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# Libyan Crisis 2014-2018 :The Conflict of the Internal Political and Social Forces and the Failure of the Political Solution

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## Abstract

**Objectives**: The study aims to analyze the impact of the state of conflict and lack of harmony between the internal Libyan political and social forces, on the continuity and development of the Libyan crisis 2014-2018, and the failure of all political initiatives proposed to solve it.

**Methods:** The subject was studied through the analytical descriptive approach based on analyzing the data and statements issued by the active forces in the course of the crisis, and its alignment with the reality of the course of events .

**Results:** The study showed that the main factor in the continuity and the development of the Libyan crisis is related, in the first place, to the rejection of all the internal Libyan conflict forces, specially the Islamic and liberal ones of all the proposed political agreement attempts, and the endeavor of each of them to monopolize power and exclude the other, and the rejection of the principle of polititical pluralism.

**Conclusions:** The Libyan crisis 2014-2018 was formed by what Libya inherited after the 2011 revolution, embodied by a weak authority that was unable to impose state sovereignty on all parts of the country, This led to the ignition of conflict between all internal political and social Libyan forces and the spread of civil war. The intervention of greedy foreign powers, especially the European power, helped in its development. They were looking forward to dominating Libyan wealth.

**Keywords**: Libyan crisis, conflict forces, civil war.

## الأزمة الليبية 2014-2018 صراع القوى السياسية والاجتماعية الداخلية وفشل الحل السياسي

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ملخّص

الأهداف: تهدف الدراسة إلى تحليل أثر حالة الصراع وعدم الانسجام بين القوى السياسية والاجتماعية الليبية الداخلية، في استمرارية الأزمة الليبية وتطورها بين عامي 2014-2018، وفشل جميع المبادرات السياسية المطروحة لحلّها.

المنهجية: جرت دراسة الموضوع من خلال المنهج الوصفي التحليلي القائم على تحليل البيانات والتصريحات الصادرة عن القوى الفاعلة في مسار الأزمة ومواءمتها مع واقع سِير الأحداث.

النتائج: بيّنت الدراسة أن العامل الرئيس في استمرار الأزمة الليبية وتطورها يرتبط بالدرجة الأولى برفض جميع قوى الصراع الليبية الداخلية وخاصة الإسلامية والليبرالية لكلّ محاولات الاتفاق السياسي المطروحة، وسعي كلٍّ منها إلى الانفراد بالسلطة وإقصاء الآخر ورفض مبدأ التعددية السياسية.

الخلاصة: تشكّلت الأزمة الليبية 2014-2018 بفعل ما ورثته ليبيا بعد ثورة عام 2011، من سلطة ضعيفة عجزت عن فرض سيادة الدولة وهيبتها على جميع أنحاء البلاد، مما أدّى إلى اشتعال الصراع بين كافة القوى السياسية والاجتماعية الليبية الداخلية وانتشار حالة الحرب الأهلية، ساعد في تطورها تدخُّل القوى الخارجية وخاصة الأوروبية الطامعة بالثروات الليبية .

الكلمات الدالة: الأزمة الليبية، قوى الصِّراع، حرب أهلية.

**Introduction**

At the beginning of the 2000s, Libya experienced a serious crisis, represented by the state of internal conflict and civil war that erupted between all Libyan forces, which was formed following the start of the February 2011 revolution. It came against the policy of injustice and tyranny practiced by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya for 42 years.

Although the Libyan revolution was very similar to the previous revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt in terms of causes and motives, its results were different from the revolutions of neighboring countries. The main reason for its occurrence was the lack of civil society institutions in Libyan society, particularly party organizations capable of adopting the demands of the popular opposition movement. These organizations should have worked through a proper plan and approach that ensure the maintenance of the supreme national interest and thus the political vacuum should have been filled due to the fall of the Gaddafi regime. However, the situation got worse than before because of the rapid transformation of the popular protest movement from a peaceful path to an armed conflict with the regime. This shift had led to bloody massacres unknown to previous Arab revolutions, which necessitated the intervention of international forces under the pretext of protecting civilian lives.

Furthermore, the conflict between various Libyan forces broke out due to the weakness of post-revolutionary power, particularly on the military side, and the lack of qualified, experienced functional national institutions in the affairs of administration and governance. This tendency had created a serious crisis throughout the country to cause serious damage to Libyan interests at all levels, opening the way for international forces to be greedy for Libyan wealth to intervene in the crisis, in a way that is in line with their interests. They received helped by the widespread welcome they found by Libya's conflicting forces; the Libyan crisis became a model reflecting the state of conflicts on the Arab scene that have caused the greatest damage to the Arab national security situation.

**The importance of the study**

The significance of the study stems from representing Libyan crisis as a realistic model of Arab crises. It mainly discusses its internal and external factors that are active in its creation, the paths of its development, and its negative repercussions on the reality and the future of Libya, and along with Arab and regional national security. The study also tended to explain the factors that led to the shift in the trends of conflict between the Libyan parties from the political framework to the armed military one after the Libyan elections in 2014, and the deadlock in attempts to contain the crisis politically by signing the Paris Agreement in 2017.

**The hypothesis of the study**

The study starts from the hypothesis that there is a close relationship between the struggle of the Libyan political, social and internal forces, and the stumbling of the political initiatives that were put forward to solve the crisis.

**Questions of the study**

1. What is the nature of the Libyan crisis in terms of its dimensions, causes and actors?

2. What impact has Libya's parliamentary elections in 2014 on the evolution of the crisis?

3. What are the dimensions that the parties of the conflict rely on to justify their positions?

4. To what extent are the parties to the Libyan conflict willing to accept initiatives to resolve the crisis?

**The problem of the study**

The problem of the study lies in demonstrating the readiness and steadiness of Libya's internal forces to respond to the proposals of political agreement and international initiatives to resolve the crisis. In addition, they need to move away from submission to the interventions of external forces known with conflicting interests, and to accept consensual solutions based on the principle of political involvement of all parties as the only framework through which Libya's supreme national interests are achieved.

