

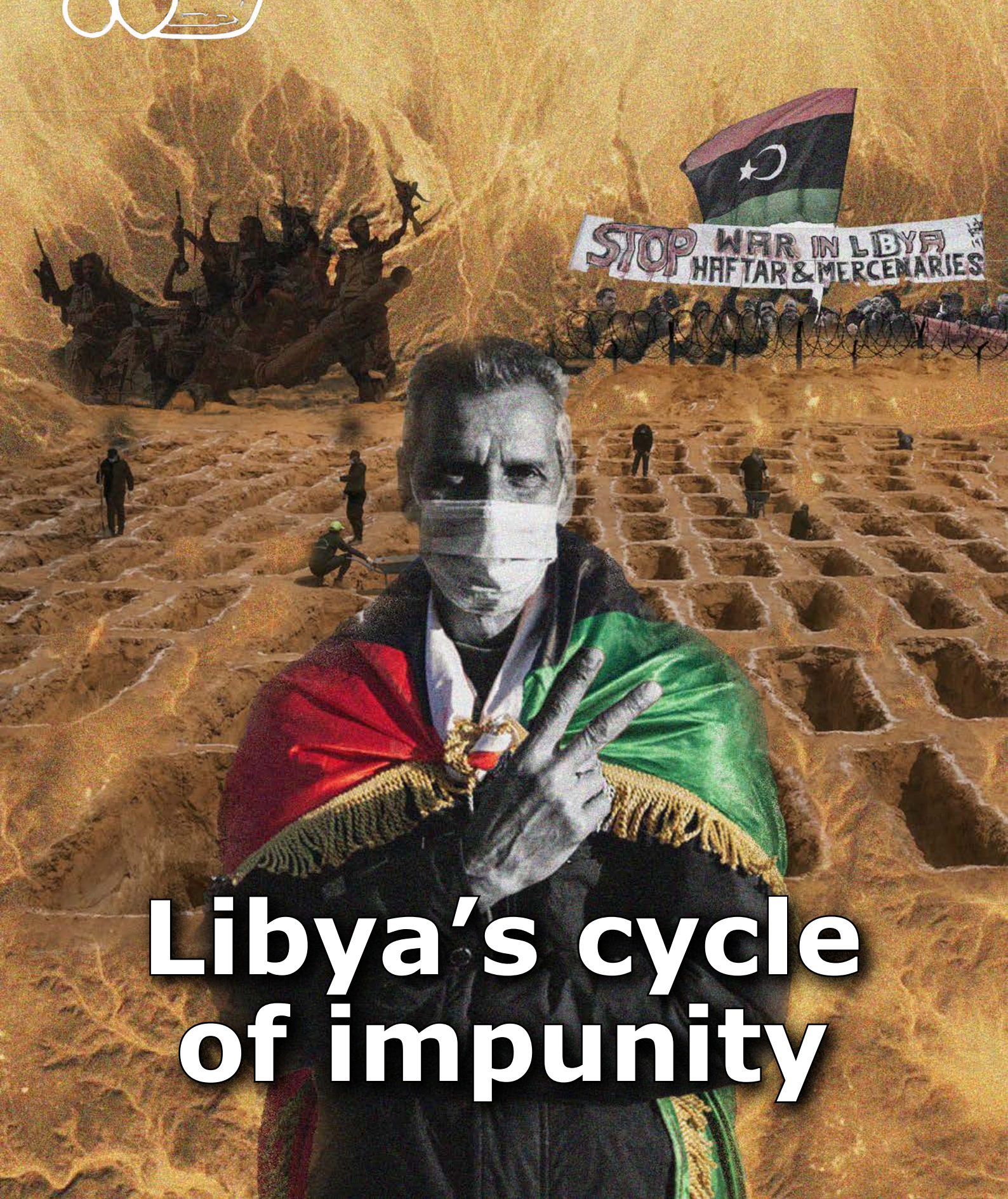
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MaghrebiWeek

A snap shot PDF magazine of the news from North Africa and the MENA region



Libya's cycle of impunity



Human rights violations in Libya: an endless cycle of impunity

Jack Dennison-Thompson

“Our worst-held fears are being confirmed” is the description provided by UN human rights chief Volker Turk regarding the state of Libya and its human rights violations.

Since the fall of Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has descended into a nightmarish landscape of systematic human rights violations, where the collapse of state institutions has transformed arbitrary arrests and mass graves from aberrations into a grim new normal.

The UN’s discovery of these sites on 4 June 2025 represents more than a momentary horror—it is a stark testament to a nation’s complete institutional breakdown.

