



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Libya – July to December 2024

31 December 2024

15 July 2024

Activist kidnapped by unknown persons

According to media reports, the political activist Al-Moatassim Al-Areebi was abducted together with another person by an unknown armed group in the western Libyan city of Misrata on 08.07.24. His companion was released a short time later and reported mistreatment and torture in the custody of the kidnappers. Al-Areebi himself is said to have been released two days after his abduction. The abduction of the activist was strongly condemned by the UN, foreign diplomatic missions and local politicians.¹

22 July 2024

Civilian killed in fighting in western Libyan coastal town

According to media reports, a civilian was killed by a stray bullet on 16.07.24 when two rival armed groups engaged in violent clashes in the western Libyan coastal town of Tajoura.

The fighting broke out after members of one armed group arrested a fighter from another militia. The fighting ended with an agreement between the parties to the conflict to withdraw to their headquarters and station two neutral armed groups in the area of the city.²

Journalist released after three days in detention

The well-known journalist and TV presenter, Ahmed Sanussi, was reportedly released without explanation on 14.07.24 after being arrested and detained for three days by the local security authorities in Tripoli. As editor-in-chief of a Libyan financial news website, Sanussi has been reporting on corruption in his home country for a long time already, with his most recent report focussing on the Ministry of Economy.³

29 July 2024

Renewed fighting in western Libyan coastal town of Zawiya

According to media reports, two armed groups clashed violently in some residential areas of the western Libyan coastal town of Zawiya, around 40 km west of Tripoli, between 23.07. and 24.07.24. During the fighting, neighbouring houses and vehicles were damaged and numerous families were trapped in their homes. The reason for the clashes is still unknown.

There had been brief armed clashes in the western Libyan coastal town in March and May 2024 (cf. BN of 04.03. and 27.05.24).⁴

12 August 2024

Dead and injured in violent clashes in Tripoli suburb

At least nine people were reportedly killed and 16 others injured in violent clashes between the Rahba Al-Duruae and Al-Shahida Sabriya militias in Tajoura on 09.08.24. The fighting was preceded by an assassination attempt on the militia leader of Rahba Al-Duruae by Al-Shahida Sabriya.⁵

19 August 2024

Twelve officers sentenced to long prison terms for dam bursts in Derna

On 28.07.24, twelve officials were sentenced to prison terms of between nine and 27 years for their role in managing the dams that were endangered by heavy rainfall in early September 2023, ultimately burst and severely flooded the eastern Libyan city of Derna (cf. BN of 25.09.23).⁶

Central bank suspends work due to the kidnapping of an employee

On 18.08.24, the Central Bank of Libya announced that it would cease operations until its kidnapped employee was released. In the morning of the same day, the head of the bank's information technology department had been kidnapped in front of his house by members of an unknown armed group. Other executives of the institution were threatened with kidnapping as well.

A week earlier, armed individuals had besieged the headquarters of the central bank in Tripoli. According to local media, the attackers had demanded the resignation of the head of the bank, al-Siddiq al-Kabir.⁷

26 August 2024

Political and military tensions increase

According to media reports, the UN and the EU expressed concern about the mounting political and military tensions in the North African country.

Politically, the confrontation between the two competing governments intensified further after the House of Representatives (HoR), based in Tobruk in eastern Libya, voted on 13.08.24 to end the term of office of the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU) led by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah and declared the rival Government of National Stability (GNS) led by Osama Hammad as the country's only legitimate government. Furthermore, there is disagreement regarding the appointment of the head of the Libyan Central Bank. According to media reports, the HoR speaker threatened on 22.08.24 to stop oil production if the central bank's current head, al-Siddiq al-Kabir, was removed from office. In the past two weeks, the central bank had shortly interrupted its work after one of its employees had been kidnapped, and its headquarters had been briefly besieged by an armed group some days earlier in order to force al-Kabir's resignation (cf. BN of 19.08.24).

Militarily, the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF) mobilised some of their units to the south-west in early August 2024 which put the military forces supporting the GNU on alert. Forces associated with the GNU had already advanced westwards at the end of July 2024, which in turn led to the mobilisation of LAAF units.⁸

02 September 2024

Production at several oil fields temporarily halted

According to media reports, several oil fields were closed between 28.08 and 30.08.24 by the actors controlling the east and large parts of the south. The speaker of the House of Representatives (HoR) in Tobruk, eastern Libya, had already announced on 22.08.24 that this measure in case the head of the central bank, al-Siddiq al-Kabir, was dismissed (cf. BN of 26.08.24). The media reported that the new interim head of the central bank, Abdel Fattah Abdel Ghaffar, appointed by the Presidential Council, and his new board of directors took up office on 25.08.24, which was rejected by the HoR. Al-Kabir and other former senior bank employees left the country for fear of possible attacks by armed groups.⁹

09 September 2024

Eleven members of a human trafficking network arrested; traffickers and militia leaders killed

On 31.08.24 the Libyan authorities announced that a human trafficking network operating in the country's south-west was discovered and eleven of its members were arrested. The detainees are accused of murder, illegal detention, torture and rape of migrants.

