

Libya Weekly Digest

ISSUE NO 21: 13/10 – 19/10 2013

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ANALISYS

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Illegal migration to and through Libya

Since the beginning of this year some 30,000 migrants have crossed illegally to Europe. While the greatest number usually comes from Africa, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees UNHCR, a quarter of those crossing the Mediterranean Sea were Syrian refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR confirmed that 7,500 of those who managed to cross alive to Europe are Syrian followed by Somali migrants and asylum seekers.

Eritrean asylum seekers face flee cross the borders illegally to Sudan, and then to Libya to take a boat to Europe.

Africa's solidarity with and support to Libya

The Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union held on October 12th 2013, issued the following declaration

We, the Head of States and Government of the African Union, meeting at our extraordinary session, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 12 October 2013:

1. **EXPRESS** our concern on the situation in Libya particularly following the kidnapping of Prime Minister Ali Zeidan, by armed men in Tripoli, on 10 October 2013;
2. **STRONGLY CONDEMN** this criminal and unacceptable act and express relief at the release of the prime Minister, few hours after his kidnapping;
3. **EXPRESS** our solidarity with the Libyan leaders and our support to the legitimate Libyan intuitions in their efforts to stabilize the situation in the country, address the other challenges at hand and bring to a successful end the ongoing transition process;
4. **STRESS** the need for all Libyan stakeholders to seek solutions to their differences within the frame work of the existing institutions and a comprehensive process of national dialogue and **CALL ON** the Libyan people to extend their support to their legitimate institutions;
5. Mindful of the need for sustained support and solidarity with Libya in this challenging time, **REQUEST** the commission, building on the initiatives already taken, to take all necessary steps to facilitate a coordinated and enhanced continental support to Libya; in this regard, we **CALL ON** Africa's partners to extend similar support;
6. **ALSO STRESS** the right of Libya to put in trial , in Libya, its own citizens charged with committing crimes, in conformity with Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.419(XIX) adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2012.

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Workshop on MISAHEL Action Plan

AULOL attended a workshop held by AU on MISAHEL Action Plan in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: 19-20 October 2013. This workshop aimed at allowing the development of an Action Plan for the AU in the Sahel and undertake a critical analysis of the existing Sahel strategies by various stakeholders, particularly the UN and the EU, drawing lessons in view of guiding the work of MISAHEL on the basis of AU's comparative advantage and its value addition.

Illegal migration to and through Libya

Somali asylum seekers facing continuation of instability cross the borders to Ethiopia then to Sudan before crossing to Libya. Noteworthy to mention that smugglers have a network that is active in all the mentioned countries.

Syrian refugees and asylum seekers started arriving in Libya; there are close to 10,000 Syrian refugees and asylum seekers according to UNHCR.

Libya represents an attractive destination for many reasons; lack of adequate border control, flourishing smuggling business and the geographical closeness to Southern Europe. The Libyan government in many occasions raised its intention to control the borders; especially the Southern areas.

Many reports about boat crossing from Libya to Europe emerged and, in October, hundreds of migrants lost their lives while attempting to cross illegally to Europe.

The EU came under mounting pressure at the weekend to relieve a worsening refugee emergency in the Mediterranean, as leaders of southern member states called for urgent action to prevent the sea becoming a "tomb" for thousands fleeing north from Libya to Malta or Italy. The Italian and Maltese prime ministers insisted that the EU tackle the boat people issue at its coming summit.

With Libya an important transit point for African migrants to Europe, Eubam is already acting to strengthen the Libyan authorities' ability to manage border crimes, including trafficking of people and illegal migration. The EU border control agency, Frontex, is reported to be planning concrete activities in Libya under Eubam's flag.

Libyan authorities' difficulty to control borders is perceived as the main cause of the movement of boat migrants to Europe. Hence, border control, especially of coastal ports are very important. The EUBAM has been working closely with the Libyan authorities, but the border control needs more of a regional African action and cooperation between Libya and its African neighbors; especially Sudan, Chad and Niger. The issue needs a broader focus on countries of origin, and the European Union as a major donor needs to pay more attention to development in these countries.

The African Union as the regional Organization has always been aware of this issue. In this line it has already convened a workshop in Tripoli, in early September to enhance cooperation and coordination between Sahelo-Saharan states to improve the borders security in the sub-region

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Workshop on MISAHEL Action Plan

This workshop is expected to help in identifying ways of effective implementation of this Action plan, including the involvement of private sector on the continent. Its main objectives were:

- Laying the ground for the quick development of an Action Plan for the AU work on the Sahel through MISAHEL and related structures;
- Identifying appropriate synergies between the AU and other stakeholders for a coordinated implementation of the various strategies and MISAHEL's Action Plan;
- Identify concrete contributions of some financial institutions on the continent in the implementation of this Action Plan.

