



LIBYA: the humanitarian emergency continues

Program Department

n. 3 – March 2020

Introduction

Armadilla is a social cooperative primarily committed to international cooperation. (www.armadilla.coop)

It also carries out training and information activities on the issues of the 2030 agenda proposed by the United Nations, for the defence of human rights and for the achievement of the 17 objectives for sustainable human development: <https://www.unric.org/it/agenda-2030>

In this context, these Notebooks want to help disseminate information, critical analyses, possible answers to the priority problems they face among students and the public to whom Armadilla addresses. The collection of all notebooks from 2015 to today is located in: <http://armadilla.coop/quaderni/>

All world attention is given to the situation caused by the spread of Covid-19 and the emergency has involved the whole of Europe and especially Italy.

However, we cannot forget the other emergencies that affect many countries in war and in permanent crisis conditions. In particular, we directly follow the new apprehensions in Libya, Syria and Lebanon and we are forced to take note of the many limitations and new difficulties that also come in the world of cooperation and humanitarian aid.

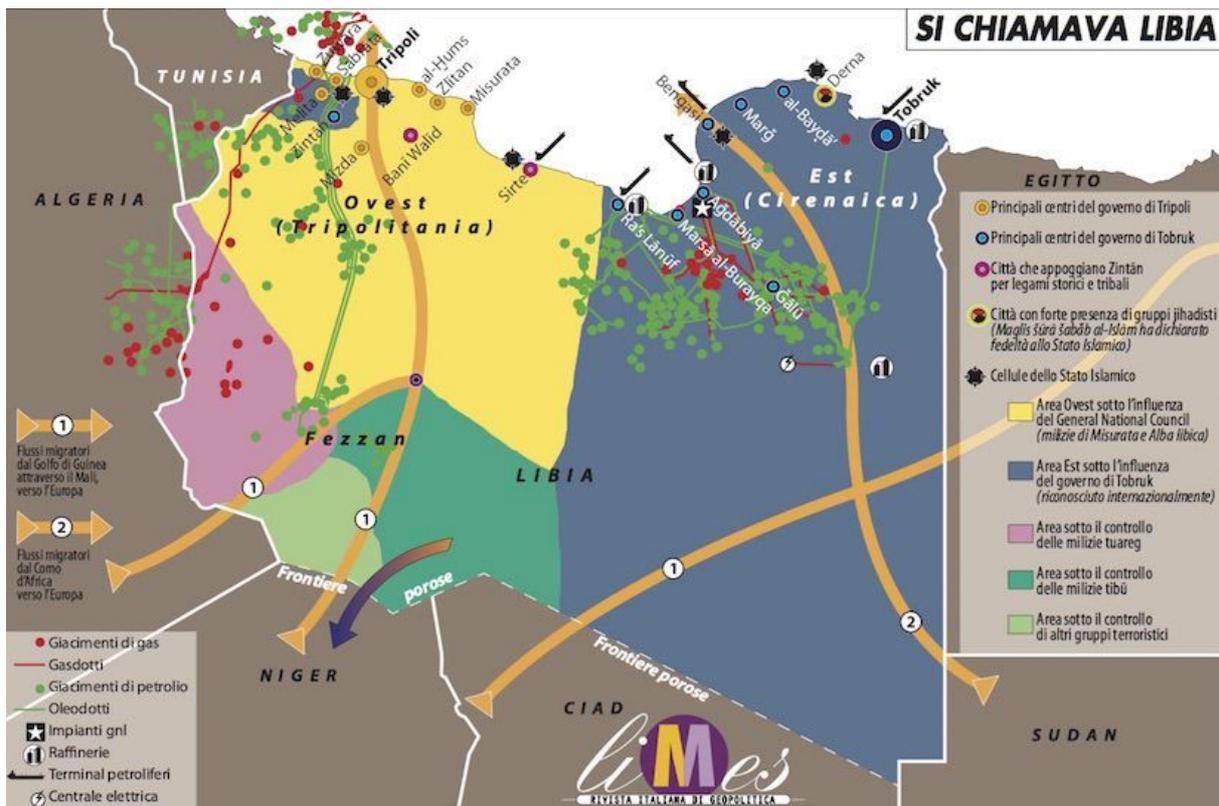
In this notebook, we present an update, elaborated already in recent days, on the geopolitical situation and the situation of humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict in Libya.

