



# SAVING TRIPOLI THROUGH SOCIAL OUTREACH

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Interview by Dr Aref Ali Nayed on Libya's Channel

14TH JULY 2019 | AMMAN, JORDAN



مجمع ليبيا للدراسات المتقدمة  
Libya Institute for Advanced Studies



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In an interview with Nabil Al-Hajj on Libya's Channel on Sunday Dr. Nayed considered the Libyan crisis to be a crisis of a strange kind—it was a crisis caused by parasites. For example there are countries that witnessed the emergence of parasitic bodies or what is known as a state within the state; such bodies live within the state to expand their own influence because they have a transnational ideology, in reference to the Muslim Brotherhood, which is classified as a terrorist group by the Libyan House of Representatives (HoR).

He pointed out that the Libyan National Army is restoring the Libyan state to what it should be, and getting rid of the parasites that have kidnapped the capabilities of the Libyan people throughout these years. He pointed out that winning the battle against the militias in Tripoli is in the best interests of the Libyan National Army, the people and the democratization process of the country.

He said that those who do not want war must not align themselves with what he described as the “war machine”, meaning the Muslim Brotherhood, the LIFG, al-Qaeda, and the Islamic State. He argued that it was imperative now for people to support a decisive victory, not stopping it. In light of the recent developments, the battle must be won particularly after the arrival of foreign fighters from Syria on board of special flights in addition to the daily shipments of weapons from Turkey.

“Personally, I am ready to assist in any mediation to negotiate with the city of Misrata as part of the social fabric, and not with the people who believe in certain ideologies. I think that negotiating with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, or al-Qaeda and the Islamic State terrorist organization is neither desirable nor fruitful. It is just a sellout of our homeland,” Dr. Nayed said.

“What happened in Gharyan was a Turkish intelligence operation more than anything else,” Dr. Nayed continued.

He stressed that the General Commander of the Libyan National Army, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, has no personal ambitions and wants a unified Libya. “Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar supports holding elections in the country.” Dr. Nayed said.

Dr. Aref Ali Nayed expressed his surprise at the accusation levelled against Haftar that he wants to take over the capital while in reality the Presidential Council, that is accusing him, is indefinitely renewing its expired tenure and procrastinating and obstructing the elections.

Regarding the Cairo meetings, Dr. Aref Ali Nayed said: “Cairo has brought together both the members of the Libyan House of Representatives and its boycotting members to create harmony in the Libyan Parliament, in order to reach a unified vision, and give them the opportunity to rebuild confidence, and establish communication channels. Egypt is trying to create harmony in order to

restore channels of communications between all the MPs of the HoR, because this body, in spite of its weakness and its division, remains the last body elected by the Libyan people”. Here is the full text of the interview translated exclusively here from the Arabic.

## FULL TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW

**How would you assess the Libyan crisis in general terms given the current situation? Some people see that Libya is going through the last stages of its crisis, and that political and military conflicts have reached their peak on the ground?**

I believe that the fabricated and artificial Libyan crisis is almost over. I say it is fabricated because the democratic path is taking steady and important steps towards democracy and peaceful coexistence among citizens; as citizens of a civil state governed by a constitution, and at least a constitutional declaration governed by laws.

Unfortunately, this democratic track was hijacked and corrupted in 2014 when a certain movement, “the Islamic Party”, lost. Instead of handing over the Parliament, this movement decided to rule and acquire the capital and its institutions, which are centralized, and used it to control all the assets of the Libyan people.

The seizure of the capital is the origin of all the problems facing us and the obstacle in the establishment of the Libyan state. But now we are in the final stage of its liberation, the restoration of order, and the restoration of constitutional work necessary for the democratic track. Taking over the capital has ruined the political life in Libya and has led to the rule and control of criminal ideological groups and criminal gangs of the state’s assets.

We are at the end of the difficult stages and I believe that after the liberation of the capital, a new chapter will open for the revival of Libya and the Libyan state so that we can all live as citizens of a civil state with a clear democratic path.

**To what degree are we today in Libya in one of the most dangerous of stages? Do you think that those who occupied and controlled Tripoli all these years and the country’s resources will easily leave the capital?**

Of course not. They will not leave the capital easily, but we are now in a fierce war for more than a month, and they will certainly leave the capital because the Libyan army is organized, strong and has enough equipment and ammunition to resolve the battle.

