in Cairo on 10.03.24 to agree on the formation of a new unified government that would pave the way for nationwide elections. However, the meeting in Cairo took place without two other influential political players, the leader of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), Khalifa Haftar, and the acting Prime Minister of the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), Abdul Hamid Dbeibah.

International observers are sceptical as to whether the declaration of intent made by the heads of the three most important legislative institutions to form a new unified government and hold national elections could ever be followed by action. After the elections scheduled for the end of 2021 were delayed, with the High State Council and the House of Representatives failing to reach agreement on a constitutional basis for the elections and rules for casting votes, a political stalemate was reached, resulting in the emergence of two rival governments. Several initiatives to agree on common legislation for the organisation of parliamentary and presidential elections have so far failed.¹⁰

25 March 2024

Armed conflict leads to closure of border crossing with Tunisia

According to media reports, armed clashes erupted between an armed group that controls the Ras Jedir crossing point on the Libyan side and security forces deployed by Tripoli at the Tunisian-Libyan border crossing at Ras Jedir on 19.03.24. Shots were fired and vehicles were set on fire; there is no information available on the number of potential casualties. The authorities of both countries then closed the border crossing. Disputes over control of the border crossing have reportedly been ongoing for several months. It is controlled by local militias from the nearby town of Zuwara, who in turn are opposed to the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU) having any influence.¹¹

08 April 2024

Attack on the Prime Minister's house in Tripoli

Media report that on 31.03.24, grenade attack was launched at a house in a western district of the capital belonging to Abdulhamid Dbeibahs, Prime Minister of the Tripoli-based national unity government. No one was injured in the attack and the house was only slightly damaged. It is not yet known who is believed to have carried out the attack.¹²

Activist arrested for critical post on social media

On 02.04.24, local media reported that an activist was arrested in Benghazi by members of the security authorities. According to a local human rights organization, he was arrested and taken to an unknown location for his critical posts on social media regarding the conditions in the eastern Libyan cities.¹³

29 April 2024

UN special envoy for Libya resigns

The UN has informed that its Special Envoy and head of the UN Support Mission for Libya (UNSMIL), Abdoulaye Bathily, announced his resignation on 16.04.24.

The former Senegalese minister and UN diplomat was appointed Special Envoy in September 2022 to succeed the Slovakian diplomat Ján Kubiš, who had resigned in November 2021, and US diplomat and former head of UNSMIL, Stephanie Williams, who took over the position on an interim basis from December 2021 to July 2022.

According to Bathily, UNSMIL has made great efforts over the past 18 months under his leadership to resolve the contentious issues of the electoral legislation and the formation of a unified government, but the situation has deteriorated. He also condemned the lack of political will on the part of Libya's main political actors to change the status quo.¹⁴

Activist dies in custody

According to media reports of 21.04.24, a political activist has died while in custody at the Rajma military base east of Benghazi, which is controlled by units of Khalifa Haftar. The activist had been arrested and detained in October 2023 along with four other activists without being officially charged or brought before a court. According to the Eastern Internal Security Agency, the activist fatally injured himself during an escape attempt. UNSMIL has called for a transparent and independent investigation into the activist's death and the immediate release of all those arbitrarily detained.¹⁵

13 May 2024

Fighting in the west

Media reports say that on 07.05.24, local armed groups violently clashed in the western city al-Jamil, 45 kilometres from the capital Tripoli, with at least nine people injured and one killed; several civilian and government buildings were damaged by gunfire.¹⁶

27 May 2024

New fighting in western Libyan town leaves one civilian dead and several injured

In the morning of 18.05.24, brief clashes between armed groups associated with the Government for National Unity (GNU) in Zawiya, a town around 40 kilometres west of Tripoli, reportedly left at least one civilian dead and between six and 22 injured. Media report that families were trapped in their homes and educational institutions were closed as a result of the clashes. Fighting stopped later in the day following mediation by tribal elders. The reason for the armed clashes is not clear.¹⁷

Member of parliament missing after robbery

Following the robbery of the home of a MP in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, the authorities reported him missing on 17.05.24 and launched investigations. The UN Support Mission for Libya (UNSMIL) said it was deeply concerned about the MP's disappearance, called for his prompt release, and condemned all forms of arbitrary detention across Libya.

Already in July 2019, MP Siham Sergiwa and her husband had been abducted from their home in Benghazi by unknown assailants. Both are still missing.¹⁸

35 people injured or killed by explosive ordnance within one year

UNSMIL reports that between April 2023 and April 2024, at least 35 people were injured or killed by accidents involving mines and unexploded ordnance, 26 of whom were minors.

The UNSMIL head of the demining department stated that in the past five years, at least 400 people were killed or injured in accidents involving explosive ordnance. She added that around 36 percent of the areas identified as dangerous have meanwhile been cleared of abandoned explosive ordnance.¹⁹

03 June 2024

Three dead and several injured in violent clashes in southern Libyan city

On 28.05.24, an attack on the criminal investigation headquarters in the southern Libyan city of Sabha by a militia allied to General Haftar apparently resulted in one fighter killed, two members of the criminal investigation department killed, and several people injured.

According to local media reports, the (unsuccessful) attack on the headquarters, which is under the interior ministry of the Government of National Stability (GNS), which is also close to Haftar, was intended to provide an escape route for the chairman of the fuel committee, who had been arrested on charges of theft on orders of the attorney general. The GNS announced that it would investigate the events surrounding the attack and to maintain security in the city with the help of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF).²⁰

17 June 2024

Tunisian-Libyan border crossing opens after three months of closure

Media report that the interior ministries of Tunisia and Libya have agreed to open the Ras Jedir border crossing as of 20.06.24. It had been closed since mid-March 2024 due to armed clashes on the Libyan side (cf. BN of 25.04.24).²¹

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Briefing Notes
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