**The purposes of the study**

The study aims to provide a comprehensive perception about the nature of the formation of the internal Libyan political and social active forces in the escalation of the Libyan crisis 2014-2018, and the extent of each of them willingness to accept the peaceful initiatives that were put forward to contain the crisis and achieve the aspirations that the Libyan people

sought to achieve through the February 2011 revolution, represented by finding a democratic state based on the principle of institutionalization and the rule of law.

**The methodology of the study**

The study was addressed through the descriptive analytical approach to the contents of the data pertaining to the crisis. The analysis focused on the data and official statements issued by the active actors in the crisis, and adapted to the realities of the course of events through critical analysis in the context of benefiting from the opinions of many analysts and political and media researchers published through the media and websites. The analysis of the data has been carried out by dividing them into two axes:

The first axis revolved around the discussion of the nature and dimensions of the Libyan crisis, and the factors that transformed it from a state of political conflict to a military one, and the second one dealt with attempts to agree and settle the crisis politically, as embodied in the 2014 Skhirat Agreement and the 2018 Paris Agreement.

**Previous studies**

1-    Idris, Ahmed (2011), the Libyan crisis and its repercussions on the Maghreb region: The study dealt with the Libyan crisis in terms of the factors affecting its launch and its repercussions on neighboring countries, while providing a general outlook for its future.

2-    Al-Afef, Ahmed (2015), The Libyan Revolution 2011-2013 and the Challenges of the Transitional Phase: The study dealt with the Libyan revolution in terms of its specificity, which is distinguished from the rest of the Arab Spring revolutions, and the challenges that led to its failure to achieve its goals.

3-    Nofal, Ahmed (2017), the Libyan crisis to where: The study analyzed the Libyan crisis in terms of its inception and the factors influencing its development.

Most of the previous studies focused on the internal and external political and economic factors affecting the launch of the Libyan revolution and the developments that took place in it, which were proposed to solve the crisis. Here appears the importance of this study that emerges in a distinguished way from previous studies, through its analysis of the impact of the nature of political, social and military composition of the Libyan conflict forces on the failure of the political initiatives that were proposed to solve the crisis

**The first axis:**

**Dimensions and nature of the Libyan crisis:**

### First: The background of the crisis

The roots of the crisis that Libya witnessed after 2014 had been related to the situation that prevailed the country after the February 2011 revolution, which toppled the Gaddafi regime. This event occurred as a natural extension of the state of protests and revolutions that swept the Arab countries at the end of the twenty-first century, which was called the "Arab Spring". The occurrence of these incidents were due to a number of factors, the most important of which are tyranny, injustice, unemployment, poverty and suppression of freedoms. Despite the great similarity between the Arab revolutions with regard to the factors driving them (Al-Afif, 2015), the Libyan revolution enjoyed a specialty in terms of its results and consequences from the other revolutions that preceded it in Tunisia and Egypt. To put it differently, the revolution gave the new authority the power to control the state without a constitution or clear legislation and institutions and to be capable of regulating the issues of the state and society in order to achieve a state of security and stability (Idris, 2011).

After the success of the revolution to overthrow the Gaddafi regime, the formation of the National Transitional Council was announced in Libya on March 27, 2011. Its tasks were to manage the transitional period, restore security, maintain stability to the country, and prepare the constitution and the parliamentary election law (Al-Afif, 2015). This council included members representing all parts of Libya, formed an interim sovereign government, but it was characterized by weakness and inability to govern the country. The inability of the council to control the state as it lacks functional national institutions, particularly a regular military force, as is the case in Tunisia and Egypt in light of the presence of many armed groups outside the control of the government, some of them were extremist Islamist, but the other were tribal (Barfi, 2012 AD) . Additionally, it lacked a clear strategy to deal with the existing challenges, particularly armed groups in that they

took advantage of the weakness of the authority and made invasions at all levels (Al-Afasy, 2013).

During the second transitional phase, the features of the conflict between the greedy Libyan political forces for power began to appear more clearly after the election of the General National Congress on July 27, 2012 AD, namely the first elections in Libya. During that period, the country lived 42 years under the authority of a tyrannical rule. At that time, the problem of finding good legal authority persisted; the elected National Congress did not possess the powers of Parliament in the full political sense since its members did not have previous experience in matters of legislation and parliamentary work. Additionally, the conflict between members due to their different interests driven by tribal, regional and intellectual considerations. Moreover, the incompatibility between the various forces within the conference on legislation did not give the existing authority the legitimacy of imposing law on the conflicting parties. This prevented consensus on vital issues related to Libya's supreme national interest, such as the constitution, the form of the political system, national reconciliation, and the security situation. These issues negatively affected the Libyan people's confidence in the ability of the National Congress to achieve its aspirations, and the establishment of a modern state based on the principle of institutionalization and the rule of law (Al-Afif, 2015).

The features of this conflict were evident clearly in the Libyan parliamentary elections in 2014, which marked the beginning of a new crisis represented by the development of the conflict between the Libyan forces from the political to the military level, entering a state of civil war, and the deterioration of the situation at all levels.