The international community have repeatedly said that there is no military solution in Libya and a political solution is required. We have tried all political solutions. The Parliament cooperated with the international community, and was satisfied with the efforts made at Skhirat and gave many concessions. Perhaps political life will be possible through a political solution; unfortunately, the matter of the elections has been postponed time after time.

Sarraj’s government should have been a one-year government that could be renewed, if required, for another year. It is now ending its fourth year term! Surprisingly, Al-Sarraj, and his inept government, which was not sworn in front of the Libya Parliament, has ruled Libya for four years and has never been considered an autocracy.

Many say that the Libyan army intends despotism and forget that we have been under a tyrannical rule for the last four years. Who is the one who appointed Al-Sarraj? Al-Sarraj was not appointed by

the Parliament, nor was he on the list of the 14 names submitted by the House of Representatives or the General National Congress list. The name came from outside the two lists. That is why Al-Sarraj rules us for the last 4 years while not having even been elected. He is autocratic in power and in the Presidential Council, where he takes all the decisions. This is what made him head of a Board of 3 people from an original group of 9, and even the other two do not rule with Al-Sarraj, but he alone rules without any democratic approval or process.

The Presidential Council and its government have lost more than 17 cases in the Libyan judiciary. This government is not legitimate at the local level and in the Libyan judiciary. Its legitimacy has been forced upon on the Libyan people and on Libya. The nation's sovereignty and capabilities must be restored. This situation cannot continue.

The Libyan Army was patient and defeated terrorism in Benghazi, Derna and in the South. It moved towards the capital and has tried to negotiate with Al-Sarraj and had reached an understanding with him on several fronts. Yet, whenever Al-Sarraj returns to Tripoli, he violates agreed arrangements. There are some who say it is because he is under pressure and others who say that he did not intend to fulfill those promises and the result was this regrettable war.

Everyone tried not to get into such a conflict, but unfortunately this is what happened. The result now is that the Libyan Army is offering a military solution that will restore the democratic path to what it should have been.

**There are those who say that the crisis in Libya is a political crisis or a security crisis? Will it end, through the army, or through political solutions, mediation and initiatives, whether external, internal or international?**

I believe that it is a strange crisis, but it is not rare. It is a kind of crisis caused by parasites. There are countries which have a within a state like in Lebanon, which suffers from this problem with the Hizbollah. These entity live inside the state and take on the same shape as the state, such bodies live within a state to expand their own influence because they have a transnational ideology.

Hizbollah's association with Iran, the so-called *Wilayat al-Faqih* state and Khomeini's ideology, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood, tried every time to build entities within entities, such as the Hamas to corrupt Palestinian unity and weakening the Palestinian people through its negotiations with the other party. This is why Islamist groups, or those claiming to operate under Islam in Libya, try to establish a state within a state.

When these groups control the Central Bank, the National Oil Corporation, the Audit Office, which is supposed to hold the Central Bank and others to account, and the Libyan Investment Authority, these acquisitions lead to the establishment of a state within a state, as is the case with the phenomenon of parasites in biology. Parasites do not kill the victim but weaken it and use the victim's lifeblood to strengthen themselves. They do not let the victim die or let the victim live, and the same has happened in Libya.

The state did not collapse completely and did not function as it should. The Libyan state was used as an ATM machine for the Muslim Brotherhood. The Central Bank deposits are now in Turkish banks to support the Muslim Brotherhood in Turkey and in other countries. The Libyan Ministry of Defense and the Libyan Ministry of Interior have been used to support terrorism.

This use of the Libyan state is a parasitic state within a state. What the army is doing, which we call on God to support, is to re-establish the Libyan state to what it should be, and eliminate the par-

asites that hijacked the Libyan people's capabilities all these years. How is it possible that a Libyan child in the south should die of a scorpion bite or a snake bite, whilst the money of the Libyan people is deposited in Turkey, or used to buy real estate and projects all over the world?

All this spending over these years, for what should have been for future generations, is used to buy weapons for terrorism, support terrorist militias, and leave the Libyan people suffering from a lack of basic services such as fuel, water and electricity. Is it possible in 2019 for the Libyan people to live in darkness while their money is used to finance terrorism?