The locations were the SSA headquarters, hospitals, and Tripoli, with these mass graves highlighting the broader violations which have been widespread across the country, with arbitrary detentions being just as prevalent as murder. This inability to uphold human

rights has become deeply rooted in Libya and stems from the fall of Gaddafi, where Libya has been left to exist in a state of perpetual fracture.

With the country split between rival administrations, with the UN-backed government in Tripoli and the Government of National Stability in Benghazi.

The international community’s failure in Libya extends beyond military intervention. After deposing Gaddafi in 2011, NATO powers abandoned any meaningful reconstruction efforts.

The UN maintained only a limited political advisory mission, while European countries became increasingly focused on containing migration rather than supporting democratic institution-building.

This strategic neglect transformed Libya from a potential democratic transition into a breeding ground for armed groups, human trafficking, and systematic human

rights violations. A state controlled by two parties is one in which the judiciary and accountability are hard to uphold, with an ecosystem of repression easily born from it.

Armed groups have been able to take more control than can be found in stable societies, as the Stabilisation Support Apparatus (SSA) and the Internal Security Agency (ISA) have effectively replaced state institutions, transforming systematic violence into a form of governance.

This violence is rooted within both sides of the country, including the side that the UN puts its recognition behind.

The repression which is used is brutal and is supported in its application. The ISA in the eastern side of the country applies its repression through heavy arrests, enforced disappearances, and calculated intimidation, which puts fear into its very own citizens. This fear is spread in how the governments attack a diverse set



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of people. Those who are targeted are political activists, elderly tribal leaders, bloggers, and those who are willing to criticise the various governments.

On the 13th of July 2024, these brutal crimes were shown. Ahmed Abdel Moneim Al-Zawi died at the hands of an ISA detention centre in Ajdabiya in the northwestern region of Libya.

A sufferer of arbitrary arrest after visiting the centre on the 10th of July, when visiting his brother, who had been arrested for criticising the ISA.

It was reported that Ahmed had hung himself, yet witnesses say he had a bruise on the back of his head, which appeared to be from a strong blow. The evidence of this treatment

and violations is staggering. The International Organisation for Migration documented over 1,000 migrant deaths and disappearances in 2024. Mass graves were found in Jakharrah and Al-Kufra, having 10-93 bodies respectively.

This operation is not just limited to the armed forces but is being backed by institutional credibility.

Libya's parliament approved a budget of 179 billion Libyan dinars for the eastern-based government, with funds explicitly earmarked for armed groups with documented histories of abuse.

Operating with near-total immunity, the ISA and similar groups have garnered such power that their ability to carry out human rights violations has become an

institutional methodology. This disregard has not gone unnoticed, as the UN and Amnesty International have documented the abuses in excruciating detail in what can only be the hope of bringing justice and ending the violations being carried out in the country.

Yet this shameful documentation has not translated into action, as a culture of impunity has continued and has been noted in the recent mass graves that have been discovered.

Türk has now made a strong call to action for Libya with the discovery that Libya must move towards an "inclusive democracy" and break the "recurring cycle of transitional agreements." Amnesty International demands the immediate release of arbi-

trarily detained individuals and independent investigations into human rights violations.

The people of Libya have expressed their demand for truth and justice—a peaceful existence where human rights are not just promised, but protected.

Libya is not a perspective. The discourse of mass graves, the arbitrary arrests, and systemic violations is not just history; they are current testimonies to a system which has normalised human rights abuses across the region.

Fundamental structures of state must be changed across the country. At the moment they are currently enabling these atrocities and will need alteration if change is to occur in the future.

Strikes erupt as Morocco's government workers grow restive

Malaika Remedios

Morocco's disgruntled workers have launched rolling strikes this June raising fears of wider resistance as the Kingdom increasingly cracks down on dissent.



Local government employees across Morocco began a nationwide strike on June 11, reports Telquel. The strikes, spearheaded by the National Front of Local Government Employees, are set to continue throughout June and include government staff across all levels, including temporary workers.

The movement comes as officials increasingly crack down on dissent. In February, a wave of protests erupted in response

to a widely unpopular draft bill that sought to impose restrictions on strike freedoms. The bill mandated advanced notice for strikes and strict penalties for those who did not have approval, which critics argued effectively criminalized protest.

Despite public outcry, the bill was passed in March reflecting Rabat's efforts to quash frustration with persistent inflation, stagnant wages, and top-down governance in sectoral "dialogues."



The strike is meant to represent a range of sectors, including advocates from education, agriculture, healthcare, and transportation.