Second: Parliamentary elections and the development of conflict

**A. Political conflict**

After the 2011 revolution, Libya entered a new phase, which is currently contradicting the ambitions of the revolution that aimed at creating a state of law and institutions, where a state of conflict emerged between internal Islamic and liberal forces. This conflict had increased by the intervention of external forces, leading to a real crisis, which brought the country to a state of armed conflict and civil war, and each side of the conflict, with the support of external forces, sought to exclude the other to be alone in power. Thus, the forces that revolted against the Gaddafi regime turned their principles of demanding freedom and a democratic state. This was evident in Libya's parliamentary elections on June 25, 2014, which were held under the law established by General National Congress in 2012 (Martini, 2014).

Although these elections were poorly received, the Libyan Electoral Commission considered them acceptable in these difficult circumstances, with turnout of (18%) voters. According to the Libyan Constitutional Declaration, the liberal current candidates in the majority of seats, where the National Forces Party, the political front of the liberal movement, won (50) of the total seats of the Council (200) seats, while the Islamic current won only (23) seats. This victory made the new Parliament dissolved and hence the power had been transferred to the National Convention, which later became known as the 'Parliament of the East' headed by Akela Saleh. One of his most important duties was to form a new government (Al Jazeera Net, 2015).

The 2014 elections, with the aim of creating a representative parliament for the Libyan people to substitute the General National Congress, which was formed in 2012 as an interim parliament, but the state of the crisis inside Libya during this phase prevented the protection of the results of the ballot and the commitment of the warring parties. The Islamist movement controlling the National Congress rejected the results of the elections and handed over power to the new parliament. By doing this, the movement provided the support to extremist armed groups related to Misrata brigades such as the Libyan Rebel Operations Room and the Libya Shield Force, to take control of the capital, Tripoli in the late of August 2014. As a result, the National Convention is considered the only legitimate parliament. Due to the military strength of Misrata brigades and their ability to control Tripoli, the new Parliament was forced to move east to the city of Tobruk. It also formed a new government headed by Abdullah al-Thani, and appointed General Khalifa Haftar, a commander of operation to Karama-Libya forces, as an army chief of staff. After joining the Eastern government as a military force, it supported its position in the face of the Islamist movement to control Tripoli (Abu al-Saad, 2018).

As the new parliament took the decision to change its headquarters from Tripoli to Tobruk on the pretext of completing the process of receiving power, which became impossible in Tripoli, the Islamic forces controlling the National Congress,

filed a lawsuit to the Libyan Supreme Court challenging it. As a result, the court's decision in November 2014 was incorrect regarding the procedures to transfer power to Tobruk, and that everything related to the February committee's actions, which was formed by a decision of the National Congress to prepare the proposal to amend the constitutional declaration and the electoral law proposal (Nofal, 2017). It should be said that the Libyan Supreme Court's decision was at gunpoint by the Libya Dawn forces allied with the Muslim Brotherhood for failing to hold Libyan parliamentary elections in 2014 (Martini, 2014).

The decision of the Libyan Supreme Court gave the Islamist current controlling the National Congress the right to delegitimize the Parliament of the East (Tobruk) since the February committee that prepared the electoral law is invalid, and was formed under pressure from the liberal current within the National Congress. Consequently, all what was issued by it was invalid whether the electoral law, parliament or government. This led to the return of the National Congress in Tripoli, elected in 2012, to hold until the holding of new elections that enjoy legitimacy. As a result, the national conference headed by Nouri Abu Sahmeen, took a decision to form a new national rescue government in Tripoli, headed by Omar al-Hassi, and assigned the leadership of the army there, to Jadallah al-Obaidi, the commander of the shield forces, which during this phase was the strongest armed faction in Libya (Estelle, 2017).

The parliamentary elections in 2014 revealed a real crisis in Libya and a situation of conflict between two political currents: the Islamic current and the liberal current. The crisis between them after the elections led to the drafting of a new map of the political forces in Libya, namely the presence of two governments. The first one was in Tripoli, which included the Islamist groups controlling the National Congress and its armed militias in the city of Misrata and the West of Libya. The second one was in Tobruk, in the east, represented in the elected House of Representatives in 2014, and Liberal forces and subsequent military forces and militias led by Khalifa Haftar. Each government has a military arm represented by the Tobruk government's Karama army, and the Tripoli government's Libya Dawn Forces (Arab Jerusalem, 2015).

It is worth noting that the Libyan crisis, which emerged clearly in 2014, was the result of a pre-election political conflict between the Justice and Construction parties, the political arm of the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood, the Alliance of National Forces party. The conflict was against the backdrop of a constitutional debate between the two parties over the expiry of the term of the National Convention on February 7, 2014, according to article 30 of the Constitutional Declaration. Supporters of the end of the conference, belonging to the Alliance of National Forces party, sided with the apparent text of the mentioned article that outlined the features of the transition period, whereas the Justice and Construction party considered that the duration of the constitutional declaration is organizational. This period has been planned to achieve certain benefits regardless of the length and short period stipulated. Because the Alliance of National Forces party within the National Congress exerted pressure to adopt a road map suggesting a third transition period in Libya, the February Committee was formed in November 2014, having members from within and outside the National Congress to develop that map (Landinfo, 2014).

Although the state of political division appeared clearly on the Libyan scene after the 2014 elections, and was further reinforced by the Supreme Court's decision, the situation was prepared for this division in advance. This was also evident from the state of military conflict between Libyan forces, as reflected in the operation called Dignity of Libya on 16 May 2014, and the subsequent Libya Dawn operation on 13 July 2014. The Libyan parliamentary elections in 2014 came at a time when the political actors on the Libyan scene and the subsequent military forces were not ready to accept the principle of political pluralism. It was not also ready to establish a system of government based on the principle of participatory, and strengthen this situation further after the elections by the emergence of two authorities: one in the east and the other in the West. These authorities fell into a conflict over legitimacy and representation of the people (Hamdani, 2018). Each one competed to attract the support of external forces to achieve their respective objectives by controlling power. In this way, Libya is surviving in a state of vacuum of central power and the duality of power, where it has no agreed central political authority with voluntary legitimacy, and no strong military force capable of protecting the legislation of the state and its decisions (Al-Ahmad, 2018).