**Libya now passes through the fifth year since Operation Dawn, both its political and armed wings. Do you believe that the perpetrators of this operation and its successors are the ones who bear the brunt of the mess, chaos, fragmentation and division we see in Libya? Or were the differences between Libyan politicians so deep that they would have sought any factor to blow it up even if the armed operation didn't take place 2014?**

Operation Dawn of Libya has not finished and it continues with same leadership that led to the coup in 2014. One of them has become a Minister of Interior and a Minister of Defence. Some of them still benefit from letters of credit by the Central Bank and currency exchange, and even the commission imposed on the currency. The same group that benefits from these privileges is the same group that declared Operation Dawn and who said they were from Operation Qaswara. They have made fools of the Libyan public and their Parliament by the false use of Qur'anic terms. This group is still present and active in Istanbul. It has Operation Rooms, television channels and countless electronic armies, include those who run campaigns against us.

All of these groups still exist. Libya Dawn still exists and it used Skhirat to take over, and to stall in handing over the Central Bank and the National Oil Corporation despite what was agreed. Although it is the army that guarantees the pumping of oil from Barqah and the Fezzan, they still have all Libya's money. They used the Skhirat not in good faith to reach a solution, but to procrastinate. The evidence is that the Skhirat agreement was only meant to be for a year but this did not happen. Presidential and Parliamentary elections were postponed, and the postponement continued even when a consensus was reached at the Paris Conference, between four parties and agreed in front of the world that elections would be held in December 2018. This date was postponed under the pretext of Palermo.

The Palermo meeting was used for planning and postponing, because for every 6 months of delay 6 months of the budget is spent in billions. Even in this ongoing war, the Government of National Account is still spending millions without control, without oversight, not even the by the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Audit Bureau. More than US\$3 billion have been spent in the last few days in strange ways. Surprisingly, it is not in their interest to settle the war, but rather in their interest to prolong it. Those who have the best interests at heart in ending this war are the Libyan National Army, the Libyan people, and the democratic process of the country.

**Do you think the Skhirat agreement, after all the events that have occurred, is still viable as a political solution to the ongoing conflict?**

On several occasions, I have stated, through open letters from the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies, to UNSMIL head, Dr. Ghassan Salamé, that the dilemma of the Skhirat agreement is that it has never been implemented; it has never come into force. For example, the Presidential Council, in accordance with the Skhirat agreement, is to make decisions unanimously. In reality, however, deci-



sions are issued by the Presidential Council individually and autocratically. Other confidence-building measures, such as the release of prisoners, putting an end to torture, improving conditions, the return of the internally displaced families to their homes, all these have not been implemented at all. All these situations still exist.

Sometimes they play with the feelings of the people by leaking news of the release of some of the supporters of the former regime or others. These prisoners should have been released in 2015, but only a few were released and deals were made behind the curtains to release them. The Skhirat agreement was never implemented. Where are the measures pertaining to building confidence?

I met with Stephanie Williams. General Raad, the security officer in the UNSMIL, attended the meeting. I wonder where were the security arrangements that should have been done by the UN mission? Do the security arrangements mean that someone will make a tour of the city of Tripoli riding a late model Mercedes? Or that the security arrangements involve bullying the bankers and blackmailing them on a daily basis? Do the security arrangements mean that someone can buy half of Tripoli and its properties, and starve its people, and sell their homes to people, and that no one knows the source of the funds they use to buy those houses?

### **Who is responsible for not implementing at least the security arrangements clause in the Skhirat agreement?**

I hold the United Nations and the international community, especially the Obama administration in the United States and State Department, which unfortunately still has some of its cadres in the deep state of America promoting the same mentality. When the armed groups of the Islamist parties attacked Tripoli in 2014, they should have said: this is a fascist act in no way different from Mussolini's attack on Rome.

The United States and the international community should have rejected the takeover of Tripoli at that time. Even when the US Ambassador to Libya was assassinated in Benghazi, the young men and women of Benghazi participated in a spontaneous outcry to protest against this terrorist crime; they were shot at and killed in those demonstrations but they eventually expelled the militias at that time from the city. These events are documented online with photos of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, the LIFG, and al-Qaeda standing next to the President of the defunct General National Congress and his ministers; they said that these militias were legitimate and that the youth of Benghazi were the ones who committed mistakes. The United States should have sided with the Libyan people at that time.

