

## **The Libyan Crisis Between Fragile Internal Structures and the Struggle of Regional and International Interests**

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### **Abstract:**

The Libyan crisis is considered one of the most complex crises experienced in the Arab region over the last decade, revealing the fragility of the state's internal structures and the weakness of political and military institutions, which made it an open arena for regional and international interventions. In this crisis, internal factors linked to the historical legacy of the previous regime and tribal and regional divisions intersected with external factors reflecting the struggle of interests and influence among major and emerging international powers.

Accordingly, understanding the trajectory of the Libyan crisis requires a comprehensive approach that considers the interaction of internal and external dimensions and examines how this interplay contributed to deepening the crisis and prolonging it, despite multiple political initiatives and UN efforts to establish peace and stability.

**Keywords:** Libyan crisis, state fragility, internal and external factors, political instability

### **Introduction**

The Libyan crisis represents one of the most complex crises in the Arab region due to the interweaving of political, economic, and security dimensions, as well as its regional and international repercussions. Since the outbreak of the conflict, Libya has experienced political

division and security deterioration, making it an arena for internal conflicts and external entanglements that have complicated the proposed solutions.

On the other hand, the conflicting interests of regional and international powers have turned Libya into a battlefield where political, economic, and security calculations intersect. This internal-external interplay has made the Libyan crisis exceed its national boundaries to become a regional issue with complex strategic dimensions, raising a central problem:

To what extent has the fragility of Libya's internal state structures and the conflict of regional interests deepened and prolonged the crisis?

The following sub-questions were also formulated:

1. What are the internal and external backgrounds of the Libyan crisis?
2. What security aspects contributed to exacerbating the Libyan crisis?
3. How have regional transformations affected the Libyan crisis?
4. What economic and social causes contributed to escalating the Libyan crisis?

To answer this problem, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- The more fragile the internal structure of the Libyan state and the weaker its political and security institutions, the greater the likelihood of worsening and prolonging internal conflict due to the absence of a central authority capable of imposing stability.
- The more conflicting regional and international interests exist within Libya, the more intense the crisis becomes and the more complicated the political settlement processes, due to the multiplicity of external actors and the contradictions in their strategic agendas.

The Libyan crisis is one of the most complex crises in the Arab region due to the interweaving of its political, economic, and security dimensions, as well as its regional and international repercussions. Since the outbreak of the conflict, Libya has experienced political division and security deterioration, making it an arena for internal conflicts and external entanglements that have complicated the proposed solutions.

## **I. Internal Backgrounds of the Libyan Crisis**

The initial causes of crises are often linked to a set of internal factors unique to the environment of the crisis. These factors and distinctive features create fertile ground for the emergence and intensification of crises. In the security context, understanding the nature of the Libyan crisis requires a precise diagnosis of the internal environmental elements that contributed to shaping the features of the crisis, as they constitute the main framework that allowed its outbreak and

continuation. Therefore, identifying and analyzing these factors is an essential step in accurately understanding the dimensions of the Libyan crisis.

## **1. Libya's Geopolitical Role**

### **A. Geographical Features of Libya:**

Libya is an Arab country located in North Africa, with a distinguished strategic location. It is bordered to the north by the Mediterranean Sea, to the east by Egypt and Sudan, to the south by Chad and Niger, and to the west by Tunisia and Algeria. It covers an area of 1,775,500 km<sup>2</sup>, making it the third-largest country in Africa by area, with borders totaling approximately 4,843 km with six neighboring countries and a coastline of about 1,900 km. According to World Bank statistics for 2021, its population is approximately 6,958,538.

Libya consists of three distinct topographical regions: Tripolitania in the northwest, Cyrenaica in the east, and Fezzan in the south. It occupies a strategic position on the northern coast of Africa, extending along the Mediterranean for 1,900 km, overlooking the southern central basin. This coast contains several vital ports, notably Tripoli, Benghazi, and Tobruk, which can serve as important naval bases. Libya also serves as a bridge connecting North Africa with transport routes to Asia and the Maghreb countries with the rest of West Africa's Atlantic coasts. Internally, it includes a Mediterranean zone and a desert sector, making it a crossroads between Europe to the north and tropical Africa to the south. This unique geographical extension has historically made Libya a significant strategic point, threatening Mediterranean communication routes and serving as a base for expansion toward the Middle East and North Africa.

### **B. Natural Resources in Libya:**

Libya holds strategic importance for regional and international powers due to its geographic location, economic significance, and large oil wealth. Natural resources are essential factors affecting any country's economic activity. Libya presents a paradox: despite its strategic location and vast area, it suffers from a significant scarcity of natural resources, making it exceptional compared to its neighbors. Italian colonization did not expand its territory with additional land, and its large area has not translated into abundant economically significant resources.

Agriculture in Libya occupies only 1% of its area, mainly in coastal and mountainous regions near the Mediterranean, while about 8% of its land in the east is used for grazing. Cultivated land provides wheat and other crops. The scarcity of natural resources does not indicate their complete absence, and populations have successfully utilized available resources to suit their

livelihoods. Before oil discovery, essential natural resources included extensive diverse pastures and small cultivable lands.