## B. Military conflict

The political conflict between Libyan political forces was accompanied by a military conflict carried out by the armed organizations and militias of both currents, which was the result of the collapse of the military (Libyan army) after the Revolution of February 2011. The post-revolution authority represented by the Government of National Accord in Tripoli, without a unified military force fully under its central authority, was away from all ideological, tribal and regional affiliations (Bakosh, 2017). This opened the door wide for armed organizations and militias to work effectively on the Libyan scene, which intensified the military conflict, particularly after the emergence of General Khalifa Haftar in 2014 as a new military force. This force added to the centers of the fighting forces on the ground after its strength grew and imposed its presence as a major force in the Libyan political and military circle. This happened especially after the parliament of the East (Tobruk) adopted this new force, and considered it the military arm of the 'regular army' of the Eastern government. Therefore, the international community supported Haftar as well as a number of Western and Arab countries, which enabled him to achieve several victories over his Islamist opponents, the most important of which was control of the city of Benghazi 2014 (Rashid, 2018). It is worth noting that the division of Libyan political forces and their resort to armed organizations and militias to strengthen their position against their opponents have opened up a wide range of opportunities for these organizations to influence the political equation negatively (Nofal, 2017).

With regard to the Islamic movement, it has relied on armed militia organizations since the beginning of the February 2011 revolution, in the face of the Gaddafi regime, and continued to rely on them after the revolution during the transitional period of government to fill the existing security vacuum. After 2014, the Islamist movement controlling the National Congress, represented by the Muslim Brotherhood, relied on the 'Libya Dawn' forces, made up of Islamist militias based in Misrata. As a result of this policy, the number of fighters in militia organizations increased from (120,000) in 2011 to (200) thousand fighters in 2015, but the problem faced by Islamists as a result of reliance on militias is the inability to balance their Islamic intellectual thesis with the regional and tribal interests of the militias. In addition, they often encounter inability to adapt to a number of these militias, particularly extremist ones, those with an al-Qaeda-related vision, such as Ansar al-Sharia and Salafist groups (Al-Ahmad, 2018). The rejection of such organizations to the decisions of the allied political authority had made the situation worse, which has led to an escalation of the crisis and bringing the country to a state of civil war. Thus, it is possible to say that the policy of the Islamic current in Tripoli had negative and serious repercussions on the situation of Libyan security and stability. The negative interference of the Islamic organizations resulted in encouraging armed organizations and militias to be present on the Libyan scene and allied with them as military arms against their opponents in order to impose power on the country (Abu al-Saad, 2019).

The most important Islamist groups and militias supporting the Tripoli government were the Libya Dawn Force, Libya's shield force, shield forces, Touareg brigades, and the Benghazi Shura Council. In addition, they had also found a number of radical Islamist militias linked to al-Qaeda, the most important of which are Ansar al-Sharia, the Shura Council of the Mujahedeen of Derna, and the Jadabia Rebel Shura Council (Africa News Portal, 2017).

The liberal movement, which controlled the government of deputies in Tobruk in the eastern region. Its most important military allies represented by the general command of the Libyan army, consisting of the armed forces led by General Khalifa Haftar and allied forces. This force represented the regular army for the government of eastern Libya. The importance of this force comes from its sophisticated ground and air defense and offensive weapons, as well as its position in the northern part of the Eastern Sahara, within the oil fields and oil pipelines leading to the coast. It is worth noting that most of the elements of this force are tribes of eastern Libya. Another important force allied with the Eastern government is the Ibrahim al-Jadran militia, known as the Oil Facilities Guard Forces, which announced its joining to Haftar's forces against the forces of the Islamic Government of Tripoli in 2014. In addition, several armed militias such as the Zintan Rebel Brigades, Lightning and Qaqaa had supported the government of the East of Libya (Al-Sharq al-Awasat, 2016).

Thus, the Libyan real situation after the 2014 elections turned into a serious crisis, formed as a result of the violent power struggle between the liberal and Islamic currents, which emerged through the existence of two governments that show contradicted vision and objectives. Each one supported armed forces and militias scattered throughout the country

(Arab Research Center, 2017). Some of them follow directly the political forces in Tripoli and Tobruk, while the other ones maintain their independence in the organization and movement. However, the principles that these groups followed were varied and overlapped stemming from intellectual, tribal, regional and personal interests (Rashid, 2018). The military conflict resulting from the political conflict was most evident before, during and after the 2014 parliamentary elections, through two forces, namely the 'Dignity of Libya' and 'Libya Dawn'.

**Dignity of Libya operation:**

The Islamist movement's control of the General National Congress and the marginalization of elements affiliated with the liberal current led to a wave of hostility in Libyan liberal circles against Islamists, especially after the National Congress decided on 13 December 2013 to extend its 18-month term to an additional year, until the end of 2014. What has further angered liberals was the Islamists' proposal at the National Convention's draft of the political isolation project, which sought to overthrow the symbols of the former regime (Fishman, 2017).

This tendency prompted the retired major general, Khalifa Haftar, the former commander of Libya's ground forces, to call on February 14, 2014, to dissolve the General National Congress, and form an interim government to supervise new parliamentary elections. Due to the political divisions in the Libyan arena, which rejected all peaceful calls for resolving the crisis (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Haftar's ground and air forces launched a military operation called 'Dignity of Libya' against the armed groups supporting the Islamist movement that controlled the National Congress in Tripoli on May 16, 2014 in Benghazi. The operation was launched for the sake to clear Benghazi of extremist terrorist groups. Instead, these groups controlled the eastern part of Libya due to the deteriorating security situation, the weak authority in Tripoli, and its inability to extend the prestige of the state to all armed groups in the country (Arab Research Center, 2017). These groups had received material and moral support from most tribes in the eastern region, as well as external support from a number of Arab countries, particularly Egypt and the UAE (Africa News Portal, 2017).