Among the Front's key demands are a general wage increase,

the introduction of a thirteenth-month bonus –already granted in other public sectors– and a more equitable basic pay system. Also central to the protests was the opposition to the recent absorption of the KNOPS fund into the national social security regime and the rollback of certain retirement benefits.



Financial justice aside, the protests signal a pushback against what many see as an assault on democracy.

Despite repeated announcements of dialogue initiatives by the Ministry of Interior, few concrete outcomes have followed. Workers, for their part, have grown weary of false promises issued through

official channels and echoed in state-aligned media outfits.

Hesspress and Morocco Mirror, for instance, have reported on the surge in unrest especially in the Kingdom's public sector, while parroting government claims of "commitment to social dialogue."

In its latest communiqué, the Front pointed to the government's "disregard and contempt" for local workers and urged a wider coalition of unions, civil society actors, and human rights organizations to join the mobilization. They called for "the settlement of pending issues within the framework of sectoral dialogue."





Algeria added to EU's 'high risk' money-laundering blacklist

Zi Qi Sin

The European Union has announced on 10 June that it has added Algeria on its blacklist of high-risk countries for money-laundering and terrorist financing, according to The Arab Weekly plus agencies.



This high-profile status update will lead to severe economic and socio-political ramifications for the North African state. In 2021, the International Monetary Fund has suggested that blacklisted countries experience a "large and statistically significant reduction in capital flows". The EU's blacklist has historically been viewed as an instrumental tool wielded

to encourage reforms and greater financial transparency. High profile partnerships have been forged between the EU and international partners such as the Financial Action Task Force to combat the global circulation of dirty money.

The European Commission official website names three key objectives to the listing: to protect the integrity of the Union's internal market and financial system, to reinforce internal security and lastly so as to promote sustainable development.



Besides Algeria, other countries who have made its way to the list include Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Laos, Lebanon, Monaco,

Namibia, Nepal and Venezuela. The EU has confirmed that these nations have been added onto the list of jurisdictions necessitating enhanced security measures specifically for anti-money-laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CTF).



On the other hand, the EU has also announced a removal of 8 countries from the blacklist, in line with proven reforms in their financial regulatory structures. Delisted countries include United Arab Emirates (UAE), Barbados, Gibraltar, Jamaica, Panama, the Philippines, Senegal and Uganda.

In particular, the UAE's removal signals a positive step in its ongoing efforts to match up to international guidelines and rehabilitate

its image as a transparent global financial hub, after a longstanding checkered history stained with money laundering and corruption allegations.

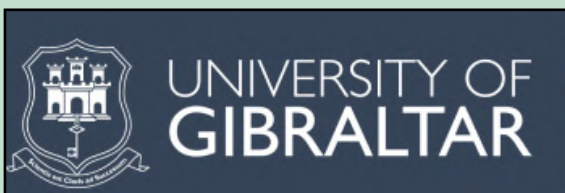
This official delisting on part of the EU will relieve the burden on part of European financial institutions to conduct enhanced due diligence measures for countries scratched off the list. Additionally, this would make delisted states more attractive to European investors, increasing cross border transactions.

By contrast, blacklisted nations such as Algeria will face mounting pressures to combat financial crime, and reduce overall image concerns regarding oversight mechanisms and enforcement capabilities.



Reflecting a collapse in confidence in Algier's capacity to monitor fiscal flows or effectively put in motion AML and CTF measures, this latest EU listing decision is expected to unfavourably impact Algerian economic relations with Europe, its largest trading partner.

Maria Luis Albuquerque, the European Commissioner for Financial Services has indicated that the latest EU announcement reaffirms the EU's serious commitment to international financial standards. The revised list will be subject to the European Parliament and EU member states, and is likely to be implemented in the space of one month.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Tunisia and Italy to expand and strengthen military cooperation

Following a meeting with the Chief of Staff of the Italian Army, the Tunisian Defence Minister Khaled Sehili on June 11th called for increased military cooperation between Tunisia and Italy, according to Xinhua – China's official state news agency.

The two officials discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the forces and implement bilateral cooperation programs, and on June 11th Sehili highlighted areas including military training, joint exercises, medical services, hydrography, and development initiatives.

The Italian Army's Chief of Staff stressed that expanding cooperation would enhance the operational effectiveness of both nations' armed forces and serve their mutual interests.

Libya reconsiders Turkey maritime deal

A Libyan parliamentary delegation has reopened discussions on the controversial 2019 maritime agreement with Turkey.