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#### **Agriculture:**

The agricultural sector is highly diverse, notably in cereals, with barley production three times higher than wheat. Nevertheless, Libya relied on imports to meet its needs. Other crops include Mediterranean fruits such as olives and grapes; Libya ranks fourth in Arab olive oil production. Date production is around thirty palms, insufficient for local needs.

Despite limited arable land on the Libyan coast (about 2% of the country's area), the revolution adopted a strategic vision for agricultural development, aiming to boost national product contribution and reduce oil dependency. The state sought food self-sufficiency to support national food security, reflected in large-scale agricultural projects such as the Green Mountain, Jefara Plain, fertile plains, and Kufra regions. Additional projects utilized the Great Man-Made River for irrigation in southern areas. Multiple programs encouraged agriculture despite significant challenges.

On May 24, 2024, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) under the Arab League held a strategic workshop on preparing Libya's national drought plan and celebrated World Desertification Day with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Wealth, highlighting Libya's commitment to sustainable development and environmental security amid climate change.

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#### **Livestock:**

Grazing resources extend across almost all regions of Libya, varying according to climate and terrain. In coastal plains, livestock such as sheep and cattle are raised near oases, villages, and coastal towns. Desert regions also support grazing along wadis from the Green Mountain in Cyrenaica, Nafusa Mountains, and Western Mountain in Tripoli. Desert pastures suit camel breeding, while mountainous areas like the Western Mountain, Black Haruj, and Acacus Mountains are used for goats. These pastures are vital for two reasons: they provide livelihoods and wealth for populations in a country with limited natural resources, and they constitute the largest portion of exploitable land.

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#### **Oil:**

The discovery of oil was among the most transformative events in Libya since the Islamic conquest. Initial discoveries in the 1920s were interrupted by World War II and later resumed by international companies. Libya faced economic weakness in the 1950s, relying on foreign

aid: the UK provided \$2.75 million and the USA \$4 million. In 1955, Libya began regulating oil exploration via licenses for foreign companies.

Today, Libya significantly influences the global energy market with about 3.5% of global crude oil reserves. Before the crisis, Libya produced approximately 1.77 million barrels per day (2% of global oil production) and around 0.2% of natural gas. Oil and gas are Libya's primary energy sources due to the absence of other conventional sources like coal. Oil discoveries in Libya's lowlands cover vast sedimentary basins such as Sirte, Murzuq, Ghadames, and the Mediterranean Basin. Oil plays a central role in Libya's economy and society, as the main income source, with transport facilitated by proximity to ports, reducing costs.

Between 1970 and 1977, agriculture's contribution to Libya's economy declined due to urban migration. Despite the oil boom, investments did not sufficiently develop other sectors like agriculture or manufacturing, creating overdependence on oil and threatening food security. Recognizing the issue, the state implemented investment plans to reduce oil reliance and develop agriculture and food industries for balanced economic integration.

## **2. Libyan Political Situation**

When politicians fail to meet societal expectations, opposition groups exploit the gap to attract public support, potentially triggering internal political crises threatening security and stability.

Libya gained independence on December 24, 1951, as a federal monarchy with three provinces: Tripoli, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan. Despite reforms by the Senussi movement, weak governance led to losses of public and private resources, harming citizens' and companies' interests, which sparked popular movements under slogans of liberation and revolution.

On September 1, 1969, a military movement led by Muammar Gaddafi seized power, abolishing the monarchy and establishing a republic. The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) under Gaddafi banned political parties, adopting the Egyptian single-party model. Between 1970–1971, the state was reorganized to consolidate central authority.

In 1973, Gaddafi called for a comprehensive popular revolution to eliminate bureaucracy and empower the people, leading to the establishment of popular committees. Over time, internal conflicts within the RCC emerged, with several unsuccessful attempts to overthrow Gaddafi.

In 1975, the ruling group fragmented due to loss of trust or political purges. Ideologically, Gaddafi's "Third International Theory" aimed to merge socialism and capitalism for direct popular democracy, formulated in the *Green Book*, later evolving into the concept of the "State

of the Masses” in 1977, where power was centered on popular conferences and basic committees.

Popular committees, labor institutions, universities, state-funded companies, and media maintained ideological and political dominance, controlling Libya’s economic, social, and political spheres.

The Libyan political system underwent significant institutional transformations in two main phases:

**A. Phase One: 1969–1976**

New institutions inspired by Arab nationalism and Nasserism in Egypt emerged, including:

- **Revolutionary Command Council (RCC):** Served as the legislative authority, issuing decisions and laws. Comprised 12 members, including Gaddafi, with centralized powers. According to Article 12 of the September 11, 1969 Constitutional Declaration, the RCC was the supreme authority with sovereign, legislative, and policymaking powers.
- **Council of Ministers:** Executive body responsible for implementing RCC policies and orders, with oversight to ensure alignment with general directions. Tasks included preparing laws and projects for approval and executing state policies.
- **Arab Socialist Union:** Established June 11, 1971, as a political participation platform, not a traditional party. Focused on social coalition, reducing class disparities, supporting the immediate regime, and aligning ideology with Islamic teachings.
- **Popular Committees:** Established April 5, 1973, after Gaddafi’s speech in Zuwara, to achieve direct democracy and allow citizens to express their will. Elections were to be held across all geographic and administrative units. Committees served as instruments of popular authority alongside popular conferences.