While the 2018 Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Program ranked Libya as a "high" human development country, its ranking fell 43 positions from 67th in 2010 to 110th in 2019, making it the largest drop in global wellness rankings. This drop in benefits is felt by the Libyan people mainly through the collapse of public services, in particular education and health, higher prices through cuts in food and fuel subsidies, loss of housing and conflict-related livelihoods and serious beats arrest in ensuring citizens' safety and the rule of law. Once a high middle income country with socio-economic indicators among the highest on the African continent, years of war and instability have sent the economy into a downward spiral. Oil and gas remain the main source of economic growth in the country. Although oil production grew 18% in 2018 and according to the Libyan National Oil Corporation has an average of 1.2 million barrels per day in 2019, production is below pre-conflict levels of 1.6 million barrels. to the day. As of December 1, 2019, there are more than 343,000 displaced people in Libya, almost doubling in 2019 the new displacements were mainly due to the conflict in southern Tripoli that has 149,000 people displaced since April 2019, clashes in Murzuq in August 2018 which resulted in the displacement of over 28,000 people, as well as localized and temporary displacements following the floods of Ghat in June 2019. The international mediations, the announced truce to the war agreed in January 2020 in the Berlin conference they did not last long and the conflict continues. The United Nations representative, Ghassan Salamè has resigned by attaching health reasons. The situation remains critical and the humanitarian emergency and the need for aid for the affected populations increase every day.

Armadilla in partnership with *Emergenza Sorrisi* is carrying out a health care project in an immigrant centre near Tripoli. A local team of 5 doctors and 2 nurses ensures the outpatient

medical service and provides treatment and medicines to immigrants (especially Eritreans, Sudanese and Ethiopians) detained in this UN-recognized government-controlled centre. Medical equipment and a mobile clinic were provided to the Tripoli pediatric hospital and 27 people (mainly children) with palatal cleft lip problems operated on a smile in Tunis by a medical team of emergency surgeons. We also referred to two documents published days ago by OCHA (United Nations Office for Humanitarian Aid) and that you find in the English version on the site .

<https://www.unocha.org/Libya>.



1. Current situation and possible prospects

The war that started on April 4, 2019, has seriously affected the well-being and livelihoods of people in Libya very negatively. The conflict has caused severe damage to homes and civilian infrastructure across the country, affecting living conditions. The destruction and damage of housing, together with the increase in demand due to the arrival of internally displaced persons, has increased the shortage of adequate housing in many locations and the related increases in rental costs. As a result, vulnerable families face difficulties in ensuring affordable housing; many are at risk of eviction. Internally displaced people are more likely to live in poor housing and have informal rental contracts. More than 4000 internally displaced people are considered among the most vulnerable and in need of shelter. Existing pressure on reception options could further increase if the conflict continues. An estimated 749,000 people remain in frontline areas or areas

affected by the conflict in Tripoli and may be under pressure to leave their homes and seek refuge in safer places. Despite persistent displacement factors, many Libyans are returning to their places of origin. In 2019, 447,000 people returned to their homelands, with Benghazi (42%) and Sirte (17%) having the most returns. Some families will need humanitarian support to facilitate safe and voluntary return, including assistance in reception centres, response to mine actions, access to basic functional services and essential domestic needs, including food and drinking water.

While the overall cost of essential goods has decreased, prices remain higher in the south than in other areas of the country. About 40% of the families surveyed reported having faced difficulties in getting enough money to meet their needs.

The situation within Libya remains extremely complex not only because of the conflict, but also because of the positions taken by the international actors involved, in violation of the military embargo formally in force in Libya since February 2011.

In Libya there has been fighting since 2011 always for the same stake: the state, its institutions and its energy resources (gas and oil), but also for the control of space, borders and migration. In the spring of 2017 Libya extracted approximately 800 thousand barrels of oil per day, about half of what was extracted in the last years of the Gaddafi regime, but still the highest level since 2014. It is no coincidence that the policy of Italy has always moved on the defence of energy interests, coupling them with controlling the flow of irregular migrants and the consequent realization of effective and illegal containment policies.