According to Libya Review on the 12th of June, member Khalifa Al-Daghari revealed that following meetings with President Erdoğan, the deal may be reintroduced for parliamentary review.

The agreement, which delineates maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, was previously blocked due to political divisions. Erdoğan has encouraged Libya to formally reassess the accord, potentially granting it constitutional legitimacy.

The development signals a significant shift in Libya's diplomatic approach, with potential implications for regional energy exploration and geopolitical relations.

Russia emerges as key wheat supplier to Libya

Libya became the third-largest African importer of Russian wheat in 2025, reflecting a significant shift in grain trade dynamics, According to the Libya Review.

Russian wheat shipments to West Africa reached 580,000 tonnes in the first five months of the year, a 38% increase from 2024.

Following Egypt and Sudan, Libya's growing reliance on Russian wheat underscores its food security challenges and the country's economic restructuring.



The trend highlights Russia's expanding economic influence in Africa, with wheat becoming a key diplomatic and economic tool in the region.

EU condemns breaking of ceasefire in Libya

The European Union has condemned the fact that there have been recent violations of the ceasefire in Tripoli during the Eid al-Adha holiday, according to Libya Observer – a historically anti-Eastern Libya outlet – on June 11th.

Along with relevant diplomatic missions, the EU released a statement demanding that all parties respect the ceasefire and work to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The statement read: "The renewed violence highlights the urgent need to revive a credible and inclusive political process."

Morocco's king advocates pan-African approach to blue economy

On June 9, Princess Lalla Hasnaa of Morocco administered a speech on behalf of King Mohammed VI to the participants of the "Africa for the Ocean" summit in Nice, France advocating a pan-African approach to the blue economy, reports Yabiladi.

She highlighted the need for South-South cooperation and regional integration in aquaculture, stressing that efforts must be collective because the challenge is continental rather than national. "It is not enough to have a shared ocean," she said, "We must also

think about it together, manage it together, and defend it together...only a coordinated approach is capable of optimizing maritime value chains, securing trade routes, and capturing a fairer share of the world's ocean wealth."

Libya accused of attacking Sudanese border posts

The Sudanese army has accused eastern Libya's leader Khalifa Haftar of attacking border posts in what could be a major escalation in the conflict.

According to Al-Jazeera on 10th June, this is the first time the Sudanese army has accused it's northern neighbour of being directly involved in the war, though Haftar was claimed to have facilitated arms shipments to the rebel Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since the beginning of the war.

The current civil war in Sudan broke out in 2023, as two rival factions – the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF – turned to force in their bid for control over the country.

Three women killed in fatal traffic accident near Tripoli

The Tripoli Security Directorate reported a tragic traffic accident on the 9th of June, southwest of the capital, resulting in three fatalities and two injuries. The incident occurred on the main road near the administrative border with the West Mountain Security Directorate.

According to the government-friendly Libya Observer, the vehicle, carrying four women and a driver, was involved in a severe collision.



Three women died at the scene, while another woman and the driver sustained varying injuries and were transported to Tiji Hospital for medical treatment. Local authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the fatal accident.

Sahel states launch new national anthem

The Confederation of Sahel States (AES) marked a symbolic milestone on June 9, as its anthem "Sahel Benkan" was played for the first time during flag-raising ceremonies in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali, reports La Nouvelle Tribune.

The hymn, composed of three verses, pays tribute to the heroic history of the peoples of the Sahel while celebrating the qualities of courage and resilience of their citizens. The event also took place in Niger and Mali, in the presence of the heads of state of the two countries.



President Ibrahim Traoré, at Koulouba Palace, highlighted the unity and resilience of Sahel nations. Calling for solidarity against external interference, he said: "The Sahel will be stronger than ever thanks to the unity of its peoples, despite external forces seeking to sow division."

Trump's Travel ban on Libya takes effect

The Trump administration's new travel ban targeting Libya has come into effect, fully restricting Libyan citizens from entering the United States.

According to the Guardian, the ban, implemented on 9th of June, impacts Libya among a dozen countries facing entry restrictions. Trump claims the restrictions are related to terrorism and public safety concerns, citing deficient screening processes.

While the administration argues national security, critics contend the policy disproportionately targets non-white, developing nations. The move reflects ongoing geopolitical tensions and raises significant challenges for Libyan nationals seeking opportunities or entry into the United States.