**B. Phase Two: 1977–2011**

New political institutions emerged:

- **Basic Popular Conferences:** 405 conferences were created, geographically distributed. Membership included all citizens over 18. Conferences discussed national laws and elected a secretariat of five members for three years, overseeing conference affairs.
- **Non-Basic Popular Conferences:** Managed decisions in specific administrative areas, ensuring alignment with general policies but without independent decision-making powers.

- **Unions, Professional Associations, and Federations:** Organized per the *Green Book*, representing specific professions and handling related issues, with administrative management by secretariats forming general bodies at the national level.
- **Popular Committees:** Executive body implementing decisions of the Jamahiriya, including the General Popular Committee, municipal committees, and basic popular conference committees, handling local dispute resolution and administrative affairs.

### 3- Features of Political Corruption in Libya:

Lisa Anderson defended the idea that there was no real state in Libya, relying on Hegel's concept, which sees civil society as a reflection of the state. She justified this by the absence of an effective civil society in Libya. Gaddafi denied this in his televised speech, considering Libya fully civil, unlike the West, which comprises an official governmental society and a non-governmental civil society. This reality confirms the absence of an effective role for civil society as an intermediary between the people and the authority, reinforcing the monopoly of decision-making by the authority and consolidating the dominance of the regime.

These political dynamics laid the groundwork for a fertile environment for political, administrative, and financial corruption due to several reasons, including:

- Lack of organized participation:** Represented by the absence of freedom of opinion, expression, and the formation of civil society institutions, due to Gaddafi's absolute dominance.
- Absence of the rule of law:** Related to political leadership, especially Gaddafi and his family, who were above the law, leading to a lack of fair law enforcement.
- Lack of transparency:** The absence of clarity in decision-making related to the state, as Gaddafi's directives had to be implemented without objection.
- Lack of social consensus:** Represented by the rejection of intellectual and political pluralism within society and the suppression of independent opinions, which led to the absence of fair representation of social and cultural components and the lack of peaceful power transitions.
- Low wages and inefficiency of the administrative apparatus:** Government employees' salaries decreased significantly under a corrupt regime, with the majority of the budget allocated to conferences (70%) while spending on education and health did not exceed 30%, leading to a lack of motivation among employees and reduced productivity.
- Job stagnation and accumulation of administrative problems:** Many officials retained their positions for long periods, up to 16 years, obstructing change and development and

increasing administrative inefficiency.

g. **Dependence on oil as the sole source of income:** Oil constituted 95% of state revenue, neglecting economic diversification and reliance on other sources.

h. **Failure in income distribution and achieving justice:** Despite the enactment of the Wealth Distribution Law in 1981, this did not improve conditions but increased economic and social disparities.

i. **Poverty and worsening social conditions:** Studies showed that about half of households live below the poverty line, meaning a rich state with a poor population, due to weak public spending and insufficient resources to meet basic needs.

#### 4- Tribal Composition of Libyan Society

The social composition in Libya is a key factor in shaping societal relationships and stability. However, tribal and clan divisions have remained an obstacle to building a cohesive national identity. The state suffers from ethnic and sectarian disparities, exacerbated by the absence of social justice and exclusionary policies, which led to widespread poverty and declining trust in institutions. Tribal dominance influenced political decisions, deepening social divides and threatening internal stability, especially in the absence of effective solutions to address these challenges.

Historically, Libyan society was characterized by tribal dominance affecting its social and political structure, with tribes playing a central role in organizing internal relations, resolving conflicts, or facing external challenges. Nevertheless, this system reinforced internal divisions and weakened national unity, particularly as tribal alliances were used as tools to ensure loyalty and control. With the emergence of the modern state, tribalism remained a major challenge to political and social stability.

According to 2023 statistics, Libya's population reached about 6.888 million with a population growth rate of 1.1%. Tribes in Libya represent centers of power and influence, with regions of the country exhibiting distinct tribal distributions. In western Libya, specifically in Tripoli, there are tribes with strong influence; in the eastern region of Cyrenaica (Barqa); while tribes in Fezzan in the south are among the most influential social components in that region.

##### a. Most influential tribes in Tripoli:

- **Warfalla Tribe:** One of the largest Libyan tribes, numbering around one million people, distributed across the north and south. The tribe played a central role in political and security alliances, but its rebellion against the regime in 1993 led to severe

repression, including trials, executions, displacement of some members, and destruction of homes, resulting in significant marginalization.

- **Qadhadhfa Tribe:** Small in number, not exceeding 100,000 members, its power derived from Muammar Gaddafi's affiliation.
- **Zintan Tribe:** A large Amazigh tribe spread across several Maghreb countries, geographically concentrated in the city of Zintan in the western mountain region.

**b. Tribes of the Cyrenaica (Barqa) region:**

This region features a high tribal diversity, including:

- **Al-Ubaidat Tribe:** Comprising 15 sub-tribes and considered one of the strongest in the region, settled in Barqa since the 18th century and contributed to resisting occupations, such as repelling the invasion of the Awlad Ali in western Egypt.
- **Al-Awaqir Tribe:** Historically an influential aristocratic tribe, especially during King Idris's reign, belonging to the traditional social system. They supported Gaddafi's regime and held high positions of authority.
- **Azawiya Tribe:** Among the largest tribes in Libya, residing in strategic areas with oil facilities and known for the Kufra Oasis as a prominent center.