The stated purpose of Karama Operation, in accordance with Haftar's slogans, was to fight terrorism, which was primarily represented by the Muslim Brotherhood. It aims to unveil the entities behind it, particularly the assassinations that increased frequently during this phase, which were mostly due to political backgrounds. Meanwhile, the authorities in Tripoli failed to detect them and work to stop them, which is worth saying that these operations were mostly retaliatory carried out by a number of personalities who held important positions in Gaddafi era (Landinfo, 2014). Despite the slogans raised by Operation Dignity of Libya to fight and detect terrorism, the frequency of assassinations has been increased, but this time by Operation Dignity forces themselves (Fishman, 2017).

Events on the ground have revealed that Khalifa Haftar's objectives from the Operation Dignity were far from the slogans he raised. Instead, his main objective was to seize power, confirming that the operation was the result of planning more than two years earlier. Haftar also told Al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper on May 20, 2014, before the start of the General National Congress elections held on July 7, 2012 that terrorist organizations had not emerged with the active presence as they became in 2014. The political conflict had not reached the crisis that characterized it before and during the elections, and the ISIS had not announced its emergence in Libya, which was in April 2013 (Noon Post, 2019).

This confirmed the view that 'Operation Dignity' is a coup dictate of the authority in Tripoli, as was evident in its first statement; it had not declared itself as a project to fight terrorism specifically, as much as it presented itself as a project seeking to change a chaotic and conflict-characterized reality by the use of military force. In the sense that it had not concealed its coup tendency. A manifestation of the coup dictate dimension of Dignity operation is also its leadership's constant pursuit of attempts to abort political consensus leading to the creation of a civilian authority that limited the military's influence. This was evident by its rejection of article 8 of the Sakhirat Agreement calling for the establishment of a civilian state beyond military control (Arab Jerusalem, 2019).

**Libya Dawn operation:**

After the launch of Dignity operation in Benghazi, the Benghazi Revolutionaries Council was announced in June 2014, which will be made up of Benghazi rebels, Rafallah Al-Sanjani brigades, Ansar al-Sharia Brigades, Libya Shield militias and the February 17 martyrs' militias (Africa News Portal, 2017). On July 13, 2014, a month after the launch of Dignity

operation, the Tripoli-based Benghazi Revolutionaries Council announced the launch of Libya Dawn operation, which was supported by the General National Congress and a wide range of supporters of the revolution and Islamist parties in western Libya, as well as support from the Turkish-Qatari axis (Al-Youm Opinion, 2017). The aims of this operation were to confront karama forces, which increased their activities after the 2014 elections. As such, this made the Camp of the West of Libya consider it a rebellion against legitimacy and a departure from the will of the people (Al Jazeera Net, 2015).

Libya Dawn operation followed the 2014 elections led to the dissolution of the Islamist-controlled General National Congress, as well as the launch of Dignity operation, which enjoyed widely popular support in most of Libya's internal and eastern regions. It became clear from the beginning of its inception that it was a revolutionary process through which the Islamic movement sought to rehabilitate itself and stop the losses it suffered during this stage in front of the liberal current. The most important of which was its defeat in the elections of 2014, reflecting the popular rejection of the Muslim Brotherhood reign, which controlled the National Congress through the power of arms (Nofal, 2017). The elections also led to the release of a new parliament, the majority of its members are from the liberal national current, which means the dissolution of the National Congress. Yet, this institution provided a legitimate cover for the expansion of Islamists in most important state centers, and the exploitation of its wealth. Therefore, they sought to abolish the new parliament and maintain the continuity of the National Congress. Many armed militias, particularly extremists, were obligatorily urged to support the Islamist movement in its operation due the fear of the emergence of a strong military force in Libya capable of controlling the situation, ending the division and thus closing the door in front of them to expand and plunder wealth (Najib, 2018).

**Axis II: Attempts to agree and resolve the crisis:**

Conflicts between Libyan political, military and tribal forces have led to the loss of the identity of the state and the inability to create national leadership and central authority, capable of imposing the prestige of the state on all populations and regions. Because of this chaotic situation and the conflict between the Libyan forces, which are driven by a number of motives that were in their entirety far from Libya's supreme national interest, all attempts at the political agreement put forward to contain the crisis were failed, the most important of which was the Sakhirat Agreement and the Paris Agreement (Nofal, 2017).

**First: the Sakhirat Agreement**

The agreement was signed in the city of Sakhirat, on the outskirts of the Moroccan capital Rabat, by representatives of the conflict parties in Libya and under the auspices of UN envoy Martin Cobler on December 17, 2015. The primary purpose of this agreement is to end the civil war in Libya since 2014 and declare a government of national accord covering all Libyan parties, in accordance with the democratic process and the peaceful transition of power (Rydi, 2018).

The most important aspects the agreement emphasized to resolve the Libyan conflict were:

1. The formation of a Tripoli-based government of national accord headed by Faiz al-Sarraj to govern the country a one-year transition that ends with legislative elections. Its main task is to achieve a comprehensive national political consensus among all parties. In case its functions are not completed, it will be extended for an additional six months. On the basis of the terms of the agreement, the prime minister have been granted broad executive powers, namely, carrying out the functions of commander-in-chief of the army, appointing and dismissing the director of Intelligence after the approval of the House of Representatives. He is also responsible for appointing ambassadors and representatives of Libya to international bodies, senior officials and relieving them of their duties, declaring a state of emergency, war, peace and concluding international agreements and treaties provided that these decisions to be ratified by the House of Representatives.