Israel directly attacks Iran in severe military escalation

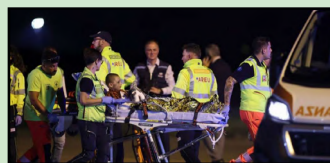
Children of Gaza go to Italy for medical care

A total of 17 children from Gaza have gone to Italy for medical care, accompanied by 50 relatives, Middle East Eye via Reuters reported on June 12th.

Dr Alaa al-Najjar and Adam Hamdi al-Najjar, her son, were within the group. The son's nine siblings and his father were killed due to an Israeli strike which struck their Khan Younis home in May.

The son, who sustained several fractures, arrived at Linate Airport in Milan with Alaa al-Najjar. Upon arrival, he was received by Antonio Tajani, Italy's foreign minister. Adam was

admitted to Milan's Niguarda Hospital.



Lebanon: Ex-economy minister arrested over embezzlement

Authorities in Lebanon on June 11th apprehended the country's ex-economy minister over charges of embezzlement, forgery and misusing funding from the public, Al-Monitor reported.

The Court of Cassation's Attorney General, Judge Jamal Hajjar,

ordered the arrest of the ex-economy minister, Amin Salam, after three hours of questioning surrounding his purported complicity in forgery, agreeing to suspicious contracts and the embezzlement of funding.

The case concerning Salam's arrest is separate to another probe which involves Salam, concerning accusations such as illicit enrichment. Since March, the former economy minister has been under investigation.

Israeli forces storm al-Aqsa mosque in occupied Jerusalem

Israeli forces made people in occupied Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque evacuate on June 13th,

and later closed off its gates, Middle East Eye via Wafa news agency reported.

Following the dawn prayer, Israeli forces entered the mosque. According to local sources who spoke to Wafa, the incident marks the first time Israeli forces shut down the mosque since the coronavirus pandemic.

Al-Aqsa Mosque shuts down as Israel declares a lockdown in the occupied West Bank. Local sources also said that many military checkpoints and gates located in the West Bank were closed by Israeli officers.



Gaza: Israeli attacks kill over 60 including aid seekers

At least 61 people in Gaza, including 39 people looking for aid have died due to Israeli attacks, Middle East Eye via Al Jazeera reported on June 11th.

Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City said 27 bodies were brought to the hospital. But in al-Awda in Nuseirat seven bodies had arrived and in al-Aqsa in Deir al-Balah two bodies were brought over. In the case of Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, 25 bodies arrived.

The media office of Gaza's government said Israel is intentionally bringing "chaos" to Gaza through its "policy of starvation" and allegedly intentional attacks on people seeking aid.

Islamic State seeks revival in Iraq and Syria

Leaders of the Middle East and allies in the West have claimed that the Islamic State could see the fall of Syria's Assad regime as an opportunity for the group to have a resurgence in Syria or Iraq.

Sources of security and political officials believe the group is trying to execute this comeback, Reuters reported on June 12th.

Israel attacks Iran in a severe military escalation

Leon Kouider

On the morning of June 13th, Israel launched a "pre-emptive" attack on numerous nuclear and military strikes across Iranian territory, signifying a major escalation which has brought the two regional powers on the precipice of all-out war.

According to an Iranian state media report via The National, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander-in-chief Major General Hossein Salami was killed in the strikes. Major General Mohammad Bagheri, the chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, was also killed in the air strikes.

Six Iranian nuclear scientists were targeted, Tasnim news agency reported, with at least 50

Iranians sustaining injuries.

Ali Shamkani, a top aide to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was "critically injured" in a targeted strike on his place of residence in Tehran. Khamenei threatened Israel with "severe punishment" in response to the attack, warning of a "bitter and painful fate."

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz warned that "a missile and drone attack against the state of Israel and its civilian population is expected in the immediate future." The Israel Defense Forces revealed that over 100 drones were launched from Iran in retaliation. Iran, Iraq, and Jordan have closed their airspace.

The explosions were heard north-east of Iranian capital Tehran.

Local news outlets have reported civilian casualties as at least one strike hit a residential area. Witness testimonies reported separate strikes had hit around the central city of Natanz - where nuclear sites are located - and elsewhere.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said that the Natanz nuclear site was struck and confirmed correspondence with Iranian authorities regarding radiation levels.

According to state TV, Iran's air defence system was activated at full capacity on the morning of June 13th. Prior to the strikes, Iranian officials have warned that any form of Israeli military action would prompt a firm and definite response.

The Islamic state has begun to bring fighters back into action in Syria and Iraq, in which the group has handed out weapons and accelerated recruitment as well as propaganda activity. But as of yet, efforts to reactivate the group's presence has seen limited results.



