

Libya's Civil War: Is the End in Sight?

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Introduction

Inspired in part by the civil uprising in Tunisia, minor protests began to emerge in Libya in mid-January 2011. The demonstrations were the result of corruption and nepotism, driven by a desire for greater political freedom and reform. In early February, significant demonstrations took place in Tripoli and Benghazi against Muammar Gaddafi. Protests subsequently spread throughout Libya, resulting in repression and violence from the regime.

Circumstances in Libya in 2011 differed from those in Tunisia and Egypt, however. Although Libya was ruled by an authoritarian leader, a strong economy and an adequate standard of living supported much of the population (Pedde, 2017). The toppling of the Gaddafi regime gave rise to several domestic, regional and international problems. The destruction of Libya's government resulted in a power vacuum, widespread violence, human rights abuses, a refugee crisis, exacerbated racism and tribalism, economic instability, and the collapse of social welfare systems. The manner by which the Libyan government was overthrown also led to grave, unintended consequences affecting regional instability, including massive civilian displacement and the creation of an environment conducive to extremism and terrorism. Today Libya is fragmented and polarized, mired in instability and insecurity. In many respects it is a

failed state, lacking a unified, representative and legitimate government, and unable to exercise nationwide authority or hold a monopoly over the use of force (Eljarh, 2018).

Since 2014, efforts by the international community to broker peace have been unsuccessful. More recently, from November 12 to 13, 2018, Italy hosted The International Conference on Libya to establish a path toward stability. Unfortunately, the conference produced neither political consensus nor a well-organized plan to solve the country's crisis. Ultimately, Libya must press ahead with national elections, even if the House of Representatives (HoR) intends to undermine efforts to resolve the lasting conflict. The United Nations, regional and Western powers hope that Libya will hold a referendum on a constitutional framework outlining a plan to resolve the conflict. The next step would include national elections by June. However, if no clear political, institutional, or military agreement is confirmed, the possibility of elections in the near future appears doubtful.

The Libyan Government, supported by the UN, must tailor a national plan for peace which will allow all social, cultural and political actors to work together in solving their accumulated grievances. The role of Khalifa Haftar, head of the Libyan National Army, has yet to be resolved and remains the key obstacle in unifying the country.

Libya's Political Structure Reconfigured

Libya has had a long history of political exclusion and stigmatization of political opposition. Gaddafi seized power through a military coup in 1969 and subsequently imposed a law banning the establishment of political parties or civil society organizations. Since the fall of Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has been governed under a temporary Constitutional Declaration, under which Libya is designated as a parliamentary republic governed by the General National Congress (GNC), whose members were elected in July 2012. The key responsibility of the GNC was to form a constituent assembly which was expected to write Libya's permanent constitution. Between 1965 and 2012, no elections were held in Libya, and these were the first to occur since the overthrow of Gaddafi.

Many parties were formed during the run-up to the July 2012 elections, 21 of which secured parliamentary seats. The National Forces Alliance (NFA), on the rather

liberal end of the spectrum, was created in February 2012 under the leadership of Mahmoud Jibril. Jibril was a former interim leader of the country who played a leading role in Libya's 2011 revolution. The NFA received 48% of the popular vote and won 39 of the 80 party-list seats.

The Justice and Construction Party, which is affiliated with the Libya Muslim Brotherhood and under the leadership of Mohamed Sowan, was officially founded in Tripoli on March 3, 2012. The party received 10 percent of the vote and won 17 of the 80 party-list seats, placing second behind the NFA. Minor parties included the National Front, with three seats, the National Centrist Party Union for the Homeland, and the Wadi al-Haya Party for Democracy and Development, each with two seats. Fifteen other parties each secured a single party-list seat (IPB, 2015).