2. The formation of a presidential council, consisting of the head of the government of national unity (i.e. Faiz al-Sarraj), five ministers of state representing all the opposing forces, and three senior ministers, whose task is to name the ministry.

3. The formation of a Supreme Council of state, as the highest advisory entity, consisting of members of the General National Congress, to express opinion on bills and legislative decisions that the Government intends to refer to the House of Representatives.

4. Adoption of the Eastern Parliament (Tobruk Parliament), the determination of its powers to assume the legislative power in the transitional period, the adoption of the general budget, the control of the executive branch, and the adoption of the policy provided by the government.

5. Form a joint committee of the House of Representatives, the Supreme Council of the State, the Government of National Accord, and the Council of Defense and National Security, to approve a bill specifying the powers of the Supreme commander of the Libyan Army.

6. The formation of a higher council of local administration, the Defense and National Security Council, a reconstruction body and another institution to draft the constitution.

7. Disarmament and integration of militias into the Unified Libyan Army (Al Jazeera Net, 2015).

Although all Libyan parties signed the agreement under international auspices to end the crisis, the dispute continued after the signing of the agreement on several issues, the most important of which could be explained by the following:

- The leadership of the military institution: the camp of eastern Libya rejected the text of article (8) of the agreement that gave all the sovereign powers to the Presidential council and the government of National Accord. They had the power to appoint senior military and political officials instead of the House of Representatives. Therefore, the camp of eastern Libya considered the target of this decision is the removal of Khalifa Haftar and hence they demanded the amendment of this article, which was the main reason for the refusal of the Parliament of Tobruk to adopt the government of reconciliation (Al-Raidi, 2018).

- Presidential Council: Most members of the House of Representatives and the Dialogue Committee consider the presidential council to be an illegal party, as its formation was in an unconstitutional manner and hence imposed on Libyans. In addition, the frequency of disagreement increased - later – due to the control of the Islamic movement on its decisions to become a party to the conflict.

- Participation in legislative decisions: It was represented by the fact that the Eastern Parliament did not recognize giving the State Council (the General National Congress) any legislative powers, because the Parliament of the East is the only authority to exercise this right.

-Opposition to the activation of the government of National Accord headed by Faiz al-Sarraj without passing it to the house of representatives. In addition to refusing to give the head of the government of National Accord broad powers to make changes in Libyan military command centers (Al-Ahmad, 2018).

The results of the Sakhirat agreement were contrary to what had been hoped for, and the agreement became a crisis in itself, contributing significantly to pushing the crisis forward and strengthening the situation of division further than before. The Libyan Eastern Camp announced that the committee representing it in the dialogue sessions prior to the signing of the agreement was not authorized to sign, and this position was the result of the rejection of article 8, which entitles the head of the Government of National Accord Faiz al-Sarraj to serve as the commander-in-chief of the army. This means that the role of Khalifa Haftar will be marginalized though the Eastern Parliament had the tendency to bring him to power. Although the Eastern camp agreed to the Sakhirat agreement, as a result of international pressure, it remained conservative on article 8 (Noon Post, 2019).

Although the Western camp, represented by the National Congress in Tripoli, signed the agreement, it also announced that the committee representing him in the dialogue sessions is not authorized to sign after the agreement had been performed in 2016. As such, this incident was the result of a split within the National Convention on the terms of the agreement between supporters and opponents. As a result, opponents supported by a number of militias broke the terms of the agreement and formed a new government known as the 'Rescue Government' headed by Khalifa Goel. Therefore, he in turn took control of the headquarters of the Supreme Council of state in Tripoli and announced that members of the National Congress who approved the Sakhirat agreement are suspended from work (Al Jazeera Net, 2016). This means that during this phase, the parties of the conflict in Libya had no willingness to abdicate their interests in the best national interests of Libya. Each of which sought to formulate an agreement consistent with its interests, often driven by the influence of external forces, which are considered contradictory in their interests. Thus, the Sakhirat agreement failed to achieve its objectives

by uniting Libya's governance institutions, and even contribute to further division than before (Hamdani, 2018).

After the signing of the agreement, Libya's political map had been divided into three governments:

The Government of National Accord in Tripoli, headed by Faiz al-Sarraj, is considered an internationally recognized government due to the Sakhirat Agreement on February 23, 2016. It won the confidence of the Al-Wouti Conference, and considered the 'Sakhirat' agreement to be the only option to end the crisis. The second government is the Eastern Libyan government, which is part of the Tobruk parliament. The basis of this government was in the eastern Libyan city of Al-Bayda, and is headed by Abdullah al-Thani, a supporter of Haftar's successor, who refuses to hand over power to the government of National Accord. The third government is the 'Rescue Government' of the General National Congress headed by Khalifa Goel, an internationally unrecognized government as well as parliamentarians, one in the east and the other in the West (Al-Ahmad, 2018).

The major problem facing efforts to resolve the Libyan crisis during this phase was the weakness of the National Accord government. Although the government, since its inception, had received internal, regional and international support, it had not been able to control the situation and meet existing challenges (Arab Research Center, 2017). This outcome was because of the lack of a regular military force under its full direct powers, the reason that made it to give legitimacy to a number of militias to protect them. The Government of National Accord was unable to control these militias, since some of them were involved in human trafficking, illegal immigration and drugs. Thus, its popularity has declined and has lost its citizens' confidence. This was also helped by its failure to make significant progress in securing vital services for citizens, such as water, electricity, treatment, food, the collapse of the Libyan dinar, a severe shortage of liquidity and an increase in kidnappings and assassinations in Tripoli. This was evident by which the Libyan Human Rights Organization in 2017 (744) committed kidnapping and assassination. The weakness of the government and the resulting political and military divisions also led to a severe collapse in the Libyan economy, particularly in the oil sector, where the volume of oil revenues, the main source of budget financing, fell from $53.2 billion before 2011 to about $4.2 billion in 2017 (Al-Ahmad, 2018).