Israeli attacks on schools amount to "extermination", UN says

Israel's assault on schools and cultural areas in Gaza are war crimes and a form of extermination, a UN body said, according to Middle East Eye via Reuters on June 11th.

The findings from the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel found that Israel's military activities have obliterated or harmed over 90% of academic infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

The devastation in Gaza has left 658,000 children unable to access education in the last few years. The commission's chair, Navi Pillay, said there are increasing signs of Israel conducting "a concerted campaign to obliterate Palestinian life in Gaza."



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Israel poised to finish off Hezbollah

Algeria's new president

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with coalition leaders in parliament

Syria's al-Sharaa in danger of assassination, US warns

The US special envoy for Syria said the Trump administration believes Syrian leader Ahmed al-Sharaa's engagement with Western nations could mean he is in danger of assassination, Al-Monitor reported on June 10th.

The envoy, Tom Barrack, said: "We need to coordinate a protection system around [Sharaa]." Barrack said factions of the global militants who joined forces with al-Sharaa in the run up to the ouster of ex-Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad, present a threat to the new Syrian leader.

While the new Syrian administration is trying to

bring the foreign fighters into the Syrian army, groups like the Islamic State (ISIS) are equally trying to enlist them.



US says Muslim nations should free up land for Palestinian state

The US Ambassador to Israel has proposed that Muslim nations let some of their territory be used to form a Palestinian state, the BBC reported on June 10th.

The ambassador, Mike Huckabee, stressed that Muslim nations have "644 times the amount of land that are controlled by Israel." He suggested that if the urgency for a Palestinian state is so pressing, a country should say "we'd like to host it."

Huckabee also criticised the UK and Australia for issuing sanctions on two far-right ministers from Israel, due to "repeated incitements of violence against" Palestinians. The ambassador added that a two-state solution to the Gaza war is "aspirational."



Opposition fails to dissolve Israel's parliament

Nourhan Fouad

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition government narrowly survived an opposition-led motion to dissolve parliament, according to Al-Monitor on June 11th.

The vote saw 61 Knesset members oppose the dissolution bill while 53 supported it. The opposition had hoped to trigger snap elections by exploiting growing tensions between Netanyahu and his ultra-Orthodox coalition partners over the controversial issue of military conscription exemptions.

Although the ultra-Orthodox Shas and United Torah Judaism (UTJ) parties had previously expressed dissatisfaction with the government's stance on

conscription, the vote revealed that only a handful of their lawmakers backed the motion. The opposition will now have to wait six months before it can attempt another dissolution effort.

The ultra-Orthodox exemption has come under increased scrutiny as the war in Gaza continues. Calls to broaden the Israel Defense Forces' recruitment pool have intensified, with Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich calling it a "national and security need".

Before the vote, Likud party party lawmaker, Yuli Edelstein, announced that parties had reached an agreement on the future conscription law. Although details were not disclosed, he described the deal as "historic news," that would lead to an expanded military recruitment base.

Edelstein had proposed increasing ultra-Orthodox enlistment and imposing stricter penalties on those who avoid service.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid said this marked the fall of Netanyahu's government. "When coalitions begin to fall apart, they fall apart," he said. He added that ultra-Orthodox parties had been forced to choose between their military exemption or their place in government.

Opposition parties had earlier announced that they would suspend all legislative activity to focus entirely on removing the Netanyahu government.

Smotrich warned against destabilizing the government during wartime, calling it an "existential danger" to Israel's future.



Pavel Prigozhin, leader of the Wagner group in Mali

Algeria launches undercover mercenary group to destabilise Sahel states



The Algerian army has launched a secret paramilitary group code named “KL-7” with the objectives of carrying out undercover operations to destabilise Sahel nations, according to the Moroccan government friendly North Africa Post on 6 June.

“Sahel intelligence” news outlet has cited Algeria Gendarmerie

sources to allege that the undercover group has conducted subversive missions within Algeria’s Southern neighbours in tandem with terrorist groups already active in the Sahel region. Sahel nations at risk of attack include Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali, among others.

Libya accused of attacking Sudanese border posts

The Sudanese army has accused eastern Libya’s leader Khalifa Haftar of attacking border posts in what could be a major escalation in the conflict.

According to Al-Jazeera on 10th June, this is the first time the Sudanese army has accused it’s

northern neighbour of being directly involved in the war, though Haftar was claimed to have facilitated arms shipments to the rebel Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since the beginning of the war.



The current civil war in Sudan broke out in 2023, as two rival factions – the Sudanese Armed Forces and the RSF – turned to force in their bid for control over the country.