SEATS IN THE LIBYAN GENERAL NATIONAL CONGRESS

After the 7 July 2012 Election

Voter turnout 61.6%

National Forces Alliance NFA

Justice and Construction

3 National Front

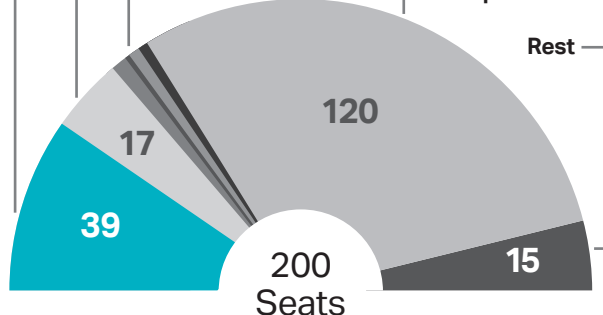
2 Union for the Homeland

2 National Centrist Party

2 Wadi al-Hayah Party

Independents

Rest



Rest

Total Seats 15

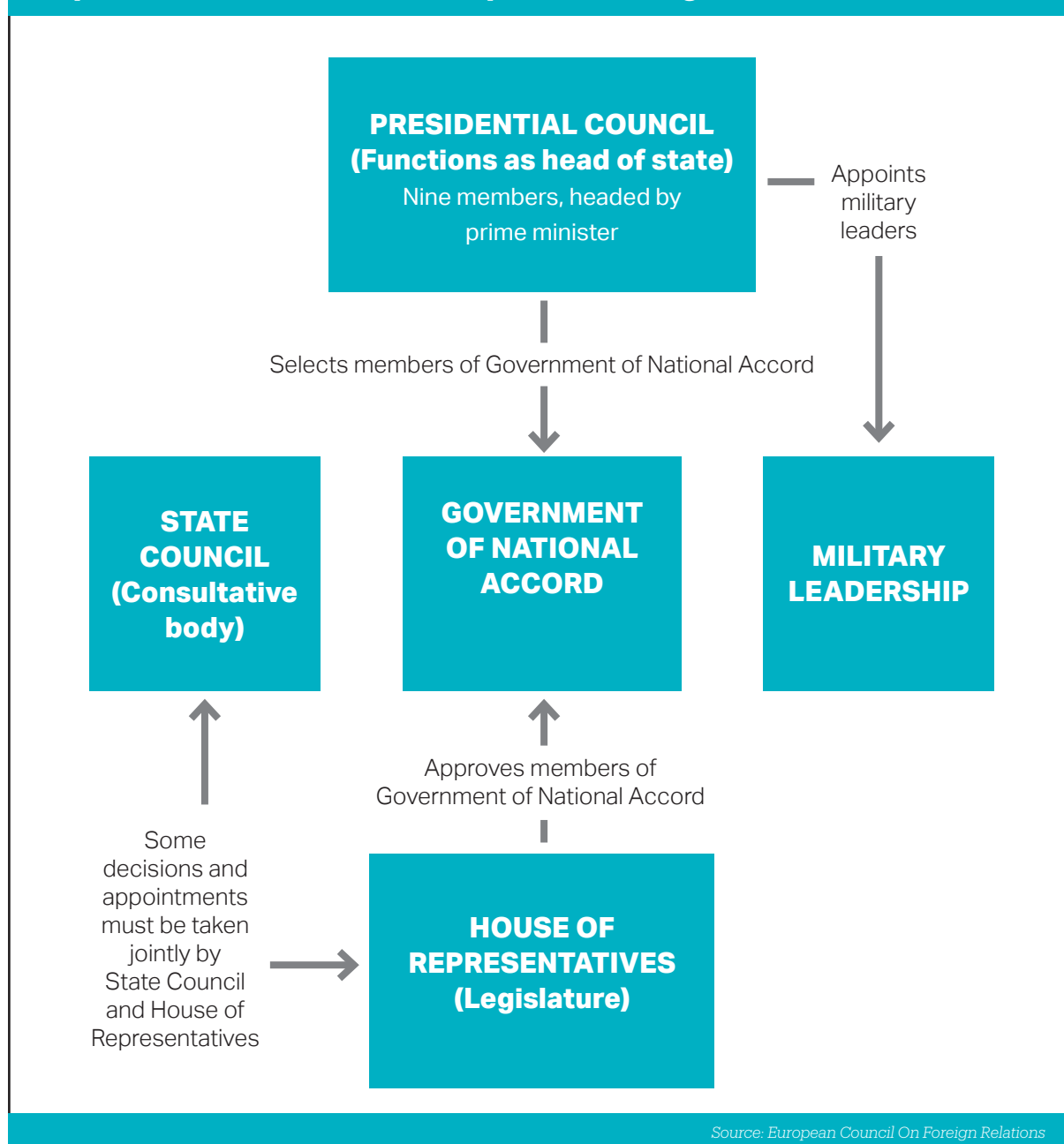
Moderate Ummah Assembly	1
Authenticity and Renewal	1
National Party For Development and Welfare	1
al-Hekma (Wisdom) Party	1
Authenticity and Progress	1
Libyan National Democratic Party	1
National Parties Alliance	1
al-Resalah (The Message)	1
Centrist Youth Party	1
Libya al-Amal (The Hope)	1
Labaika National Party	1
Libyan Party for Liberty and Development	1
Arrakeeza (The Foundation)	1
Nation and Prosperity	1
National Party of Wadi al-Shati	1

Source: fanack.com

In 2015, in order to foster an inclusive dialogue with rivals in Libya, the United Nations attempted to negotiate a political compromise under the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). The principles of the LPA included ensuring the democratic rights of the Libyan people, respecting the need for a consensual government based on the principle of the separation of

powers, establishing oversights and balances between the powers, and the empowerment of state institutions such as the Government of National Accord (GNA). The LPA was meant to address vital challenges facing Libya, including issues affecting the Libyan judiciary and its independence (Nation, 2018).