Turkey also makes no secret of linking the agreement signed recently with al-Serraj to the objective of exploiting Libyan submarine deposits in the central-eastern Mediterranean, promising to place itself in a direct line of collision with the interests of the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) and its promoter countries (Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Italy). Finally, Egypt intervened widely in Libya against the government of al-Serraj because for General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi the Libyan crisis is not simply a matter of foreign policy, but of national security. After jailing his predecessor Mohammed Morsi, leading Egypt between 2012 and 2013, and arresting and persecuting members of the Muslim Brotherhood in the country, it is easy to understand the reasons for al-Sisi's support in Haftar against the hypothesis of a Libya in the hands of al-Serraj and a government broadly expressed by the Libyan Muslim brothers (especially Misatini), who on the contrary and precisely for this reason were able to count on Turkish support. The crisis in Libya is therefore part of a wider match within the Muslim world between two alternatives of statehood and above all of companies that see allies of the Misrata militias, Qatar and Turkey, against Saudis, Egyptians and Emirates.

Europe has struggled to impose its own line, especially for the internal divisions: France has made no secret of militarily supporting Haftar, while Italy is present on the field in support of the Misrata forces. In 2016, Italy deployed a military device not far from the Tripolitan city, with the priority task of installing a field hospital to treat the wounded of the troops of Misrata, then engaged in the fight against ISIS in Sirte. The base opened with the "Hippocratic Mission" has never been closed and since January 2018 it has been included in the framework of the "Bilateral Assistance and Support Mission in Libya". In addition to treating the wounded, the Italian military have

trained Misrata troops and continue to play a role as military advisers. Haftar's plan is for a military government, with a solution to the Libyan crisis similar to that of Egypt in 'Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, while Misrata and her political leadership to be part of the international network of Muslim Brotherhood for a state in which Islam has centrality. From a purely Italian point of view, the choice to support Misrata and the government of the National Accord was dictated by the team order and the link with Europe, the United Nations and the United States, especially with the previous Obama administration. The fact that Italy and Turkey find themselves supporting the same political side is not the result of a concerted common front, but rather of a convergence of different interests. It is no coincidence that Italy and Turkey are increasingly competing in support for the Tripoli government and in the claim to be its largest (and most influential) partner. There is no doubt that the latest developments have led Turkey to assume a prominent role, essentially because Turkey's support was not only political but also decisive from a military point of view.

Libyans, for their part, are increasingly the victims of a war fought on their skin by others and for others. The war went deep into the Libyan capital. Whole neighbourhoods are the scene of conflict and only the centre of the capital has been spared for now. In recent months, over 70,000 new refugees have had to leave their homes. In the Eurocentric narrative that pervades information and comments on the crisis in Libya, reality continues to distort, speaking of thousands of migrants ready to invade Italy and Europe. The reality is another. Most of the so-called migrants are foreign workers residing in Libya who are systematically discriminated against, exploited and imprisoned also and above all because of the policies to contain migratory flows wanted by Italy and Europe on the basis of the (false) presumption that these people they all want to cross the Mediterranean as soon as they have the opportunity. Alongside the international workers, the majority of the people who are fleeing the war in Tripoli are mostly Libyans, who in turn are refugees and persecuted. The politicians of our house are not only irresponsible to blow on European fears, but also Libyan politicians. The threat of mass departures, which will never be there, serves the real objective of the Tripoli government to obtain greater political and military support from Italy and Europe for its increasingly crisis-ridden power. It hurts to walk the streets of the centre of Tripoli and see the streets flooded with waste, a good part of the shops that only populated the central streets a few years before, today they are closed, not to mention the continuous interruptions of water and electricity. Who can buy a current generator and, out of the centre, dug a well. After ten in the evening there are few people around: in a city where in the past it was possible to go around alone at any time of the night, today everyone is afraid, there are entire neighbourhoods where it is better not to venture and the houses are more and more small forts. Railings, gates and security systems have sprung up, because the war and the various forces in the field fuel a permanent conflict. One of the very few, perhaps the only, social spaces that continued to remain open and inclusive for all Libyans, especially for young people, was the campus of the University of Tripoli. It was no small feat to keep the university open and functioning in a conflict season like the present one. There have been several accusations against the university's management of illegitimately using the university's funds and paying the militias by buying their protection. In fact, beneath the two great fighting sides, in hindsight, these are composed of a different series of militias who often fight not for high ideals, but more trivially

because of the money they receive. In Libya, the problem is not the lack of wealth and liquidity (which continues to come from oil revenues), but rather to those who run out of money and how it is used.