Meanwhile, numerous media outlets are reporting the death of the well-known militia leader and alleged human trafficker, Abdel-Rahman Milad, from the western Libyan city of Zawiya. He had been found dead in his bullet-riddled vehicle on 01.09.24. Milad, who is said to have led a coastguard unit, had been sanctioned by the UN Security Council along with other individuals for human trafficking and violence against migrants. In the case of Milad's killing, the public prosecutor's office on 07.09.24 ordered the arrest of the militia leader, Muhammad Bahroun, also from Zawiya, and one of his allies accusing them of involvement in Milad's killing.¹⁰

16 September 2024

UN report criticises ongoing impunity for human rights violations committed in Tarhuna

In their report published at the end of August 2024, the UN Support Mission for Libya (UNSMIL) and the UN Human Rights Office criticised the lack of accountability and continued impunity for the human rights violations committed by the local Al-Kaniyat militia in the western Libyan city of Tarhuna between 2013 and 2022. The report cites killings, sexual violence, torture and abductions allegedly committed by the local armed group. As a result, the perpetrators have still not been brought to justice and the victims, as well as their families, have received neither justice nor compensation or are still in the dark about the whereabouts of their family members. 5 In some cases, the lack of justice and continued impunity of the perpetrators had triggered renewed violence, the report says.¹¹

Imprisonment of political opponents in the country's east and south

According to a report by Amnesty International (AI), members of the Internal Security Agency (ISA), which is subordinate to the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), have been arresting political opponents and critics without warrants in the east and south of the country since January 2024. Some of the people concerned were detained for months without contact to their families or legal representation and had no prospect of a fair trial. In addition, two people died in detention in April and July 2024. AI also criticised the fact that these and other human rights violations committed by the ISA did not result in criminal prosecution.¹²

07 October 2024

Agreement on joint head of the central bank

On 30.09.24 the parliament residing in Tobruk, eastern Libya (House of Representatives) and the High State Council domiciled in the capital approved the appointment of Naji Issa Belgassim as the new head of the central bank and Mari Barassi as his deputy. The appointment was preceded by several weeks of wrangling between the institutions supporting the rival governments over who should become the new head of the central bank. As a result of this dispute, production at a number of oil fields was suspended by the actors controlling the east of the country and large parts of the south (cf. BN of 19.08. and 26.09.24). The National Oil Corporation announced on 03.10.24 that production and exports were being resumed at all oil fields.¹³

Military court: 16 people sentenced to death

According to reports in the media, a military court has sentenced 16 people to death in connection with the mass graves which were discovered in the town of Tarhuna in western Libya in 2020. Six other defendants received life prison terms. Some of the victims in the discovered mass graves showed signs of torture. Death sentences continue to be imposed in Libya, although no executions have been carried out since 2011.¹⁴

- 1 The New Arab: UN says 'deeply concerned' over Libyan activist abduction, 10.07.24; The Libya Observer: Political activist released in Misrata after various condemnations, 11.07.24.
- 2 The New Arab: Bystander killed as armed groups clash in Libya seaside town, 17.07.24; The Libya Observer: Woman killed by indiscriminate fire from armed clashes in Libya's Tajoura district, 17.07.24.
- 3 Arab News: Libyan authorities release detained journalist Sanussi, 15.07.24; Voice of America: UN urges release of detained Libyan journalist, 13.07.24.
- 4 The New Arab: Libya: Families trapped as militias clash in western city of Zawiya, 24.07.24; The Libya Observer: Clashes halted in Al-Zawiya as stranded people evacuated from fighting areas, 24.07.24.
- 5 The New Arab: Libya: At least nine killed in fighting between rival militia groups in Tripoli, 10.08.24; Al Arabiya: Militia infighting kills at least nine in Libya's capital, officials say, 10.08.24.
- 6 Libya jails 12 over dam mismanagement in Derna flood that killed thousands, 29.07.24; Reuters: Libyan court jails 12 officials over deadly floods, 29.07.24.
- 7 Deutsche Welle: Libya central bank halts operations over employee abduction, 19.08.24; BBC: Libya's central bank halts operations after director kidnapped, 18.08.24.
- 8 United Nations: Amid Rapidly Deteriorating Political, Economic Situation, Ordinary People in Libya Fear Re-emergence of War, Top UN Official Warns Security Council, 20.08.24; North Africa Post: Libya's ongoing political crisis similar to that prior to 2014 civil war, experts warn, 18.08.24; Deutsche Welle: Is Libya on the brink of a new civil war?, 16.08.24; The Libya Observer: Saleh threatens oil shutdown over CBL governor dispute, 24.08.24; Asharq Al-Awsat: Libyan Parliament Unilaterally Ends Terms of Presidential Council, GNU, 14.08.24.
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- 11 UN Support Mission in Libya: UN visits Tarhuna to launch new report on mass graves, 04.09.2024; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: Libya: UN report urges accountability for years of human rights violations in Tarhuna, 30.08.24; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Support Mission in Libya: Tarhuna – Mass Graves and Related Human Rights Violations and Abuses in Libya, 30.08.24; Africanews: Families of Libya mass grave victims demand justice, 13.08.24.
- 12 Amnesty International: Libya: Internal Security Agency must be held accountable for deaths in custody, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention, 10.09.24; Asharq Al-Awsat: Amnesty International Denounces Crackdown on Political Opponents in Libya, 11.09.24.
- 13 Reuters: Libyan oilfields open now that central bank dispute resolved, 03.10.24; Reuters: Libya preparing to restart oil output as central bank crisis eases, 01.10.24; The New Arab: Libya gets new central bank chief under UN-backed deal, 01.10.24.
- 14 The Libya Observer: Libyan military court issues death sentences in Tarhuna mass graves case, 03.10.24; Amnesty International: Death Sentence and Executions 2023, 23.05.24; Amnesty International: The State of the World's Human Rights; Libya 2023, 24.04.24.

Imprint

Published by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge,
90461 Nürnberg

ISSN

2943-1387

Valid as of

12/2024

Printed by

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Design

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge

Reference source

Publikationsstelle Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
www.bamf.de/publikationen

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