Libya's Institutions Under the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA)



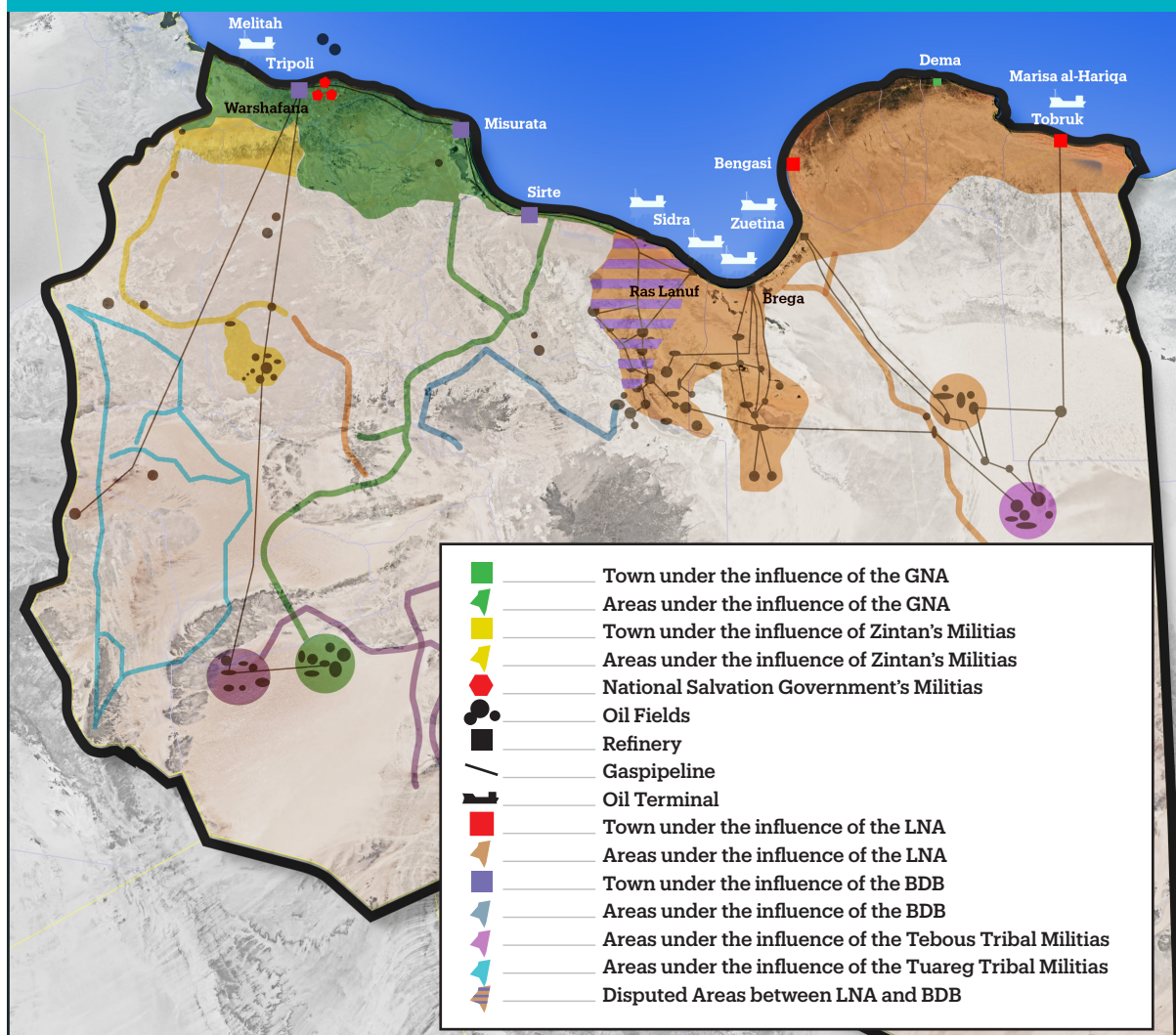
Source: European Council On Foreign Relations

Libya's complex political and security situation has presented significant challenges to the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement between rival factions within the country. Libya now has three centres of power. The first is the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli since March 30, 2016, and headed by Fayeze al-Sarraj, a former member of the GNC. Although internationally recognized as Libya's legitimate government, the GNA has failed to extend its authority beyond its base in Tripoli. The second power centre is the result of a compromise between the Tobruk and al-Bayda-based authorities, which also, in theory, functions under the framework

of the LPA. Under the agreement, the Tobruk-based House of Representatives (HoR) would become the legitimate legislative authority; however, the necessary constitutional changes have not yet occurred which would enable this function.

The Tobruk and Al-Bayda authorities are under the control of General Khalifa Haftar, leader of the Libyan National Army (LNA), who is backed by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, with increasing support from Russia. The third centre of power is the Tripoli-based Government of National Salvation (GNS), which is under the control of Prime Minister Khalifa Ghwell.

Libya's Institutions Under the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA)



Source: Bloomberg, Limes, AEI

Daesh Attacks in Libya

In 2015 Daesh gained significant ground in Libya with the capture of the coastal town of Sirte. Daesh emerged in Libya in early October 2014, when extremist factions in the eastern city of Derna joined their cause (Banco, 2014). Derna has been a centre of extremist factions in Libya for more than three decades. After 2011, Derna continued to serve as a centre for militant Salafis with links to terrorist groups including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar al-Sharia in Libya (ASL). After the formation of Daesh in 2014, many local fighters pledged allegiance to their cause (Truitte, 2018). Many of the Libyan militants who joined Daesh were veterans of the group's activities in Iraq and Syria and brought with them battlefield experience.