**c. Tribes of the Fezzan region:**

Including:

- **Awlad Suleiman Tribe:** Played an important role in Fezzan during the Ottoman period, Italian occupation, and Gaddafi's rule.
- **Mqarha Tribe:** Concentrated in the Wadi Al-Bawanis area and considered one of the most heavily armed tribes.
- **Tebu Tribe:** A nomadic desert tribe residing in southeastern Libya, living in low-density areas for a long period.

Figure 05: Map showing the geographic distribution of Libyan tribes.

**Second: Security Aspects that Contributed to the Escalation of the Libyan Crisis**

The outbreak of the Libyan crisis and its impact on various aspects of life was not only due to societal and economic imbalances but also security factors that played a central role in fueling public anger, igniting the revolution, and spreading it. The security situation in Libya can be described as follows:

**1. Weak organizational structure of the Libyan army:**

The Libyan regime under Gaddafi deliberately weakened the army, depriving it of

professionalism and strength, preferring to rely on organized tribal militias to protect the regime. The army numbered about 50,000 personnel, but only 10,000 were trained, distributed over four brigades. The rest included 10 tank battalions, 10 mechanized battalions, 18 infantry battalions, 6 commando battalions, and 22 artillery battalions.

Before the crisis, the land forces arsenal included 500 battle tanks, several armored artillery pieces, and attack helicopters. However, the army was inadequately trained and lacked sufficient ammunition. Researcher Florence Gaub from NATO Defense College noted that Gaddafi avoided building a strong army because he saw it as a threat to his rule, focusing instead on creating special units under his sons' command.

## **2. Impact of mercenaries on weakening the security apparatus:**

Although mercenaries in Libyan security forces are frequently discussed, their actual presence was limited. However, the phenomenon is old, as Gaddafi relied on foreigners in military units and armed militias. Their operational impact remained limited. The International Federation for Human Rights reported that 6,000 African mercenaries participated in Libya until February 2011, recruited from countries like Nigeria and Chad, exploiting unemployment and poverty, joining the conflict for material motives and committing violent acts against protesters with the support of the Libyan regime.

## **3. Threats to humanitarian security in Libya:**

Libya faces serious threats to humanitarian security due to human rights violations under Gaddafi, causing thousands of deaths and displacements, including mass displacements. Despite efforts to refer cases to the International Criminal Court, transitional justice remains incomplete amid challenges in building a modern state and restoring security and stability.

## **Third: External Backgrounds of the Libyan Crisis**

The Libyan crisis cannot be understood in isolation from the external contexts that surrounded it, contributing to its escalation and complexity. Regional and international transformations played a key role in shaping the course of the Libyan crisis since its outbreak in 2011. Through direct military interventions and competition for influence among regional and international powers, and the outcomes of the new international order, Libya became a theater of complex interest conflicts that went beyond its geographic borders.

## **1. Impact of regional transformations on the Libyan crisis:**

The Middle East and North Africa experienced deep political and security

transformations since the Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, which were turning points directly affecting the stability of countries in the region, including Libya. These revolutions led to the fall of authoritarian regimes, such as Gaddafi's in Libya, creating political and security vacuums that allowed multiple internal conflicts. While these revolutions brought hopes for democratic change, they opened the door to regional and international interventions, increasing the complexity of the Libyan situation.

After Gaddafi's fall, Libya became a ground for regional influence conflicts. Regional powers sought to achieve their interests by supporting warring factions. For example, the UAE and Egypt supported some armed factions and the Libyan National Army under Khalifa Haftar to combat political Islam, considered a threat to internal stability. Conversely, Qatar and Turkey supported the internationally recognized Government of National Accord, alongside some groups representing the Islamic current. This regional rivalry made Libya a ground for political and ideological score-settling, supplying conflicting parties with weapons and financial resources, prolonging the conflict and complicating the crisis.

The African role was also noticeable but limited and ineffective. Despite the African Union's mediation attempts, efforts were hampered by weak institutions and the control of regional and international interests over events in Libya. Neighboring countries such as Sudan, Chad, and Niger indirectly fueled the crisis through arms and fighter flows across unguarded borders, making Libya a haven for mercenaries and transnational armed groups, further worsening the security situation.

Regional transformations, whether resulting from the Arab revolutions or geopolitical competition among regional powers, were among the main factors complicating the Libyan crisis, turning it from a domestic conflict into a regional and international struggle, difficult to resolve without broad consensus among active parties.

## **2. Impact of international contexts on the Libyan crisis:**

International contexts played a central role in escalating and complicating the Libyan crisis since 2011. The strategic interests of major powers intertwined with Libya's internal situation, prolonging and worsening the conflict. Initially, there was the NATO-led international military intervention under UNSC Resolution 1973, ostensibly to protect civilians from Gaddafi's repression. This intervention toppled the regime but lacked clear plans to rebuild Libyan state institutions or achieve stability, leaving a

noticeable political and security vacuum. Instead of sustainable solutions, it opened the door for international and regional competition for influence in Libya.

Economic interests also played a major role, as Libya's oil and gas wealth attracted major international powers like the United States, Russia, and European countries. These states sought, directly or indirectly, to support parties in the Libyan conflict aligning with their economic and strategic interests. European countries, for example, competed to control Libyan energy resources, given Libya's strategic importance as a nearby source of oil and gas, leading to favoritism toward certain factions and adding an international dimension to the internal conflict.