Politics

Prime Minister abduction follow up:

- **Prime Minister Ali zidan held a press conference in which he presented the following elements:**
 - Those who kidnapped me are groups belonging to Libya Thuwar Operations Room and the Anti-Crime room.
 - The words mentioned by the kidnappers were the same words mentioned to me the previous day by the GNC members of Zawiya Mohammed Kilani and Mustafa Treiki.
 - My personal mobile phone was taken from me after I arrived the Anti-Crime headquarters, and I was surprised that after my release I found my phone at the GNC headquarters.
 - I didn't accuse anyone but I mentioned what happened, and the GNC member Toufik Shiheibi told me that Treiki said that if Zidan had resigned he wouldn't have been kidnapped.
 - I am a Muslim man and if I was aware of Abu Anas al-Libi's abduction then I would have told him, and I deny what Wesam Ben Hmeid mentioned that I handed over 213 names of Libyans to the US to arrest them.
- **First reactions to Prime Minister Ali zidan press conference:**
 - GNC member, Mohammed Kilani rejected the Prime Minister accusations. He said they put his well-being at risk and said he will launch a lawsuit against the prime minister.
 - At the same news conference, GNC member, Mustafa Treiki expressed pain and condemnation for the kidnapping of the PM and his surprise and denunciation of including his name in the accusations. He said the reason Zidan may have mentioned him in his accusations was because he had asked before for an investigation into information received that Zidan had dual nationality.

2 – SECURITY

Security Situation

- Gunmen have killed Colonel Ahmed Mostafa el-Barghathy, the head Libya's military police force. The shooting comes follows a series of attacks by armed militias whose activities have hindered the government from stabilizing the country. Unidentified assailants gunned down Libya's military police chief outside of his home in Benghazi on Friday, according to Libyan security officials. Colonel Ahmed Mostafa el-Barghathy was reportedly heading to mosque to attend Friday prayers when he was killed. "Several shots hit Ahmed [Mostafa] el-Barghathy. He was brought to hospital but later died there. El-Barghathy was one of the first members of the military to take up arms against Moammar Gadhafi in the 2011 uprising.
- The family home of the commander of the Libya Shield No. 1 Battalion, Wissam Ben Hamid, in the Benghazi suburb of Kuwafiyah was attacked and set on fire by reportedly members of the Barghathi tribe who accused him of responsibility for the assassination of Colonel Ahmed Mustafa Al-Barghathi, head of Libya's Military Police.
- Muftah Grimazi, the former commander of the thuwar in Al Amamira, near Emsalata some 140 kilometres east of Tripoli, was reportedly shot dead on Friday. Muftah Grimazi was driving with his

cousin Rifat Grimazi when their car was attacked, sources in Khoms. In the subsequent shootout both men were hit, as were two of the assailants. Both cousins were rushed to hospital in Emsalata but Mutaafa died later. Rifat's condition is reported as stable.

- Seven members of Ansar al-Sharia were killed after their position in Sirte was targeted by rockets from an unknown location. Libyan sources said it was likely the attack on the position in the Dheirah area of Sirte came from a drone or from one of the warship off the Libyan coast. However the spokesperson for the Defence Ministry, Adel Al-Shabahi, said two Ansar members were killed Monday night in an explosion in a vehicle as they were transporting ammunition.
- A large blast exploded near a Libyan Islamist stronghold east of the capital Tripoli on Monday, killing at least two people. The cause of the blast was not immediately clear. Residents in the area reported there was a loud explosion.
- Colonel Abdel Jalil Tarhuni, commander of the 147th Infantry Battalion identified two soldiers who were killed from the unit on the main checkpoint outside their headquarters in Benghazi's Ras Minqar neighborhood on Tuesday morning. The victims were tied up and killed by their unidentified attackers. Other soldiers were injured in the attack.

Security Assistance and Cooperation

- Tunisian Prime Minister Ali al-Arid denied reports circulated by media outlets about solid information about the intention of armed groups in Libya to attack Tunisia. He said that due to the difficult conditions Libya is going through Tunisia must rely on its capabilities to control the border. The Tunisian media outlets circulated reports on hosting training camps in Zintan to attack Tunisia, which was denied by the Chairman of Zintan local council Mohamed Wakwak.

Security of Foreign Representations

- Malta's consul in Benghazi, Joe Pirotta was evacuated and brought to Malta after threats by unknown sources were sent to the Maltese diplomatic mission. As a precautionary measure, the Maltese government evacuated the consul; however the embassy in Tripoli was not affected.

Security of Foreign Citizens

- A Libyan group kidnapped more than 50 Egyptian truck drivers demanding the release of a group of Libyans fishermen who were arrested for having entered Egypt illegally. The commander of the Libyan thwar brigades in Ajdabiya said that the kidnapped Egyptians are treated with respect, adding that the Egyptian authorities ignored their demands to release the detained Libyan fishermen. He added: "We demand that the Egyptian judiciary to issue judgments on the Libyans instead of detaining them."

3 – Transitional Justice and Rule of Law

- **Judicial Reform:** Libya's recently-established Trial Monitoring Network has been given a boost with training to help it tackle the technical challenges of observing trials in Libya. The Trial Monitoring Network was set up in June by 17 Libyan lawyers, following a series of meetings, field trips and training. Trial monitoring tries to ensure rights to fair trials and is an important tool in helping judicial reform.

4 - Human Rights:

- The Grand Mufti, Sheikh Sadik Al-Ghariani, has issued a fatwa saying that female teachers in schools and colleges must cover their faces if they are teaching males who have reached puberty. He made the ruling following a request for advice from the Ministry of Education on the issue. It had said that some female teachers were veiling their faces while giving lessons but it felt that this was having a negative impact on students' understanding because, by not seeing the teacher's face, they were not able to interact and properly learn. It is not clear where this leaves the Ministry of Education.