Eighteen months later, on December 5, 2016, Daesh was defeated in Sirte following a six-month military campaign led by armed groups loyal to the GNA with support from US airstrikes (Arab Weekly, 2016). However, Daesh has yet to be completely eliminated from Libya.

Battle for Libya's Oil Resources

According to the 2018 BP Statistical Review of World Energy, Libya has the largest proven crude oil reserves in Africa at 48.4 billion barrels. When Gaddafi was in power, Libya produced some 1.6 million barrels per day, exported mostly to Italy, France, Spain and Germany. However, the Libyan economy has experienced a significant decline because of political unrest and fighting over the control of oil fields, resulting in a concomitant decline in production.

The struggle over the control of Libya's oil resources is a major driver in the ongoing conflict. Haftar has enjoyed political and logistical support from Egypt, UAE, Jordan,

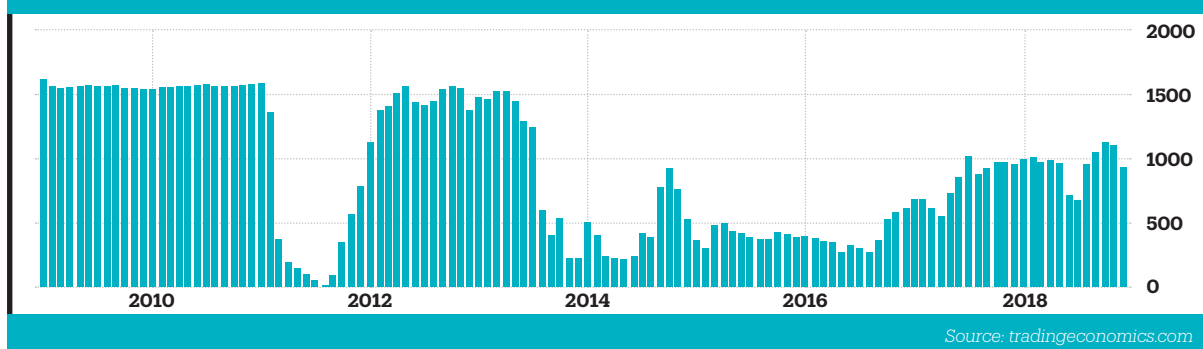
France and Russia, and he dominates the eastern administration. Libya's fragmentation at the political and security level has effectively invited open competition for the country's energy resources in several ways. Oil revenues are at the heart of the internal conflict (Easton, 2018).

A political resolution is needed to implement reforms that will stimulate economic and job growth driven by the private sector. Reforms are necessary to stabilize the macroeconomic and fiscal frameworks. In the medium term, Libya must diversify its economy, which will help strengthen the private sector and provide more job growth. If Libya implements the necessary reforms it can progressively restore its oil production level to pre-revolution potential by the end of 2021 (1.6 million bpd). This will cause the GDP to increase by approximately 11 percent over the period, which could help address inflation (The World Bank Report, 2018).

Libya must address two urgent problems: the collapsing economy and its domestic security concerns, both of which require assistance from the UN. Greater domestic security would boost the economy, necessary for an increase in foreign investment crucial to the rebuilding of Libya's oil industry.

As a first step, the UN could lift sanctions on Libyan assets worth \$67 billion USD. This economic relief could be translated into improved domestic security and reconstruction of infrastructure that was damaged after the fall of Gaddafi. Other sectors, including healthcare, education and housing would also benefit, in turn creating job growth.

Libyan Oil Production Chart



Main International Players Involved in the Conflict

Despite the United Nations' attempts to reach a negotiated solution between rival groups and forces, Libya remains divided. The interference of some international powers and regional actors has been a significant factor in deepening political fragmentation and polarization.

The European Union (EU)

The ongoing conflict has resulted in a steady flow of migrants and refugees to Europe. This instability has also caused a proliferation of terrorist groups using Libya as a base. In 2017, a deal between Italy, the EU and Libya was signed aimed at stemming the flow of migrants from North Africa to Italy. However, in the past two years more than 4000 people have drowned in the Central Mediterranean alone (Aljazeera, 2019). The EU aims to draw all conflicting Libyan parties into negotiations in order to promote a long-standing political solution to prevent a further influx of refugees into EU countries.

Italy

Italy has specific interests in Libya as a former colony. Rome therefore wants to preserve and widen its economic interests. Eni, the Italian energy company, has a long presence in Libya and is currently its largest international oil producing company. This may explain Italy's displeasure at the interference posed by France. Italy's far-right Prime Minister Matteo Salvini has accused French President Emmanuel Macron of having supported Khalifa Haftar on behalf of the French energy giant Total. "My fear is that someone, for economic motives and selfish national interest, is putting at risk the security of North Africa and, as a result, of Europe as a whole," commented Salvini (McGuinness, 2018). Italy has remained supportive of the GNA, at the same time recognising the importance of Haftar's role in Libya's future. Italy is also concerned about the influx of refugees from Libya. For example, last year the Italian government announced an allocation of an additional 80 million Euros to its existing 200-million-Euro Africa fund in order to increase the number of troops stationed in Misrata to fight illegal migration and human trafficking (Xinhua, 2018).