International policies on illegal migration also played a complex role. After Libya's regime collapse, the country became a major transit point for African migrants heading to Europe, prompting the EU to intervene through funding Libyan coast guard training or supporting specific governments to control the coast and migration flows. These interventions aimed at EU security goals rather than resolving the Libyan crisis, further complicating the internal situation and worsening the humanitarian situation.

International contexts, through military interventions, economic interests, or migration policies, played a dual role in the Libyan crisis. Although justified as aimed at security and stability, they significantly aggravated the conflict and deepened internal divisions, making Libya an open arena for international and regional score-settling.

### **3. Outcomes of the new international order and their impact on the Libyan crisis:**

With the transformations in the new international order after the Cold War, the international arena became more complex and competitive, directly contributing to the worsening and prolongation of the Libyan crisis. One prominent feature was the American unilateral dominance in the early post-Cold War years, with the US as the main actor in shaping international policies. In Libya, direct American intervention gradually declined after Gaddafi's ousting in 2011, allowing other regional and international powers like Russia and Turkey to fill the strategic void, enhancing their political and military influence, escalating the internal conflict into a regional and international confrontation.

Moreover, the new international order showed clear weaknesses in the UN's ability to enforce binding solutions for conflicting parties, despite multiple international conferences such as the Berlin and Paris conferences. UN efforts remained limited due to divisions within the Security

Council, where major powers' interests differed regarding Libya. Some countries supported the internationally recognized Government of National Accord, while others leaned toward Haftar's Libyan National Army, hindering international consensus on a clear political path to resolve the crisis.

Additionally, the new international order led to the emergence of multiple international actors in Libya, sharply dividing the international community among supporters of different conflict parties. This division paralyzed diplomatic efforts, as every international or regional power continued supporting its ally in Libya through arms, funding, or political backing, fueling the conflict.

The new international order, characterized by declining US role, weak UN, and multiple international actors, made Libya a theater of international and regional conflict, complicating the crisis and leaving no opportunity for a comprehensive and sustainable solution.

It also entrenched a very broad social arena called the revolutionary environment, coupled with the absence of party institutions with clear programs, which should have contributed to purposeful political activity aware of Libya's social, political, and economic realities. Resolutions 1970 and 1973, despite relying on protective responsibility entailing reconstruction, maintaining Libya's unity against fragmentation and secession, establishing lasting peace, good governance, sustainable development, and reintegration of armed groups, all require funding to rebuild what was destroyed. Thus, Libya faces major challenges, including:

**a. State-building:**

A major challenge for the National Council during the transitional phase, establishing sovereign institutions like the national army, security, and ministries, alongside creating a political climate to formulate political ideas across different orientations, contributing to an environment for forming organized structures post-Gaddafi. The future of state decisions and governance in Libya reflects the political reality that NATO was a key partner of the Transitional National Council in the collapse of the previous Libyan political system.

**b. Weak traditional state structures and modernization requirements:**

The Libyan state and society inherited a comprehensive legacy and a traditional, submissive political culture. One of the main problems is weak political structures formed by parties and unions facing traditional social structures due to inflated authority, absence of the state, and annihilation of political life, leading to conflicts between nascent state authority and traditional

local authority, and difficulty in distributing national symbols materially and morally across social groups. It is essential to accommodate tribal diversity within Libya's system through the principle of equal political representation via consensual democracy.

**c. Security challenge:**

In the absence of a regular army, security battalions under the Libyan president were the main pillars of the informal security structure under the previous regime. Militias that played a decisive role in Gaddafi's ouster now pose a major problem. Their numbers are unclear, estimated by some at 100 groups and by others three times that number. More than 125,000 Libyans carry weapons, and these groups have clashed repeatedly. Rebuilding Libya requires addressing the fate of these militias.

**d. External challenges:**

Libya faces external challenges, especially after the failure of international conferences like the Skhirat Agreement 2015, Paris Agreement May 2018, and Palermo Conference November 2018. Challenges include:

- Khalifa Haftar's desire to control the country militarily, with complete practical or official rejection of political and diplomatic paths.
- Divergent positions of coalition countries regarding counter-revolutions supporting Haftar versus the UN path, rejecting Islamists in power and Libya's participation in a true democratic process.
- Differences between Rome and Paris over competition for Libyan wealth and overall influence within Libya, leading to varied crisis challenges for each.
- International divisions within the Security Council regarding condemnation of Haftar, which encouraged his advance toward Tripoli.

**4- Manifestations of Security Breakdown in Libya After Gaddafi's Fall:**

After Gaddafi's fall, Libya experienced security chaos. Security institutions under the former regime were dismantled or dissolved, creating a security vacuum. No central force could enforce order across the country, allowing armed militias to control many cities and regions.

This security breakdown led to negative phenomena such as looting, rising crime rates, and militia control over vital state sectors, including ports, oil fields, and other essential facilities. Armed groups with varying loyalties emerged, making Libya a suitable area for smuggling, weapons, and illicit trade. The interim government lacked sufficient military and security

strength to confront these groups, and security chaos continued to escalate, further complicating the situation in the country.

