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ARAB NEWS

The Voice of a Changing Region

SINCE 1975

The people's right to peacefully protest should be respected and protected.
Stephanie Williams
UN's top Libya envoy



Libya's protests came a day after the leaders failed to reach an agreement on elections during UN-mediated talks in Geneva. AFP

ROGUE MILITIA
No talks until Houthis agree to open Taiz roads: Official

Saeed Al-Batati Al-Mukalla
Yemen will not begin discussing other issues with the Houthis under a UN-brokered truce until the militia accepts a proposal to open roads in Taiz, a government official told Arab News.

Last month, UN Yemen envoy Hans Grundberg proposed opening a main road linking Taiz with other provinces to partially ease the Houthi siege on the city, with the aim of resolving stalled negotiations between the two sides.

The government previously insisted on a complete lifting of the siege but accepted the proposal providing other roads opened during subsequent talks.

But the Houthis rejected Grundberg's proposal, dealing a blow to the talks and the truce that has by and large been holding since April. "We will not accept discussing other issues or offer more concessions before they agree to the UN envoy's proposal," the Yemeni gov-

'We will not accept discussing other issues or offer more concessions before they agree to the UN envoy's proposal.'

ernment official said anonymously because he was not authorized to brief reporters. "We have not received any invitation (from the UN envoy) to take part in a new round of discussion on the Taiz file."

The Houthis alternatively proposed opening an old, rough road connecting Taiz with the countryside. Taiz residents and local government officials told Arab News that the proposed road was narrow, unpaved, and had been abandoned for over six decades.

The Yemeni Army has accused the Houthis of breaking the truce more than 100 times last week in Hodeidah, Taiz, Hajjah, Saada, Jof, and Marib, and killing a soldier and wounding four more.

On Saturday, it said it had shot down a small explosives-rigged Houthi drone.

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DIVIDED NATION

Libya riots and vandalism 'totally unacceptable,' says top UN envoy

Interim Premier Dbeibah supports protesters, says all institutions should quit and hold elections

AFP, Reuters, AP Tripoli

Libya's rival leaders were under growing street pressure on Saturday after protesters stormed parliament as anger exploded over deteriorating living conditions and political deadlock.

Libyans, many impoverished after a decade of turmoil and sweltering in the soaring summer heat, have been enduring fuel shortages and power cuts of up to 18 hours a day even as their country sits atop Africa's largest proven oil reserves.

The UN's top Libya envoy, Stephanie Williams, tweeted: "The

people's right to peacefully protest should be respected and protected but riots and acts of vandalism such as the storming of the House of Representatives headquarters in Tobruk are totally unacceptable."

Protesters stormed the seat of the House of Representatives in the eastern city of Tobruk on Friday night, ransacking its offices and torching part of the building.

Interim Premier Abdul Hamid Dbeibah leads a Tripoli-based administration while former Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha draws support from the Tobruk-based House of Representatives and eastern military strongman Khalifa Haftar.

Dbeibah voiced support for the protesters' concerns in a Twitter

FASTFACT

Libyans, many impoverished after a decade of turmoil and sweltering in the heat, have been enduring fuel shortages and power cuts of up to 18 hours a day even as their country sits atop Africa's largest proven oil reserves.

message. He said he agrees that all institutions should leave including the government, and there is no way to do that except through "election."

In both the main eastern city of Benghazi — the cradle of the 2011 uprising — and the capital Tripoli, thousands took to the streets to

chants of "We want the lights to work." Some brandished the green flags of the former Qaddafi regime.

They said they will keep demonstrating until all the ruling elites quit power. "We affirm our determination to continue the path of peaceful demonstration until the last breath to achieve our goals," the Beltrees youth movement, which is mostly focused on online activism over living conditions and was behind calls for protests in 2020, said via social media.

Parliament Speaker Aguila Saleh condemned "acts of sabotage" in the protesters' attack on the parliament building in Tobruk, saying it was punishable by law.

Libya has been mired in chaos

and repeated rounds of conflict since a NATO-backed uprising toppled and killed dictator Muammar Qaddafi in 2011.

UN-mediated talks in Geneva this week aimed at breaking the deadlock between rival Libyan institutions failed to resolve key differences.

Presidential and parliamentary elections, originally set for December last year, were meant to cap a UN-led peace process following the end of the last major round of violence in 2020. But voting never took place due to several contentious candidacies and deep disagreements over the polls' legal basis between the rival power centers in east and west.

The Brief

LEBANON MEETING

Arab foreign ministers said after their meeting in Beirut that their presence in Lebanon amid its difficult times signals Arab world's support to Lebanon reforms. **P6**

TURKISH OPERATION

President Erdogan said Turkey is in no rush to stage a new operation against Kurdish militants, but regional actors are concerned over Turkey's potential offensive against towns of Tal Rifaat and Manbij. **P7**

INDONESIA TRADE

Indonesian officials say they are hopeful of increasing the country's exports to the Middle East after the signing of a new economic pact with the UAE. **P8**

JOURNEY OF FAITH

Hajj journey 'an answer to my prayers,' says Thai pilgrim

Direct flights and efficient transit win praise as Saudi Arabia smooths way for travelers

Lama Alhamawi Riyadh

Thai pilgrims arriving in the Kingdom — many for the first time — have been surprised by the ease of their Hajj journey, with one saying that his "prayers had been answered."

"I did not expect these facilities, because I heard that the pilgrimage journey is tiring and long. But everything was easy — less than 12 hours and I was in Saudi Arabia," Arong Samae, a businessman from Narathiwat province in southern Thailand, told Arab News.

The pilgrim flew direct from Thailand to the Madinah airport



Thai pilgrims said every procedure in their arrival was 'fast and tidy.' Supplied

on a chartered flight. He is one of at least 3,700 Thai worshippers heading to the Kingdom.

Samae, who is undertaking the pilgrimage with his wife, described Hajj as "the opportunity of a lifetime." He added: "I thank everyone who serves the pilgrims, whether they are from Thailand or Saudi Arabia."

Mamu Kayah, a high school Arabic teacher from Yala in southern Thailand, said: "It can be said that this year is completely different from my previous experience. Every step is fast and tidy, starting with the procedures in the passports, taking the luggage, riding the bus."

Basri Tatif, deputy head of the Thai Pilgrims Affairs, said that his fellow citizens will be able to perform their rituals safely with all the measures in place.

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