France

The roles of former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and former British Prime Minister David Cameron were substantial in the removal of Gaddafi from power. Sarkozy considered Gaddafi a threat to French interests in Africa. For example, Gaddafi's government intended to use 143 tons of gold which had been accumulated prior to 2011 to establish a pan-African currency pegged on the Libyan golden dinar.

This plan would have provided an alternative currency to the French franc (CFA) for Francophone West African countries (Brown, 2016). The preservation of French economic interests in Libya and the strengthening of French influence in North Africa were Sarkozy's main priorities. France's role in leading the anti-Gaddafi coalition also aimed to promote the interests of Total.

France has supported Haftar as being recognized as a primary actor in Libya because he controls the areas where French interests lie, the oil fields in the east of Libya. France views Libyan oil as cheap to extract and easy to export to Europe. In May 2018 the French president hosted the Libyan rivals in Paris for his own summit, during which they agreed to hold elections in December 2018. However, the election did not take place. The efforts of France were poorly coordinated with the UN, and seemed to contradict - at times - the endeavour of the U.N. envoy, Ghassan Salame, who wanted the Libyans to hold a national conference and draft a new constitution before holding elections.

On the other hand, some of Salame's political moves cast some shadows over his intentions, and whether, wittingly or unwittingly, he is favouring France's interests in Libya. For instance, observers fail to elucidate Salame's sheer indecisiveness over the LNA war crimes in Derna, in contrast with his rapidity and determination to stop Tripoli's fighting in September 2018. Moreover, Salame's lack of reprimands vis-à-vis Haftar's inflexibility and disruption to the U.N. political process has raised many eyebrows. For example, the U.N. envoy remained supportive of Haftar during last year's Paris conference despite the latter's multiple attempts to ruin his own



People gather to celebrate the eighth anniversary of Libyans' 17 February Revolution, which put an end to dictatorship regime of Muammar Gaddafi, at The Martyrs' Square in Tripoli, Libya. (Hazem Turkia - Anadolu Agency)

work. Needless to say that Salame's political moves seemed aligned more with Paris designs than anything else.

Russia

Under Gaddafi, Tripoli and Moscow enjoyed strong relations and significant economic and political cooperation, including arms deals and licensing agreements for Russian oil and gas companies (Isaev, 2019). More significantly, Russian involvement in Libya has had a historical geopolitical dimension, particularly in Russian's desire for access to Mediterranean ports. Libya is therefore important to Russia both economically and politically. As a result, Russia has been strengthening its presence in the country by resuming prior agreements established with the Gaddafi regime. In August 2017 Haftar expressed his readiness to act as a guarantor of all Russian-Libyan military contracts.

The GNA is viewed by the Kremlin as a Western-backed entity. Russia therefore wants to maintain leverage in order to influence the GNA and its sponsors. Moscow's largest concern is that if Libya remains the way it is the Kremlin will be excluded from participation in political settlements and therefore lose political and economic influence in post-war Libya (Kozhanov, 2017).

While Russia has been close to Haftar, in 2017 it also hosted a meeting with al-Sarraj. In a recent meeting between al-Sarraj and the Russian Ambassador to Libya, Ivan Molotov, the ambassador stated that

his country "supported the GNA and expressed his country's keenness to enhance cooperation and active agreements signed between the two countries" (Alwasat, 2019). Moscow has sought to maintain ties with opposing sides of the Libyan conflict in order to ensure the preservation of Russian interests in any final political settlement. Because of this, Russia could play a significant role in crafting a compromise between rival parties.

Egypt

Egypt's policies toward Libya are based on a combination of security concerns, economic interests and regional political considerations. President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi continues his aim to marginalise the Muslim Brotherhood at home and abroad, and he sees Haftar as a suitable ally toward this end. Egypt has been assisting Haftar's forces by supplying arms, logistical support and intelligence (The North African Post, 2016). Egypt relied heavily on the Libyan economy before the 2011 revolution, as a workforce of approximately 2 million Egyptians sent \$33 million USD back to their home country. Additionally, Libya was a reliable source of inexpensive oil. Moreover, Libya had invested over \$10 billion in various sectors of the Egyptian economy (Shennib, 2013). By supporting Haftar, Egypt is widening divisions within the country and making the situation in Libya more problematic. However, keen on protecting its interests, Egypt has played host to talks between Haftar and Sarraj in Cairo.

The United Arab Emirates

The UAE's ongoing support for Haftar has multiple dimensions. However, it is believed that Abu Dhabi's counter-revolutionary orientation towards the region is driving the approach of Emirati decision makers. The UAE has held secret negotiations with Haftar in efforts to export Libyan oil through channels other than the sole exporter approved by the UN, the National Oil Corporation (NOC). NOC is the only legitimate entity responsible for managing oil under the GNA (Faucon, 2018). The UAE and Haftar had violated U.N. National Security Council resolutions that ban any export of Libyan oil except through the country's National Oil Co. Therefore, this has increased international pressure on Haftar to return oil exporting ports to the National Oil Corporation (Ouadi, 2018).