#### **a. Political conflict after Gaddafi's fall**

After the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, Libya became the scene of a complex conflict characterized by armed pluralism. A number of armed militias emerged, representing various political, tribal, and ideological forces, each seeking to dominate certain areas of the country or to obtain a share of power.

These militias spread across all of Libya, with some groups controlling major cities such as Tripoli, Benghazi, and Misrata, while some of the major tribes in the east and south formed their own armed forces. The divergence in loyalties and interests among these militias led to the continuation of the conflict, resulting in Libya being divided into areas of competing influence.

In this context, Islamists played a significant role in the conflict, with the conflict map encompassing two main forces: the extremist Islamic forces seeking to establish an Islamic state, and the liberal forces supporting a democratic system inclusive of all segments of society. These political tensions, in turn, transformed into armed confrontations on the ground, making efforts to rebuild the Libyan state more complicated.

This situation coincided with foreign interventions by major countries such as France and the United States, which played a role in fueling the conflict, whether by supporting certain groups or through direct military intervention. This intervention further complicated the political and military landscape, deeply affecting the distribution of influence among local forces and exacerbating the chaos of the conflict.

Analyzing the regional repercussions of the Libyan crisis requires a precise understanding of the complex interactions among various actors, both internal and external. The competition for power and influence in Libya intersects with regional and international interests, making it difficult to find a comprehensive and sustainable political solution to the crisis. The absence of political and security stability in Libya affects regional balances and contributes to increased uncertainty and ambiguity in the region. The crisis also represents a true test of regional institutions' capacity to manage complex and cross-border crises. Reaching a solution requires balanced efforts combining political dialogue and national reconciliation, taking into account the interests of all stakeholders, both domestic and foreign.

#### **B- The Impact of the Libyan Crisis on Regional Security**

The Libyan crisis, with its complexities and repercussions, represents a critical turning point in the dynamics of regional security in North Africa and the Sahel. Since the fall of the Gaddafi regime in 2011, Libya has not witnessed political or security stability; rather, it has become an open battlefield for various conflicting factions, supported by regional and international powers with conflicting interests. This situation has exacerbated regional instability through the proliferation of weapons, the influx of foreign fighters, and the rise of cross-border terrorist activities. The Libyan crisis has also led to the deterioration of economic and social conditions in the region, increasing pressures on neighboring countries, which now face growing security, economic, and humanitarian challenges, making the entire region more vulnerable to further instability.

The impact of the Libyan crisis on regional security goes beyond the immediate consequences of the conflict to affect the geopolitical balances in the region. Foreign interventions in Libya have complicated the scene and intensified regional divisions, turning the region into a theater of competition among regional and international powers. For example, some regional states seek to support certain factions in Libya to achieve their own economic or political interests, while other international powers aim to maintain their interests in the region or impose their vision for a solution in Libya. These competing interventions have prolonged the conflict and increased the complexity of the Libyan crisis, making the region more prone to escalation and instability. Moreover, these interventions have undermined Libyan sovereignty and weakened its institutions, further complicating efforts to achieve stability in Libya and the region.

In addition, the Libyan crisis directly affects the national security of neighboring countries, including Algeria, which faces growing security challenges due to the flow of weapons and extremists across the borders. Terrorist groups are active in border areas, posing a direct threat to national security and stability. The Libyan crisis also negatively impacts Algeria's economy by disrupting cross-border trade, increasing security expenditures, and driving refugee flows, thereby intensifying pressures on state resources. It is noteworthy that instability in Libya adversely affects regional relations and increases tensions between neighboring countries, heightening the likelihood of broader regional conflicts. Therefore, resolving the Libyan crisis represents a top priority for neighboring countries and the international community in general to achieve stability and security in the region.

### **C- The Spread of Armed Groups in Neighboring Countries**

The spread of armed groups in countries neighboring Algeria, particularly Libya, has represented a complex and multifaceted security challenge that requires careful study of all its dimensions and repercussions. Since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, Libya has turned into a chaotic arena where different armed forces compete, resulting in a security vacuum that allowed extremist groups to grow and expand, including Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and their various branches. This expansion of armed groups has not been limited to Libyan territory but has extended to border areas with neighboring countries, increasing the risks of terrorist infiltration and arms smuggling, posing a direct threat to Algerian national security.

The transnational nature of these groups, their advanced combat tactics, and extremist rhetoric require Algeria to adopt comprehensive security and defense strategies, focusing on enhancing border surveillance, intensifying security and intelligence cooperation with neighboring countries, and building robust defensive capacities capable of facing all potential challenges. These challenges also require an in-depth study and analysis of the roots and causes of extremism to develop effective preventive strategies capable of safeguarding society from extremist ideas and promoting values of tolerance and moderation.

Analyzing the causes of the spread of armed groups in neighboring countries, especially in Libya, requires a deep understanding of the local, regional, and international factors that have exacerbated the crisis. On one hand, the political, social, and economic instability in Libya since the fall of Gaddafi has provided fertile ground for these groups, which exploited the security vacuum and the absence of the state to expand their influence and recruit more members. On the other hand, blatant foreign intervention in Libyan affairs has played a significant role in fueling the conflict and deepening divisions, worsening the security situation and the humanitarian crisis. Additionally, other regional factors, such as weak border control, the proliferation of weapons, and the flow of foreign fighters, have fueled this expansion of armed groups. Therefore, addressing this problem requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that takes all these intertwined factors into account and works to find sustainable solutions to ensure regional stability and security, through regional and international cooperation, state rebuilding in Libya, and combating extremism and terrorism by all possible means.