In the years of Gaddafi, access to the proceeds from the oil revenue was the main lever of consent to the regime, the more one was "Gaddafi", the more one was in the system and the more there was the possibility of benefiting from the proceeds from the annuity, but a series of basic services, a minimum wage and exemption from paying taxes was not denied to almost anyone. Today, Gaddafi is no longer there and the so-called militias manage the flows of oil revenues. In the last two years of the war, they have settled the final shoulder to the still functioning institutions and have gradually replaced the state institutions. It is precisely the militias that have centralized the oil revenue in their hands and redistributed it to their militiamen and their customers. In its mechanism and functioning, the system is not so different from Gaddafi's time, but today the political objectives to which that mechanism is addressed have radically changed. Gaddafi's Libya was certainly an authoritarian and undemocratic regime, but still a state that aspired to redistribute resources with a view to national unity. On the contrary, the militias do not represent the state, they are rather an anti-state that feeds on the instability caused by the war and through violence has folded the logic of a formal economic system to that of an informal, often illegal, economy that draws its strength from the war. The rapid strengthening of the militia's power back to a measure approved by the then national transition government, just after the fall of the Gaddafi regime, which in fact institutionalized the militias by allocating large funds to the thawar, the revolutionaries, that is the Libyans who had fought against the regime. It was a sort of compensation for the veterans of the revolution, but in the complexity of the moment there were many who invented from day to day at the head of a brigade and related thawar to take the money. Once the money was grabbed, at least part of the revolutionary brigades turned into militias, ending up occupying power and hindering the post-Gaddafi transition to a democratic regime. The real losers of the revolution were the young and very young Libyans who fought to bring down the Gaddafi regime and were subsequently excluded from the management of power and reduced to militiamen in the pay of the various Qatiba (militia) leaders. Work in the militias is in fact the only profitable employment opportunity for many young Libyans today and it has increasingly become a coveted job not only for the salary, but also for the privileges and social status that follow. It is therefore difficult for any Libyan to ignore the relationship with the militias. To be able to withdraw a few dinars from the bank, you need to ask the militia that "protects" the bank in your neighbourhood and pay the amount due for its help. The same if you want to keep any shop or business open. Be careful, however, because being found with too much money in your pocket or letting them know that you have a lot of it in the bank can be the quickest way to tickle the appetites of some group dedicated to the kidnapping industry on commission (and to release for payment) who works for some competing militia.

In Gaddafi's Libya, corruption and patronage were widespread, but there were also limits: today the relationship of dependence on the power (and the will) of the militias is potentially limitless.

As in many other countries where the state has gradually retreated from the conflict, the logics of war have become strongly intertwined with the economic ones. It is the militias that have real control over the nerve centres of the capital and the country and often dictate their conditions to properly political institutions. The state can represent an asset that often tends to be taken too often for granted and its questioning with the international intervention in Libya in 2011 opened the current crisis. The Libyan revolt in 2011 was against the state of Gaddafi and for a more inclusive and participatory state; the international war has instead led to a progressive weakening of the state in itself. The action culminated most recently with participation in the Berlin Conference on Sunday 19 January 2020 to establish a truce in the context of the Libyan crisis. Under UN auspices, participating countries, including Italy, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Russia, Turkey and Egypt, have signed a final document containing 55 starting points to be observed to establish a respite from ongoing armed clashes. Represented by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and Foreign Minister Luigi di Maio, Italy has authoritatively made several proposals to be included in the document. Despite the fact that the ceasefire is objectively far away (Libyan President Al-Sarraj and General Haftar currently not speaking), the drafting of this document is an important step towards the de-escalation of the conflict. To stop the war means to stem the number of displaced people who venture out to sea and throw themselves into the hands of ruthless smugglers; it means preventing the country, with the progressive blockage of energy supplies, from reaching a dramatic closure of revenue in the state coffers, which would have catastrophic consequences on the stability of social stability, as well as concretely undermining the interests of ENI and therefore of Italy ; finally, it means preventing the attraction or formation of terrorist cells a few hundred kilometres from our shores.