Furthermore, Libya has several potentially competitive advantages over the UAE, including its strategic location close to Europe and its possession of the largest oil reserves in Africa. As a result, Libya has the potential to become the new regional hub and financial centre, attract international investment and businesses, and thereby establish a close and convenient alternative to the UAE (el-Gamaty, 2017).

Turkey

Turkey has a strong desire to establish strong political, economic and cultural relations with the entire African continent. Libya opens a door from the Mediterranean Sea to the interior of Africa. Therefore, Turkey has always tried to maintain a good relationship with Libya. During the Gaddafi period, both Turkey and Libya worked to the improvement of relations. In 2009, Turkey's then Minister of Industry and Commerce, Zafer Caglayan, visited Libya with the intention of reaching an agreement about investment, construction and trade. In 2010, the Libyan Privatization and Investment Board sent a delegation to Istanbul where they discussed the establishment of free trade zones with their Turkish counterparts. Following this meeting an investment forum was held to build corporate relationships between Turkish and Libyan firms.

The two countries have also aimed to increase common investments in Africa in the fields of energy, small and medium-sized enterprises, technology, education, consultancy, banking, transportation, and agriculture.



Prime Minister of Italy Giuseppe Conte (L) welcomes Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay during the dinner in honor of guest state leaders and representatives ahead of the Libya Conference in Palermo, Italy on November 12, 2018. (Mustafa Kamaci - Anadolu Agency)

Turkey has invested billions of dollars in the construction sector of Libya. Between 2009 and 2010, Turkish construction firms were involved in 124 projects in Libya. In 2008, the trade volume between the two countries was \$1.4 billion USD. This rated increased by 57% in 2009, reaching \$2.2 billion USD (Hüseyin Bağcı, Serdar Erdurmaz, 2017). According to the Turkish newspaper Hurriyet, the total value of 304 contracts that Turkish firms could not complete due to the civil war was approximately 15 billion USD. Many of these projects were at the completion stage. Therefore, Turkish companies were unable to collect their receivables and subsequently left the country.

Prior to his overthrow, the Turkish government had working relations with Gaddafi. Turkey showed interest in maintaining the existing relationship with Gaddafi and held that Libya's issues had to be solved internally. Therefore, Ankara initially objected to NATO intervention. The Turkish government contacted Gaddafi on several occasions to persuade him to take into account the legitimate demands of the Libyan people. However, there was no change in Gaddafi's attitude. As a result, Turkey's open dialogue policy changed, and Turkey eventually supported the NATO operation.

Turkish President Erdogan was one of the first world leaders to visit Libya after the fall of Gaddafi in 2011. Turkey was the first country to appoint an envoy to the new authorities in Tripoli in September 2011. At the new government's request, Turkey immediately became involved in training forces after Gaddafi's ouster (Sbah, 2018). Turkey wants to be part of the peace process. The Turkish government seems to be concerned that other countries might exploit Libya's instability for economic gain. Many Libyan dissidents have fled to Turkey. Istanbul may host as many as 1.2 million Arabs, and over 3 million Syrian refugees now live in Turkey. Many Arab satellite television stations, think tanks and associations are based in Turkey. Istanbul's Arab Media Association now counts 850 journalists as members. Therefore, Turkey could play a significant role in the peace process and bring some Libyan rivaling political figures to the negotiating table. There are numerous Libyan activists living in Turkey, many of whom support the GNA.

Turkey's initial reaction was to refrain from recognising the Tobruk Parliament and government. Then Prime Minister Erdogan's reaction in 2014 was that "Turkey could not accept the Libyan legislature meeting in Tobruk," and Ankara has maintained its support for the GNC. As a result, the Tobruk-based government reacted negatively and claimed blatant interference in Libyan internal affairs. Haftar also called for all Turkish citizens to leave Libya, especially in the oil-rich East (Reuters, 2014). Haftar's oppositional stance toward Turkey has led to the deterioration of relations on both sides. However, in 2017 a delegation from Libya's Tobruk-based House of Representatives visited Ankara and expressed its intention to cooperate closely with Turkey in order to resolve their differences. Another purpose of the visit was to reassure Turkish businesses that their receivables from Libya were guaranteed (Libyan Express, 2017).

The United Kingdom (U.K.)

The U.K. became involved with Libya for several reasons, one of which was to impede Gaddafi's influence in Africa. However, the UK Foreign Affairs Committee report, which was published in 2016, criticised former British Prime Minister David Cameron, saying that he was ultimately responsible for the failure to develop a coherent Libya strategy (Gaffey, 2016).

According to Stephen Hickey, UK Political Coordinator at the UN, it is clear that a military solution to Libya's problems will not bring the long-term peace and stability, which the country needs. Therefore, all Libyans should come together in a spirit of compromise and engage in the UN-led political process. The UK government has been supportive of the UN-backed al-Serraj government. However, during the past two years the U.K. has kept a low profile about its involvement in Libya.