Wagner Group replaced by Russian-owned Africa Corps in Mali

Alastair Tibbs

The Russian private military contractor, the Wagner Group, is set to be replaced in Mali by the Kremlin’s own Africa Corps, marking a significant shift in the optics of Moscow’s strategy.

The group, which employs an estimated 2000 mercenaries in Mali and has spent more than three years aiding government forces, has already left according to France24 on 8th June.

While the replacements, the Africa Corps, will not change much on the ground in Bamako, the rebranding shows a growing confidence on the side of Moscow.

The Africa Corps are directly controlled by the Russian government whereas Wagner, though state-funded, has its own leader and ostensibly more independence.

Mali’s ruling junta realigned its military strategy after seizing power in 2021, throwing out French troops and inviting in Russian fighters instead.

Only last week, on 1st June, Jihadist attacks in Timbuktu rocked Mali, an often familiar story in the troubled nation.

Huge swathes of northern Mali remain out of government control, presided over by the pro-independence Tuareg movement,

the Azawad forces, as well as Islamic terror groups.

The presence of Russian forces is critical for Mali’s president Assimi Goita to retain a semblance of stability, and perhaps even take back the north.

The Malian Army and its Wagner partners retook large chunks of land from Azawad in 2023, capturing the key rebel stronghold of Kidal in November.

While Mali and Wagner suffered a disastrous defeat in near the Algerian border in July 2024, revenge drone strikes in December 2024 reportedly killed eight Tuareg rebel leaders in the same area.

Sahel states launch new national anthem

The Confederation of Sahel States (AES) marked a symbolic milestone on June 9, as its anthem “Sahel Benkan” was played for the first time during flag-raising ceremonies in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali, reports La Nouvelle Tribune.

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President Ibrahim Traoré, at Koulouba Palace, highlighted the unity and resilience of Sahel nations. Calling for solidarity against external interference, he said: “The Sahel will be stronger than ever thanks to the unity of its peoples, despite external forces seeking to sow division.”

Boko Haram kidnaps Nigerian priest amidst mounting Christian persecution



A Nigerian Catholic priest, along with other travellers has been abducted on 1 June by Boko Haram terrorists within Borno state in northeast Nigeria, as reported by Africanews.

Bishop John Bagna Bakani has told the Associated Press that Rev. Alphonsus Afina was ambushed by armed men at a military checkpoint near the town of Gwozo, which is located closely to the Cameroon border. Bishop Bakani had briefly spoke with the kidnapped priest on the phone, and recounts that a powerful rocket-propelled grenade had hit Afina’s convoy, leading to the death of one individual and injuring others.

Aid to the Church in Need has alleged Afina to be the 15th religious person to be kidnapped.



Martin Jay

Israel has carried out a “pre-emptive” strike against Iran’s military infrastructure – both its nuclear facilities and its ballistic missile installations in a move which has shocked the world, given that it will now raise tensions in the Middle East to a new level.

The move will also raise tensions between Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu as the U.S. president has expressly told the Israeli leader not to go ahead with such an attack in the middle of talks between the U.S. and Iran over its nuclear program.

Trump pulled out of an agreement between western powers and Iran in his first term as president and has been working on establishing a second deal which is a considerable improvement on the first one, in his view.

The Israel strike now throws a spanner in the works and could draw the U.S. in to a major all-out war with Iran, given America’s allegiance to Israel. Trump acknowledged that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was considering a strike, which he said could spark a “massive conflict” – leading to a U.S. decision to draw down embassy staff in the region.

“We are fairly close to a pretty good agreement,” Trump told reporters just a day before leading analysts to assume that Netanyahu’s bold move was in defiance of the U.S. president. For months Israel has been frustrated by Trump’s insistence on his own administration organizing a series of talks to try and strike a deal which would ensure that Iran could not produce nuclear weapons – which Israel insists Tehran is now capable of doing in perhaps even a matter of months.

Yet intelligence that Israel received would suggest that Netanyahu might have learned that Iran itself was planning a similar pre-emptive strike. A new round of talks between the U.S. and Iran set to kick off in Oman now seems unlikely to happen given the tensions, now with the regime in Tehran examining the damage and the number of

Israel’s strike against Iran could expose US to war

Netanyahu has blown US talks with Iran out of the water with latest strikes.

senior army officials killed in the attack. It is inconceivable to imagine that Iran will not be looking at a retaliation against Israel and perhaps even western assets in the region such as oil infrastructure in Gulf Arab countries, although the Trump administration was quick to deliver a statement advising it not to hit U.S. soldiers stationed there.