The government has also failed to force militias to withdraw from Libyan cities as stipulated in the Sakhirat agreement, and even more seriously, the government and the presidential council have asked some armed militias to protect them, causing extreme anger to the Libyan street (Al-Raidi, 2018).

This failure has led to further conflict between Libya's military actors represented by Karama, Libya Dawn forces, the ISIS and Ansar al-Sharia, each of which sought to extend its influence over its region and its allied political power. For example, what general Haftar did to gain power greedily has changed the balance of power after the signing of the Sakhirat agreement. This interest had been represented by the occupation of Benghazi and the capture of a large part of the oil crescent in Sirte province with its facilities (Arab Research Center, 2017). In order to strengthen his negotiating position, and thus impose himself in any political settlement, he was helped by Egyptian and Emirati support. This support made him a self-imposed force on the Eastern Libyan Parliament, while the Coalition of Militia Grouping in western Libya, which operated under the authority of the Presidential Council, was able to seize other sections of Sirte (Gbara, 2017).

In order to achieve the objectives of the Sakhirat agreement to end the situation of armed conflict, it was necessary to involve most important military commanders in the settings of dialogue and to integrate their forces into a single military force, as a necessary demand for disarmament and the dismantling of armed militias deployed throughout the country. The designation of one force as the legitimate army has increased the pace of the conflict, as most armed organizations had connections to one of the political forces on the Libyan scene, acting as independent militias. The process of bringing them together on a unified position has therefore become extremely difficult, especially since they are mostly inconsistent, and their loyalty to their leaders is more than their loyalty to the state. In addition, their activity primarily directed at controlling oil wealth or serving personal, regional or tribal interests. This activity has further complicated the situation during this period by the emergence of the ISIS and its clear activity against many Libyan political, economic and military interests (Chrysz Group, 2016).

By analyzing the course of the events of the Libyan crisis during this phase, we found that the attitude of the major powers - particularly America, Russia and the European Union - stressed the need to adopt a political solution as stipulated

in the Sakhirat agreement. However, the reality of their position on the ground was totally contrary to what they were declaring. In other words, they were divided in their positions toward the Libyan crisis between the parties of the conflict because of their conflicting interests in Libyan territory, particularly with regard to oil interests.

While, in the one hand, Italy, Turkey, Britain and Qatar supported the government of National Accord in Tripoli and called for the implementation of the Sakhirat agreement. On the other hand, America, Russia, France, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates went to support Al-Sharq camp and the subsequent military forces led by General Khalifa Haftar. The later interference exacerbated the conflict and the progress of the crisis, especially after the conflicting Islamist and liberal internal forces had welcomed this intervention to strengthen their positions in the conflict and support them for power (Megerisi, 2019).

**Second: Paris Agreement**

Because of the failure of the Sakhirat agreement to resolve the Libyan crisis, French President, Macron Emmanul invited parties to the Libyan conflict to an international conference held in Paris on 29 May 2018, under the auspices of the United Nations and the presence of representatives of (19) states. Those parties include the President of the Transitional Council of the government of National Accord, Faiz al-Sarraj; the speaker of the Council of Deputies of the East, Akela Saleh; the President of the Supreme Council of the State, Khaled Al-Mashri, and Major General Khalifa Haftar, commander of the army staff in the Government of eastern Libya. The most important decisions that resulted were:

1. Obliging the Libyan authorities to support the proposal of a timetable for the adoption of the Constitution and supporting the efforts of the UN representative to achieve this entitlement.

2. Preparing and adopting electoral laws through a joint coordination process between Libyan state institutions and the United Nations, and working to hold credible and transparent parliamentary and presidential elections in December 2018.

3. Demand that the Libyan parties create the atmosphere for elections, gradually end dealing with parallel governments and institutions, and commit to the efforts of the United Nations to build state institutions. Encourage military dialogue to unite the divided army institution (Maghreb Voices, 2018).

The reason why France sponsored this agreement and the initiative before other European countries is due to several issues, the most important of which are:

- Confirming the position of its ally, Khalifa Haftar in power after he was excluded under the Sakhirat Agreement.

- France's desire to maintain its prestige in northern Africa as a country with colonial interests and to impose its agenda through a formula for a solution that does not conflict with its interests at least.

- France, as the largest country in the European Union, fears the consequences of the Libyan crisis on Europe, particularly the risks of terrorism and illegal immigration (Dhiab, 2018).

Although the Paris Agreement set a road map for Libya's upcoming elections and set a timetable for the adoption of the constitution, at the same time it contained many flaws, the most important of which were:

- Leaving the space open to interpreting many issues, such as the failure to provide a specific time for the date of the referendum on the draft of the constitution.

- It was not signed by all Libyan parties participating in the conference, which made it weaker than the Sakhirat agreement, the one that was overturned despite its signature.

- The impossibility of implementing what was stipulated in the agreement to hold parliamentary elections in light of the difficult circumstances existing in Libya. Additionally, the absence of organized constitutional rules, as the legal framework for the elections is not clear, because it did not indicate the mechanism that allows the participation of political parties, nor did it provide any guarantee of independence and integrity of the vote (Harchoui, 2018).

- The short of the period the conference set for the completion of the constitution, which is 6 September 2018, within three months of the conference, is not possible under the circumstances in Libya (Najib, 2018).