### **What can America or the international community do?**

Even without intervention, these gangs should at least not have been legitimized. What happened was that they legitimized the takeover of Tripoli rather than supporting the Parliament, the government and its army in fighting terrorism and the fascist and terrorist takeover of the capital. Unfortunately, they even cooperated with these terrorists.

### **How did the international community, in your opinion, legitimize the armed groups inside Tripoli?**

Speaking of the year 2015, the international community should have supported the Parliament and its government in restoring the capital and supporting the arming and building of the Libyan army. Unfortunately, the international community then, supported the existing governments back then between 2015 and 2016. Khaled Al-Sharif, who was the Defense Ministry's undersecretary and the one

who brought explosive bags, backed up by the Ministry of the Interior's authorization and distributed weapons to terrorist gangs using the Libyan people's funds. The international community did not act at that time, but in general those years have passed and now the Libyan army rectified the situation and will enter Tripoli victorious sooner rather than later.

We want to say that the groups fighting in Tripoli against the army are not equal. There are groups of the Benghazi Revolutionaries' Shura Council and the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council, and the so-called the Benghazi Defense Brigades, which are originally the brigades which destroyed Benghazi; they belong to Al-Qaeda, the Libyan Jamaa group and ISIS. These groups exist and fight; they are documented by names, attributes and pictures. No one denies that, it was even published in the local media such as Al-Marsad, in addition to the New York Times and others; these militias only have the ablation, they must hand over their weapons and have their members arrested and if they were to choose to remain and fight, they should be killed

On the other hand, there are regional groups fighting because they believe that Tripoli is being attacked by abroad. This is an important role played by the Muslim Brotherhood channels in Turkey, including Libya Al-Ahrar, Panorama and others that promote the existence of an army from the east and aggression on Tripoli, and any free young man who wants to protect his area like the youth of Souq al-Juma, Tajoura, and Abu Saleem and believes that he is defending his region.

What we want to tell these guys, look who is fighting beside you and who is your comrade in the battle. Is it possible to fight side by side with Al-Qaeda, ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood, and with the Benghazi and Derna Shura Councils, and the Benghazi Saraya? I'd like to tell the Libyan army that we should differentiate between these regional and ideologue groups which are differentiated from one another. In addition to the presence of a third group, which is the criminal groups that live on stealing credits, smuggling, fuel and feed on the resources of the Libyan people which is what we do not want.

What I wish for as a Libyan who lived and resided in Tripoli, I am a son of Tripoli, and it is true that I was born in Benghazi and my family have roots in other cities like Bani Walid, al-Baida, Tobruk and Ajdabiya, but I grew up in the capital and studied there. These are not ideologue youth, and it is wrong to classify them as terrorists. These are young people who believe that they are defending their city, so we must address them and extend our hands to them to tell them: The war is not against you, but against terrorism. Help us and help us fight terrorism. You must be allies of the army against terrorism, which is the right thing to do.

The generalization, in which some of the people who fell for rhetorical classifications before, even some army spokespersons, generalize when they speak, they should differentiate between these people. It is true that the army, God bless them, secured the country, and said: "Whoever raises the white flag is safe, and whoever returns to his house is safe, and those who lay down their weapons are safe". This is an absolute promise to the Libyan people.

What I want to reassure the youth of those areas about, is secure your area against terrorism, and when the Libyan army approaches interact with them. We, at the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies, are ready to help mediate between these youth and the army officers because this matter is crucial.

I believe if the Libyan youth secured their areas so that no robberies or trespassing could take place and purge the terrorist extremist groups and besiege them and ask them to hand over their arms and surrender to the Libyan army, This distinction between young people fighting for their regions and young people unfortunately were traumatized and brainwashed with dark ideologies and



philosophies of death rather than life; I think this is crucial. Entry into Tripoli will take place, the army advanced on several axis and fronts, which is inevitable in the near future.

The army will enter Tripoli and what we hope is that the youth of those areas will rectify their position by aligning themselves with the homeland and its army. Those who tell you that it is a tyrannical army have to ask themselves, this army is fighting a despotic rule that lasted for 4 years without elections and with the current despotic Presidential Council which is ruling now.