The United States of America

The power vacuum which occurred as a result of the overthrow of Gaddafi enabled terrorist groups to gain a foothold in Libya. One of these groups, known as Ansar al-Sharia, carried out the 2012 attack on the US consulate in Benghazi that killed four Americans, including the Ambassador to Libya. America's main priority in Libya has been security, and in 2017 Trump said that he did not foresee a role for the United States in Libya beyond counter-terrorism (Conway, 2017). However, the policy has shifted, and the Italian and US governments have been cooperating on several fronts. According to a CNN report, the new policy for Libya aims to support reconciliation between rival factions (CNN, 2018).

Algeria

Libya's neighbours have suffered the most from the aftermath of Gaddafi's overthrow. Libya's vast desert border, populated by communities with a long history of smuggling, presents a significant challenge to Libya's neighbours. Moreover, the abundance of weapons and ammunition following the 2011 war, and the ability of non-state actors to move and operate freely, have increased threat levels in the region (Megeresi, 2018).

Algeria initially opposed the NATO intervention of 2011 and called on the African Union to push for a diplomatic solution to Libya's conflict. Algeria's current Libyan policy consists of working with various groups in order to help stabilise the country. Thus, Algiers has supported UN-backed inclusive initiatives, including the GNA, as a solution to the conflict. The Algerian authorities seem to believe that Haftar is incapable of bringing stability to Libya. Algeria is largely motivated by the need for Libya to counter internal problems, including youth radicalisation and porous borders. To mitigate such threats, they have been willing to meet with representatives from different groups in Libya (G. Jones, 2017).

However, Haftar's aggressive approach has pushed Algeria to cooperate closely with the Government of National Accord. Therefore, Algeria is concerned about the uncompromising and polarising nature of Haftar's military approach, along with his frail coalition (Harchaoui, 2018).

Chad and Sudan

The Libyan crisis has inflicted significant losses on Chad and Sudan, both of which have depended heavily on remittances from nationals who had worked in the Libyan oil industry. The deteriorating circumstances in Libya have had immediate consequences for Sub-Saharan workers who had migrated to Libya for years in search of work in the energy sector. In addition, Haftar has reportedly made use of Darfur militias, many of whom have joined armed groups and are reportedly building up their military strength in order to return to Sudan when conditions become more conducive (news24, 2018).

According to a United Nations Security Council Report (2017), former commanders of Sudan's Liberation Army stated that "Arab intermediaries and former regime operatives had assisted in and cash transfers and had facilitated the rapprochement between major Darfuri commanders and the LNA General Command." Repeated attacks against individuals and properties by foreign-armed groups in the south of Libya have increased communities' sense of vulnerability and distrust in the LNA and its aligned forces (UN, 2017). The presence of foreign armed forces, particularly those aligned with Haftar, have posed an increasing threat to local and regional political ties. Libya's neighbors perhaps have suffered the most from the unrest in the region, which impacted alliances in the region. Thus, while it is believed that Sudan supports the GNC, Chad has developed ties with Haftar in alignment with France.

Qatar

When the crisis began in 2011, Qatar called upon all parties in Libya to be responsible, giving priority to national interests, and to encourage all sides to work toward national reconciliation. Therefore, Qatar aligned itself with Turkey and Sudan to support the GNC. Qatar has subsequently played a significant role in supporting the GNA, seeking to enhance stability and achieve the consensus needed to preserve Libya's unity and sovereignty.

The U.N.

In September 2017, on the sidelines of a gathering of global leaders at the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA), Ghassan Salame, Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General to Libya, presented his action plan to end the ongoing civil war. The first step involved the convening of political actors from Libya's major factions, specifically the eastern-based HoR and the western-based, internationally backed GNA, in order to discuss the terms of the LPA.

The political agreement, also known as the Skhirat agreement (LPA), was signed in December 2015. Attending the signing were representatives of a broad range of Libyan society, including members of the HoR and GNC, as well as important public figures from Libyan political parties and civil society. The resulting political agreement led to the establishment of a single Government of National Accord (GNA), led by Fayez al-Sarraj.

The UNSC has thrown its support behind the agreement and reiterated its call for parties to work in a spirit of compromise, engaging in an inclusive political process. The UNSC underscored the importance of the organisations in facilitating a Libyan-led political solution to the country's critical challenges (UN, 2018). The plan could culminate in the Libyans voting on a constitution via a referendum and eventually electing a president as well as parliament.

However, none of the necessary steps has been implemented successfully so far. For instance, the HoR has not recognized the GNA. Although the LPA was widely endorsed by the international community, a regional block led by the UAE and Egypt is playing an active role in preventing the adoption of the LPA.

Continued support for Haftar facilitates his attempt to control more territory in the East. Consequently, this prevents the GNA from imposing its authority across the country. In 2016 reports emerged of a Saudi ship delivering military equipment and ammunition to Haftar's forces. It was believed that the shipment had been sent from a Gulf country allied with Haftar (Watanabe, 2016), providing support which would enable him to undercut the authority of the GNA. International and regional powers therefore have the responsibility to put pressure on Haftar to accept the LPA in order to prevent ongoing instability.