Berlin sanctioned the return of Italy, after months of absence, to the main international negotiating table on Libya. The presence of our country has become essential, not already by virtue of the history of the recent past, which has always seen us the main point of reference for the Libyan regime, but because we have managed, rightly, to be among the main protagonists of this theatre of international crisis with carefully calibrated diplomacy between Palazzo Chigi and Farnesina, restoring our role, as well as a European outpost in the migratory crisis afflicting the continent.

It is important for Libya that the solution of the crisis passes through the ceasefire, the arms embargo, the reform of the Libyan security sector through the establishment of professional armed forces and support for the necessary reforms in the banking sector, economic and energetic. It is necessary to continue making diplomatic efforts to gradually bring the country back to a condition of truce and normalcy.

The United Nations cannot count on a compact community in its mediation action: special envoy Ghassan Salamé has not been able to achieve particular results - such as a prolonged ceasefire - with a view to seating the contestants at the negotiating table . To this must be added the turbulence in the southern areas of the country - the desert areas of Fezzan - where the various tribes present pass from one alliance to another, in a perennial state of conflict more or less latent. To this must be added the increasing political pressure of important cities - and decisive for the current conflict - such as Misrata and Zintan. Surprisingly, but in a sense announced by the facts, Ghassan Salamé's resignation from the leadership of the UN mission in Libya caused

disappointment and concern. "Health reasons keep me from moving forward. For two years I have tried to bring together Libyans, to curb interference from the outside and to preserve the unity of the country. " These are the words of the Lebanese diplomat to justify his resignation. Salamé wanted to explain the reasons that led him to end his mandate prematurely: "The Berlin Summit was held and Resolution 2510 was issued despite the hesitation of some. However, I recognize that my health no longer allows this rate of stress. So I asked the Secretary General to relieve me of the mission, hoping for peace and stability for Libya ".

"Salamé had long since lost credibility," said a representative of the Tripoli government, "before Khalifa Haftar's attack on Tripoli eleven months ago. He never called the perpetrators of their crimes by their names. "

Salamé inherited from his predecessor, the German Martin Kobler, a very complex situation, but all in all still manageable with a government in charge in Tripolitania that was trying to reduce the militia's power; an ever present but contained threat from the Islamic State thanks to the liberation of Sirte; a steadily growing oil production; a rebel executive and a self-isolating parliament in Cyrenaica who were very reluctant to collaborate, but open to dialogue; military operations underway in Derna and Benghazi to drive out the last pockets of Islamist resistance; a south of Libya in difficult conditions with tribes fighting for control of smuggling routes and oil fields. After an initial period of adjustment, flanked by his US deputy Stephanie T. Williams, Salamé outlined a "road map" which included presidential elections on the one hand, and an inclusive national conference led by Libyans on the other to define a clear path. that would allow you to get out of the impasse. The intention of the UN envoy to Libya was to replicate the meeting of the Libyan tribes which in 1951 led to the independence of Libya under King Idris. And we must acknowledge the Lebanese diplomat that he has almost succeeded. Everything was ready for the Libyan national conference which was supposed to be held on April 14 and 16 in the locality of Ghadames, the "white city" that stands in the desert on the border with Algeria. But Haftar's offensive blew the table and Salamé's mandate probably ended at the time. The international conference on Libya, held in Berlin, produced a very bland document which subsequently led to the approval of a Security Council resolution to end the fighting and encourage a return to dialogue. But without mechanisms that punish for example those who violate the embargo and those who do not respect the ceasefire, this attempt is also destined to fail. The truth is that Salamé has never been able to fully win the trust of Tripoli or Benghazi. The Tripoli National Accord Government accused him of pursuing an overly wait-and-see policy towards Haftar. His prevarication, according to critics, would have allowed the strongman of Cyrenaica and his sponsors to conquer slowly, without major military tears "buying" the tribes thanks to the money obtained from foreign sponsors, all of Libya: first Benghazi and Derna , then the Oil Crescent and the Fezzan up to the gates of Tripoli. For his part, General Haftar has never had a good relationship with the United Nations envoy, even going so far as to prevent his flights from landing. In August 2019, three United Nations officials and two other people fell victim to a car bomb attack in Benghazi: incidents of this type at the New York Glass Palace do not go by the way and Secretary General Guterres is said to be gone mad. Despite all his efforts and efforts, the UN envoy leaves a country in total chaos, with zero oil production: in Libya today we don't talk, we shoot, and if we negotiate it is only to recharge our weapons. Fayez al-Serraj, faced with such a scenario, and