The repercussions of the spread of armed groups in neighboring countries, particularly in Libya, on Algerian national security go beyond direct security threats to include economic, social, and cultural dimensions. From a security perspective, Algeria faces significant challenges in monitoring its long border with Libya, protecting national territory from terrorist infiltration,

arms smuggling, and organized crime. Economically, these challenges negatively affect foreign investments, hinder economic development, and increase the state's financial burdens. Socially, the spread of armed groups exacerbates instability and heightens citizens' fears and anxieties, potentially deteriorating the social fabric. Therefore, addressing these challenges requires Algeria to adopt a comprehensive strategy focused on enhancing security and defense capabilities, developing border regions, protecting society from extremist ideologies, and promoting positive dialogue and regional and international cooperation to combat terrorism and organized crime. Additionally, Algeria must pay significant attention to sustainable development, improving citizens' living conditions, and promoting social justice as part of an integrated strategy to combat extremism and terrorism.

#### **D- The Impact of Arms Trafficking on Regional Security Stability**

Arms trafficking, as an escalating global phenomenon, constitutes a serious threat to regional security stability, particularly in conflict areas. The flow of illegal weapons directly contributes to prolonging and intensifying conflicts, worsening humanitarian crises, and increasing the number of casualties and displaced persons. These weapons often reach the hands of extremist terrorist groups, enhancing their capacity to carry out destructive operations that threaten security and stability not only in the affected region but also in neighboring and distant areas. Additionally, arms trafficking undermines peacebuilding and sustainable development efforts, creating an atmosphere of mistrust and instability that hinders any attempts at national reconciliation and state reconstruction. Combating arms trafficking requires coordinated international and regional efforts, strengthening border monitoring mechanisms, enhancing intelligence cooperation, and addressing the root causes that lead to the spread of this dangerous phenomenon.

The impact of arms trafficking on regional security stability extends beyond security and military aspects to include economic and social dimensions. The proliferation of weapons increases crime and violence rates, creating an environment hostile to investment and economic development. Arms trafficking also contributes to corruption and money laundering, undermining government institutions and weakening their capacity to provide essential services to citizens. Furthermore, this phenomenon negatively affects the social fabric, increasing divisions and conflicts among different societal groups, threatening social cohesion and civil peace. Addressing the negative effects of arms trafficking requires a comprehensive and

integrated approach that considers economic, social, and political dimensions and targets the root causes fueling this dangerous phenomenon.

The severity of arms trafficking is particularly pronounced in border areas, where complete oversight is difficult and the environment is conducive to illicit activities. Open and extensive borders create a security gap that allows weapons to flow easily, especially with organized smuggling networks operating across regional and international borders. Arms trafficking in border areas destabilizes neighboring countries and increases the likelihood of cross-border armed conflicts. This phenomenon also poses a serious threat to the national security of affected states, requiring them to allocate substantial financial and human resources to combat it. Strengthening border security, enhancing regional cooperation, and exchanging intelligence information are necessary measures to reduce arms trafficking and its destructive impact on regional security stability.

### **E- Security Challenges Related to the Shared Border with Libya**

The Algerian-Libyan border is a highly complex geographic area, where a range of security challenges intersect, requiring coordinated efforts and in-depth analysis to understand their nature and repercussions. Since the outbreak of the Libyan crisis in 2011, this area has witnessed a significant increase in terrorist and extremist activities, which have exploited the political and security chaos to establish safe havens, smuggling routes, and recruitment channels, posing a direct threat to Algerian national security. This threat is manifested in the increase of cross-border infiltration, arms and drug smuggling, and the frequency of terrorist attacks targeting both security forces and civilians. Moreover, organized crime and refugee crises exacerbate the pressure on Algeria's capacity to manage and secure its borders.

Addressing the growing security challenges along the Algerian-Libyan border requires a comprehensive and integrated strategy that includes security and military measures, developmental and social efforts, and regional and international cooperation. It is essential to enhance the security and military capacities of the Algerian armed forces along the border, intensify surveillance and reconnaissance operations, develop border infrastructure, and provide the necessary equipment to combat smuggling and organized crime. Additionally, Algeria must pay special attention to border regions by implementing comprehensive development programs aimed at improving living conditions, creating new job opportunities, and promoting local economic development. Security solutions alone are insufficient; they must

be integrated with development efforts and regional and international cooperation to combat terrorism, organized crime, and illegal migration.

## **5- Economic and Social Causes Contributing to the Escalation of the Libyan Crisis**

### **A- Irregular Migration and Refugees due to the Libyan Crisis**

Irregular migration and refugee flows are among the most prominent challenges exacerbated by the Libyan crisis. Political and security instability and deteriorating economic conditions have caused the displacement of large numbers of Libyans and non-Libyans, increasing irregular migration flows across the Libyan borders to neighboring countries, including Algeria, and to Europe via the Mediterranean. Libya has shifted from being an attractive country for foreign labor under the Gaddafi regime to a primary source of forced migration. These dramatic changes reflect the complexity of the crisis and its deep effects on social and economic structures not only in Libya but across the region. Studying these migration flows requires precise analysis of push and pull factors, as well as smuggling networks exploiting the fragile situation, necessitating regional and international cooperation to find fundamental solutions to this cross-border problem.

