

May 2021 - LIBYA FACT SHEET

Overview

Since the 2011 NATO-backed revolt in Libya that ended 42 years of rule by Muammar Qaddafi, the oil-rich North African country has struggled with its democratic transition, often resulting in rival overlapping governments and divided institutions. The Government of National Unity therefore presents a vital opportunity to redress this and has already been met with widespread support from the international community following years of internal conflict. A stable Libya will have impact well beyond the country's borders and must continue to be supported by the international community.

The Government of National Unity

The Libyan Government of National Unity (GNU) was ratified on 10 March 2021 during a landmark session by the House of Representatives. This followed a **UN-convened Libyan Political Dialogue Forum** that brokered negotiations with a diverse range of stakeholders from across the country. With a clear mandate to prepare the country for elections on 24 December this year, the GNU has clear short-term and long-term objectives. The most immediate ambition is to **provide security, rebuild infrastructure and institutions, strengthen the country's economy and pave the way for national reconciliation among Libyans**. By providing a functioning state and ensuring security, the GNU hopes to ready the country for elections.

Under the leadership of **Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dabaiba**, a leading businessman and engineer with immense experience in infrastructure projects in Libya, the GNU and its cabinet are focused on uniting the country and building a Libya that works in the interest of everyone.

The PM's cabinet includes two deputy prime ministers, 26 ministers and six ministers of state, with the [key foreign affairs and justice portfolios held by women, a first in Libya](#). The new cabinet also reflects the different Libyan regions and constituencies.

The GNU presents the first real opportunity to foster lasting stability and unity in a country that has since 2014 had parallel institutions and multiple governments. **A stable Libya is beneficial for the entire region** and the Prime Minister has already shown a willingness to engage with all actors that share an interest in the success of the country. Indeed, early in his term in office the Prime Minister has travelled to and/or met with foreign leaders from the UK, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Russia, and the Gulf states. **As well as fostering domestic unity, the GNU is committed to creating a collaborative international consensus on Libya.**

Central Mandate

As well as providing long-term stability in the country, **the GNU's mandate is clear: to pave the way for parliamentary and presidential elections at the end of the year on December 24th**. A Constitutional Committee has already been established by the House of Representatives and the High Council of State, who reached an agreement on a proposed constitutional basis for the elections. This would form the basis of the Libyan electoral process and is expected to be ratified via a referendum.

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Prime Minister Dabaiba has remarked that *“only democracy and the Constitution can make it possible to build a viable country.”*

If a referendum on the draft permanent constitution is not possible based on a decision of High National Elections Commission (HNEC) and endorsed by the House of Representatives and the High Council of State, presidential and legislative elections would take place on the basis of an amendment to the Constitutional Declaration, emanating from the February Committee report of 2014. An update on the outlook of the constitution is expected in June.

Wider objectives

With the country still recovering from the recent conflict, wider objectives of the GNU and Prime Minister Dabaiba are needed to be met allow elections to occur. These include:

- Reunifying the country and its sovereign institutions
- Advancing the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement, Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)
- Delivering basic services to Libyans based on a decentralized system
- Addressing the COVID-19 pandemic
- Reforming the Libyan banking sector
- Fostering human rights-based inclusive national reconciliation and transitional justice
- Advancing women’s political and economic empowerment

What can the international community do?

Strategically located as the gateway to Africa, Libya has the largest oil reserves in Africa and a young and well-educated population. Churchill once described the country as “the soft underbelly of Europe” and the country has always been valued by actors seeking to boost their own regional interests. However, while Libya must have a Libyan solution, sustained international support to Tripoli is essential to meeting these ambitions.

Libya is facing its own Covid pandemic. However, with shared borders with six African nations and the longest coastline on the Mediterranean, it also faces an influx of human trafficking over the coming summer months. Coupled with the threat of ISIS re-emergence, the increasing instability in neighbouring Chad and remaining presence of mercenaries, such as the Russian Wagner Group, the GNU faces a critical period. There are several avenues open to the international community to support the GNU. This includes:

- Increasing diplomatic pressure on any actors continuing to maintain an illegal military presence in the country
- Using the threat of sanctions against those seeking to destabilise Libya or impede its democratic transition
- Demonstrating vocal support to the GNU
- Continuing to support the UN process
- Building stronger trade and bilateral agreements with Libya
- Helping provide capacity building expertise and exchanging best practice to help rebuild Libyan institutions and infrastructure

Additional resources

- Prime Minister Dabaiba’s Twitter profile [@Dabaibahamid](#)
- The GNU’s Twitter profile [@GovernmentLY](#)

- The GNU's website <https://pm.gov.ly/pm/index.php>
- For further information please contact XXXXXX@mercuryllc.com