International Conference on Libya

The International Conference on Libya took place in Palermo, Italy, from November 11 to November 12, 2018. The conference was organized by the Italian government as an attempt to counter the Paris Summit organised by France in May 2018. The purpose of the conference was to bring together rival groups and promote a political solution to the Libyan crisis.

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There was a key goal to support a new U.N.-led election timeline, beginning this year, to foster dialogue among Libyans themselves in deciding the nature of the democracy they wanted to choose. Ghassan Salame, U.N. Special Envoy to Libya, stated that “we want to ask them clearly during the national conference what kind of elections do they want, parliamentary or presidential, more significantly, what sort of law do they need because we do not have a constitution in Libya” (Aljazeera, 2018).

Furthermore, the Palermo conference was planned for the beginning of 2019 to prepare potential elections by June. However, no elections have taken place due to resistance from major parties backing parallel governments in Tripoli and the East. These parties have benefited from access to oil revenues and jobs for armed groups in the absence of law enforcement authorities. Turkey was invited to this conference, and its delegation was comprised of senior officials headed by Vice President Fuat Oktay. However, the Turkish delegation

ultimately withdrew after learning that Haftar had joined a meeting on the sidelines of the conference with his U.N.-backed rival Libyan Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and other leaders. Turkey had not been invited to this exclusive meeting (Associate Press, Nov 2018).

Turkey supports open dialogue with all Libyan and regional actors, and any meeting that excludes Turkey cannot contribute to the peace process.

The Palermo conference was a good idea in principle. However, the road map Salame presented cannot be put into effect due to Haftar's impositions. The International Conference on Libya in Palermo was intended as a venue to discuss Haftar's policy of *fait accompli* in Libya and to find a solution through global accord. However, the *fait accompli* policy was transferred to the Palermo conference. The meeting therefore lost meaning and further deterred a successful solution to the problem. Neither the U.N. nor other international actors adopted a clear-cut position against Haftar, who has ignored all political decisions issued by political bodies linked to the LPA. The U.N. should therefore pressure Haftar and his regional allies to accept the terms of the LPA. If Haftar complies, progress can be made toward development of a new constitution and holding of a presidential election in Libya.



Conclusion

The solution to the Libyan crisis consists of disarming militants, building national unity and developing the economy. Without improvements in these areas, the crisis will only intensify. In order to implement all three solutions, Libya needs strong international support, especially from the U.N. The crisis affects not only Libya, but the region at large. A tangible strategy for stabilisation is therefore crucial. The foreign arming and funding of militias must cease, and an inclusive government made up of the various rival elements must be established. The agreement would need to include an arrangement for power sharing and an outline of security institutions. Furthermore, necessary steps would need to occur: demobilisation of militias, and the provision of employment and educational opportunities for Libyan youth as an alternative to involvement with militias, including Daesh.

The international community has been divided over Libya. The UN-backed GNA, headed by Fayez al-Sarraj and created by the LPA, is the internationally recognized executive body. However, some countries, including France, UAE, Egypt and Russia have also engaged with Haftar and have provided significant support to him despite his opposition to the LPA. Haftar does not seem interested in ratifying the LPA agreement or in accepting any amendments. His actions ultimately undermine international efforts to seek long-term resolution to the ongoing civil war. Haftar, viewed as a strongman against terrorism, has proven to be an impediment against a political solution. His decisions have undermined the likelihood of a peace agreement and have contributed to a decline in security. Consequently, a rise in guerrilla warfare and terrorism could ensue.

There is therefore no alternative to a negotiated solution. Libya requires strong and determined leadership, empowered by rule of law and democratic institutions adhering to inclusive policies in order to reverse the rapid deterioration of the country. Libya requires a government, institutions and a constitution that can provide stability in the post-conflict environment, lead in the disarmament and reintegration of militias, and mediate between competing interests and power centres. A sustainable political transition must be ensured while countering

terrorism as well as the smuggling and proliferation of weapons. It is evident that the Libyan conflict cannot be solved militarily, and none of the parties are able to conclude a military settlement to their advantage. International powers must therefore encourage a political settlement, which could persuade all Libyan parties to accept a political solution and work together toward stabilisation of the country. It is important to note that where foreign powers are involved in the peace process, they should approach the Libyan issue from a humanitarian perspective, not solely based on political or economic interests.

The lack of political resolution creates the opportunity for increased violence. Hence, the holding of elections in 2019 is necessary to stabilise Libya. The main actors can each have an impact, either positive or negative, on the outcome of elections. The longer Libya remains without elections the more dangerous the political vacuum will become, perpetuating the precarious economic situation and perhaps facilitating a permanent collapse of central governance. In order to ensure a reliable election, international players must coordinate their approach in support of the U.N. efforts, engaging with Libyans across the country in a manner that strengthens the country's unity and sovereignty. The U.N. must also assert a decisive stance against the illegal interference of regional and Western actors in order to bring stability to the country.

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