finding himself surrounded, after invoking the help of the Italian and European allies, turned to Turkey, which on January 9, 2020 landed its first military unit in support of those Tripoline.

On an operational level, on January 2 after the Ankara parliament's vote for the deployment of Turkish military support forces to Serraj in Libya, Haftar accelerated through a pincer manoeuvre that incorporated part of Sirte and allowed for further grip on Tripoli. Mitiga airport, the only one operating in the capital, was bombed by order of Haftar in order to prevent any type of foreign landing.

On the other side of the fence, there are thousands of Russian and Sudanese mercenaries, flanked by Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, in different roles ranging from technical-military to economic support and from the supply of armaments, in repeated violation of the United Nations Resolution 2473 of June 2019.

2.Humanitarian needs in Libya

Over 1,800,000 people are affected by the crisis. More than 893,000 are in need of some form of humanitarian aid assistance - a 9% increase over 2018. This includes 212,000 women and 268,000 boys and girls under the age of 18 (176,000 boys and 91,000 girls). About 30% of people in need are children, 34% of whom are girls. While the number of people in need is 66% of boys and men, this is largely due to the majority of migrants (93 percent) being male. Of those needy people, an estimated 134,000 are people with disabilities (66 percent men and 34 percent women). Of the total number of people in need, almost 50% are concentrated in four areas: Tripoli, Ejdabia, Misrata and Benghazi.

Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, especially health infrastructure, doubled in 2019, are on the rise. This year, at least 647 civilians have been killed or injured, the majority in Tripoli. Insecurity and conflict remain the central engine of the displacement. The number of internally displaced persons has almost doubled in 2019, with new internally displaced people mainly from

Tripoli and Murzuq. Of the more than 343,000 internally displaced people, many have no conditions to pay the rent and are forced to live in poor shelters. Those who live in informal settlements are particularly vulnerable and are at high risk of eviction. Children are exposed to high levels of stress and psychosocial trauma, with 6% of families with children experiencing negative behaviours and emotional changes in their children, particularly among displaced families. Refugee and migrant children face discrimination and bullying, including in schools. Support services to psychosocial and gender-based violence (GBV) are extremely limited. The existence of discriminatory laws that allow the prosecution of victims, widespread stigma and mandatory reporting further compromise and create further obstacles to GBV victims' access to justice and support. Arbitrary detention further exposes migrants and refugees to serious security risks. About 3,200 migrants and refugees remain in detention, living in overcrowded conditions with almost non-existent services.

The drop in the cost of food has improved food safety indicators, but this is not the case everywhere. Food prices have risen in many parts of the south during 2019. Despite improvements, 30% of families still have food accessibility problems. As a result, approximately 64% of Libyan families and 78% of migrant and refugee families live in conditions of having to reduce the number of daily meals, have inadequate food, have to withdraw children from schools or are forced to sell family goods.

About 24% of Libyans and 80% of migrants and refugees reported having faced difficulties in accessing health services. Many public health facilities are closed and open ones lack adequate medicines and equipment. Many structures have been attacked or damaged directly due to the fighting and those that remain functional are overloaded or non-functional.

Access to health, education and other public services is further limited for people who have lost legal documents or for those who do not have them, such as migrants and refugees. Even education and water services, sanitation have been discontinued.

About 39% of all people in need - 893,000 people - are in vulnerable conditions and in dire need of humanitarian aid. In general, the most critical situations are found in the areas of Tripoli which are directly suffering the consequences of the conflict. Other cities have received the largest number of internally displaced people: Azzawya, Benghazi, Ejdabia, Misrata and Sebha.