The Libyan crisis has resulted in large-scale refugee waves, with thousands of Libyans fleeing their homes in search of safety and protection, not only within Libya but also across borders to neighboring countries, imposing significant humanitarian responsibilities on these states. Notably, these waves have included not only Libyan citizens but also migrants and asylum seekers from other countries who were residing in Libya before the crisis, reflecting additional complexity in addressing the issue. The weakness of Libyan state institutions, the spread of security chaos, and serious human rights violations have driven many to flee in desperation, confirming that solutions must go beyond security measures to address the root causes of the crisis and rebuild the state on sound foundations that ensure security and stability for all.

Irregular migration and refugee flows due to the Libyan crisis are highly complex and intertwined, with economic, social, political, and security factors pushing individuals into these risky journeys. These irregular migration flows represent manifestations of political failures in crisis management and reflect the despair and frustration experienced by many in Libya. Research into these dynamics reveals the presence of organized criminal networks exploiting the tragic situation for enormous financial gain at the expense of migrants and refugees. This complexity necessitates a comprehensive approach by researchers and policymakers, taking

into account all causative dimensions and formulating multilateral strategies to address the issue effectively and sustainably.

### **B- Economic Burdens of Irregular Migration and Refugees**

Irregular migration and refugee flows are complex phenomena that extend beyond humanitarian and social dimensions to encompass significant economic aspects. They impose substantial financial burdens on both receiving and sending countries. Receiving countries face uncontrolled inflows of migrants and refugees, requiring massive allocation of financial resources to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education, in addition to costs associated with combating organized crime and smuggling linked to these flows. The presence of large numbers of irregular migrants also pressures the labor market, potentially reducing wages and increasing unemployment among local populations, in addition to potential impacts on deteriorating infrastructure. Sending countries suffer significant losses due to the migration of skilled labor and human capital, negatively affecting their competitiveness and perpetuating cycles of poverty and underdevelopment. These economic burdens necessitate root-cause solutions that go beyond security measures, addressing underlying drivers such as poverty, unemployment, and armed conflict.

The economic burdens of irregular migration and refugee flows are exacerbated when considering indirect costs. In addition to direct costs borne by receiving countries, there are hidden costs such as pressures on public services, including water, sanitation, electricity, and transportation infrastructure, reducing the quality of services for local populations and potentially worsening social tensions. The presence of large numbers of irregular migrants, often employed in the informal sector, leads to significant tax losses for receiving countries, increasing public debt burdens. Moreover, illicit financial flows accompanying this phenomenon, such as smuggling and human trafficking revenues, negatively affect the financial and economic stability of receiving countries and may undermine sustainable development efforts. Sending countries also bear indirect economic burdens due to the loss of skills and expertise, affecting productivity, innovation, and extending underdevelopment.

The economic burdens of irregular migration and refugee flows extend beyond direct and indirect material costs to negative impacts on sustainable economic growth. In receiving countries, large influxes of irregular migrants increase demand for goods and services, driving up prices and causing inflation, potentially reducing the ability to attract foreign direct investment due to security and social instability. Remittances sent by migrants to their home

countries may negatively affect the balance of payments in receiving countries, particularly if transferred through unofficial channels. Conversely, sending countries suffer from the loss of qualified labor, limiting their capacity for sustainable economic growth and potentially forcing them to import foreign labor, increasing economic burdens. These negative effects on economic growth necessitate effective measures to mitigate the phenomenon.

## **Conclusion**

### **Conclusion**

The Libyan crisis exemplifies the complex interplay between fragile internal structures and the competing interests of regional and international actors. Since the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, Libya has been trapped in a cycle of political fragmentation, armed conflict, and social disintegration, which has impeded efforts to establish a stable state. The proliferation of militias, tribal divisions, and ideological tensions has created a highly volatile environment, in which attempts at national reconciliation and state-building are continually undermined.

At the regional level, the Libyan crisis has had profound implications for North Africa and the Sahel, contributing to the spread of armed groups, cross-border smuggling, and the destabilization of neighboring states, particularly Algeria. The influx of weapons, fighters, and refugees has amplified security challenges, while the interventions of foreign powers have further complicated the balance of influence, often prolonging the conflict and weakening Libyan sovereignty.

Economically and socially, the crisis has driven waves of irregular migration and refugee flows, exacerbating burdens on neighboring countries and undermining local development. These movements reflect the broader failure to address the root causes of instability, including poverty, unemployment, and the absence of effective governance.

A sustainable solution to the Libyan crisis requires a multifaceted approach that integrates political dialogue, national reconciliation, and inclusive governance with coordinated regional and international support. It is only through balanced engagement—respecting Libya's sovereignty while addressing the underlying structural, social, and economic vulnerabilities—that the cycle of conflict can be broken, ensuring stability and security both within Libya and across the region.

In essence, the Libyan case underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive strategy that reconciles internal state-building with the careful management of external interests,

highlighting the fragile intersection between domestic vulnerabilities and global geopolitical dynamics.

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