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Libya

Power in the hands of mafiosi businessmen

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Talking about elections but never organizing them - this seems to be the strategy of the two camps sharing power and enriching themselves at the expense of an increasingly suffering population.

In the absence of a comprehensive agreement, the Libyan elections due to be held on 24 December 2021 were postponed indefinitely. Since then, meetings between the country's two authorities - Abdelhamid Dabaiba's internationally recognized authority in Tripoli, backed by Turkey, and the authority in the east, led by Marshal Haftar and aided and abetted by Wagner's Russian mercenaries - have continued unabated.

New attempt

After the failure to hold elections in 2021, the UN's special envoy, Abdoulaye Bathily of Senegal, decided to relaunch the process by convening a high-level panel comprising segments of Libyan society, such as political and NGO leaders, tribal chiefs, women and young people, to map out a path leading to free and transparent elections. A 6+6 committee was immediately set up, bringing together, on the one hand, the parliament close to Haftar and, on the other, the Libyan State Council, which is dependent on the government in Tripoli. The aim is to regain control of the elections and do everything possible to prevent them from taking place.

This objective is now being achieved. Although the elections have been announced for this year, the disagreements between the two parties over the eligibility criteria for the presidential election and the formation of a unitive transitional government persist. These are the same disagreements that torpedoed the 2021 election project.

A Mafia agreement

With the failure of Haftar's offensive on Tripoli in 2019, a new page has been turned. Both sides realised that they would not have the upper hand militarily. A modus vivendi has been established, with each side making a profit in its own territory from its legal and illegal businesses, particularly human trafficking. Haftar has decided not to be outdone. In addition to the profits that the militias can make from trafficking in migrants, this sordid activity provides them with an interlocutor with the European Union.

An agreement has been reached between the two camps to appoint Farhat Omar Bengdara as the new chairman of Libya's national oil company. It is up to him to water each camp fairly and, above all, generously; returning to pre-2017 practices.

The suffering population

Although the USA and the European Union constantly proclaim their desire to see the elections held quickly, they may well be satisfied with this situation. Indeed, the various militias of the two authorities are policing the borders to prevent migrants from trying to reach the old continent, and the oil can now flow freely. As for Russia, it is maintaining

its military presence in the country (although the crisis with Wagner could reshuffle the cards) and Turkey is taking advantage of the situation to explore for oil in Libyan waters.

Libya has fallen under the control of mafia clans who, with their accompanying militias, are plundering the country's wealth, while state social structures such as health, education and culture are in disarray. The popular demonstrations of 2022 demanding elections and denouncing the corruption of the leaders were ferociously repressed by both the Tripoli and Haftar powers.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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