For Trump, he is now in a tighter corner than ever about trying to bring peace to the region. He will now have to try and navigate himself and his PR efforts around the fact that Israel can openly defy his directives. He needs now to show that he is in control of Israel and its geo-military ventures while at the same time preventing escalation – a tough call given his limited diplomatic skills. And yet ironically it is Trump who created these tensions in the first place.

Trump unilaterally withdrew from the so-called “Iran Deal” during his first term, insisting that he could strike a better bargain, and imposed sweeping sanctions. Yet, if he hadn’t have done that, Iran would not have gone ahead immediately in 2018 and raced ahead with a beefed-up uranium enrichment program which has led to the fever pitch tensions today given their new capacity to make a bomb. If Trump had not ditched the Obama deal, Iran would have considerably less enriched uranium today and a much longer “breakout” period before it could ever make what Israel claims is nine nuclear bombs.

In short, when Trump pulled out of the deal, it resulted in Iran reviving and improving its nuclear facilities and enriched uranium to a much higher purity than it had under the previous deal, and much closer to the grade needed to make a bomb.

It is this egocentric and deluded view of his own presence in negotiating around the world which has now created new, heightened tensions in the region which is precisely the last thing Trump needs as he tries to devalue the dollar while retaining its hegemonic edge around the world.

Iran for its part now is likely to pull out entirely from talks, not so much because of

the Israel strikes themselves, but more because of a perennial distrust Tehran has of America. Many of its influential leaders will think that Trump’s statements before the strike that Israel should not go ahead with the attack might have well been staged to smother Trump in a shroud of plausible deniability which is increasingly becoming part of his presidential élan of late.

They, along with one or two western sages, will point to the threats Trump made if Iran would not comply to U.S. demands of scaling down its uranium enrichment program, not to mention his denials that he was aware of a recent attack by Ukraine on Russian bombers.

Plausible deniability, the calling card of all regimes in the Middle East, has shifted to the White House under Trump’s leadership and the next critical steps both by Israel and Trump’s administration will be carried out following intelligence reports which will look deeper into whether the U.S. president is genuinely detached from the hip of Israel and its reckless endeavours in the region.

If Trump does not act quickly to stop escalation many will assume that he was part of the decision for Israel to go ahead with the strike. If it turns out he really was not involved at all and genuinely was against such a plan, it raises new questions as to who, or what, is actually running U.S. foreign policy. Netanyahu for his part is sitting comfortably with a double hit. He has struck Iran and gained considerable political capital in doing so but has also, with the same move, blown the Iran talks with the U.S. out of the water which is a bigger prize.

The views expressed in this article belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of Maghrebi.org. Martin Jay is an award winning journalist based in Morocco, working for a number of international titles while also the editor in chief of both Maghrebi.org and Levantis.me. He can be followed on twitter at @MartinRJay. This article was originally published by Strategic Culture Foundation.

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institutions that might challenge his authority. He famously replaced the constitution with his own “Green Book,” and emphasised personal loyalty over state structure. Today, the cost of that institutional vacuum is clear.

The country is effectively split in two: the western region governed from Tripoli, and the eastern region controlled by Khalifa Haftar, a warlord backed by Egypt, Russia and the UAE. In between are countless militias, some operating as de facto governments, others as criminal enterprises. Armed groups control airports, oil terminals and prisons. Rule of law is nonexistent.

The recent assassination of Abdel Ghani al-Kikli, the head of the powerful Tripoli-based militia known as the Stability Support Apparatus (SSA), has sent shock

waves through the capital. Al-Kikli wielded significant influence as a paramilitary commander whose forces acted as a de facto security provider for parts of Tripoli, while also exercising considerable political power behind the scenes.

His death destabilised the already fragile balance of power among rival armed groups in the city, triggering deadly clashes and underscoring how militia leaders remain central to Libya’s fractured state.

Foreign mercenaries, including Russian Wagner Group (renamed Africa Corps) fighters and Sudanese paramilitaries, continue to operate inside Libya. It is a tragic irony: Gadhafi, who once styled himself as a pan-African leader and anti-imperialist, has left behind a country dependent on foreign actors and

interventions. Sovereignty is now fragmented. Libya belongs to everyone, and no one. Efforts to hold national elections have repeatedly failed. A 2021 vote, meant to be the first since 2014, was postponed indefinitely due to disagreements over who could run and how the vote would be conducted. Seif al-Islam Gadhafi’s candidacy was particularly divisive. Some saw it as an affront to the revolution; others saw it as a chance for redemption.

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