- The Paris Agreement did not cover all parties of the conflict, as France dealt with the Libyan crisis only with four personalities, without paying attention to other armed forces that are active on the Libyan scene, particularly some Islamic organizations — not on the lists of terrorism — that were active forces on the ground. Although the agreement focused on

uniting the Libyan military forces and subjecting them to the principle of accountability, it did not explain the mechanism for achieving them. It did not also indicate who was entitled to appoint and isolate the military leadership. French sponsorship of the Paris agreement was also a major problem, as France is an active international party to the crisis, which has led opponents to view the agreement as an attempt by France to assert the status of its ally Khalifa Haftar in any upcoming political settlement (Fouad, 9/1/2018). This prompted the Western Libyan Brigades, led by the Misrata Brigades, to reject the Paris conference resolutions, and a number of militias in the Western region, affiliated with the Presidential Council, pre-empted the Paris meeting and issued a statement rejecting all its outcomes. These militias generally refused to support any reconciliation, as the status opens the door to gains by blackmailing rival political forces (Dhiab, 2018).

One of the things that sparked the controversy over the Paris agreement was the fact that it included support for military operations led by Khalifa Haftar on the pretext of fighting terrorism, without clarifying which of the factions had intentions for terrorism, giving the Libyan parties an argument to continue fighting. This gave Haftar legitimacy to continue his operations under international cover, which means pressuring the political actors on the Libyan scene to accept him as a key party in the process of political settlement and power in the future. This was prepared through the Cairo declaration, which brought together Haftar, Aqila Saleh, Al-Sarraj and other members of the Supreme Council of the State. As a result, it is worth noting that the reasons for the failure of the Paris Agreement stemmed from the agreement itself, such as the previous Sakhirat agreement, where both agreements did not seek to resolve the crisis at its roots and deal with it comprehensively (Noon Post, 2019). What happened in Paris cannot be considered a complete agreement, as the participating parties had signed no document, and there has been no commitment from the parties to the issues raised. In addition to the fact that it was not set within the framework of a national consensus involving all effective military leaders, in particular Ahmed Maaitiq, commander of the Misrata forces, one of the strongest military forces in Libya. As such, this was what made this French initiative added to the factors of confusing the course of settling the Libyan crisis and the continuation of the existing conflict (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

It is worth saying that, despite what the international powers active in the development of the course of the Libyan crisis - in particular France, Italy, Turkey and some Arab countries - declared the need to implement the terms of the political agreement and contain the crisis politically in order to achieve security and stability in Libya. In fact, the matter was contrary to what it was declaring, as it was seeking to perpetuate the conflict in order to serve its political and economic interests linked primarily to controlling Libya's oil wealth. It was helped by the wide welcome it enjoyed from the parties to the Libyan conflict. Therefore, there was no seriousness among the international forces to resolve the crisis, as they were divided among themselves in a way that did not differ from the internal forces. Rather, it can be said that the internal Libyan conflicts were greatly affected by the division of the position of the international forces as a result of their conflicting interests, which led to an increase in The pace of conflict between the internal Libyan forces (Fishman, 2017,p2).

**Conclusion and results**

By analyzing the dimensions of the 2014-2018 Libyan crisis under the circumstances and factors affecting its emergence, development and outcome, the following results can be highlighted:

1. The Libyan crisis was shaped by the way it became after 2014, because of Libya's legacy after the fall of Gaddafi's rule. The other one related to the weak of the authority that failed to control the internal situation and meet existing challenges, as a result of its lack of functional national institutions with experience in administration and governance, and the absence of a regular military force under central political authority and the ability to impose state prestige on all Libyan regions.

2. Libya's 2014 parliamentary elections aimed at creating a representative council for the people, which would bring Libyan political forces to consensus on a set of foundations to establish a modern Libyan state. However, the outcomes of the elections were the other way round, as it was the beginning of a new crisis. To put it differently, the conflict between Libyan political forces, Islamist and liberal, grew to the point of armed conflict, with the aim of reaching power solely.

3. The Libyan crisis was formed after 2014, because of the violent conflict between Libyan political forces for power,

mainly represented by the Islamist current controlling the Tripoli government and its subsequent military organizations and armed militias, in the one hand. On the other hand, the liberal current controlled the government of the eastern Libya in Tobruk, and the subsequent armed organizations. The division of international forces to support the conflicting parties reinforced the conflict.

4. As Libyan conflicting political forces lack regular military force (national army) under their full control, they resorted to the use of a number of armed militias and their alliance as military arms to fill the existing security vacuum and strengthen their position in the face of their opponents. Because of their multiple loyalties and lack of commitment to the decisions of allied political forces, the pace of the conflict has increased. In this way, the country has reached a state of civil war, especially since some of these militias with allied political forces were classified among the various extremist terrorist organizations in terms of their objectives and approach.

5. Despite international efforts to contain the crisis through political initiatives and agreements, all of them have failed. Thus, their results have been contrary to what they had hoped for, and these agreements have become a crisis in themselves, contributing significantly to moving the conflict forward. This is because it had not dealt with the crisis comprehensively by ignoring important parties, particularly active military commanders on the ground, to unite military forces, dismantle militias, particularly terrorists, and disarm them to create the right atmosphere for the imposition of state sovereignty.

6. The study found that despite the fact that the international forces involved in the course of the crisis declared the need to implement the terms of the political agreement and contain the crisis politically, its position was contrary to what it was doing, and it did not have seriousness in resolving the crisis. Therefore, International forces within themselves were divided similarly as the internal forces. As such, it is worth noting that Libya's internal conflicts had been largely influenced by the division of international power positions on the crisis because of their conflicting interests.

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