If you want to fight the individual rule, fight Al-Sarraj. If you want to fight tyranny, fight the failing government and the rule of Al-Sarraj, which did not provide any service to the Libyan people. They spend money here and there on armament, terrorism and arming the gangs in order to cut off and close the roads between Tarhouna and Bani Walid and Al-Jufra, and cut off these army supply routes. They also grant Ali Kanna money so he would terrorize the south or give it to the Chadian opposition groups to terrorize and harass the people of Murzuq. These funds should be for the benefit of the people, for the young people as students of science, engineers, doctors, and corporate owners.

**These calls are, in fact, being heard from other parties and military leaders now, these calls are aimed towards the non-ideologue fighters in Tripoli who are confronting the army, given that we have entered the fourth month of fighting in Tripoli for more than 100 days now, can these calls be resonant and responded to by these fighters, regardless of how long the battle has been going on? Or have they already chosen to fight against the army?**

Marshal Khalifa Haftar, in his speech, mentioned these calls. What happened is that the confusion and the ambiguity started to clear up. These youth themselves know two crucial issues: many of the leaders who pushed them to the battles, and to the fields, are not in Libya now, but they enjoy huge sums of money which they smuggled out of the country and they are roaming the world; owning several real estate properties abroad that could be sufficient for them and their children and grandchildren after them if they were not pursued in the future.

A young man should ask himself two questions: Who is my commander and with whom I am fighting? If each young man asked himself this question, it would become clear. We are seeing signs that young are beginning to understand that even ammunition distribution is controlled by the ideologues, and they are often left without any supply of ammunition. And when they notice that they are often pushed towards the front lines, the ideologues continue to seize the opportunity of using them as human shields, and also when they see that they are being exploited and fighting every day, then they should ask themselves who are the ones being killed? They are the young people of Tajoura and Misrata. Where are the terrorists? They're waiting, collecting ammunition, taking advantage of opportunities, stealing money, funding themselves, and bringing in their fellow terrorists from Idlib through civilian flight routes which have been transformed into terrorist supply routes.

**There are some international press reports that quoted testimonies from fighters who are ideologues. Some of them stated that they were involved, they entered the battle, and were fighting without being able to retreat because of the presence of a group which was preventing the retreat from the battlefield?**

What I know about these young men is that they are the purest, the strongest, the noblest, and the bravest, and if they really have a will to change and stop this madness, you are facing the tsunami of the military which till this moment didn't use all of its fighting power, and now it is starting to push new waves that will take over Tripoli and control the capital, not to implement a military rule but

to revive the democratic track to what it should have been and the establishment of a national unity government that would prepare for the elections.

Young people should understand that they have been used as scapegoats, and were brought forward in the frontlines to die instead of being alive, so that they could live, start projects, and get married. These bastards have turned the Libyan youth into numbered graves. Why? There should be a life for these people. These youth are our youth, and the heart saddens and do not rejoice, and no Libyan rejoices in the funerals of Misrata or Souq al-Juma and Al-Zawiya.

The ideological gangs have taken possession of important matters such as television channels; they have more than five channels and money through the Central Bank, where more than 9 senior officials belong to the Muslim Brotherhood, in addition to influencing the daily public narrative that convinced these young men that they are facing an unjust aggression that came to control Tripoli. The Libyan army came to protect the country's constitution and to establish a Libyan state.

**When these allegations are believed by young and angry youth, it may be understandable, but what about well-known and educated academic elite figures in Tripoli, acting against the army's entry into Tripoli and they have statements like these?**

The army will enter Tripoli, and investigations will be conducted concerning each event that took place. I have no doubt that each official of these, was given privileges, was assigned a specific post, or had sent one of his relatives to work in the diplomatic corpus abroad.

**Or is it possible they do not want war?**

Those who does not have a wish for war, do not ally themselves with a war machine, namely the Muslim Brotherhood, the Libyan Fighting Group, Al Qaeda and ISIS. How can people ally with these monsters that cut heads and burn living people? How on earth they associate themselves with them, and which purpose to serve?

**Perhaps many people who refuse the entrance of the army into Tripoli object to the heavy losses that these battles could cause to the capital and its residents?**

For these considerations, we have always objected to the military solution, and we have been aiming for a political solution with the help of the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies, which organized a number of seminars, meetings and dispatched official letters directed towards promoting elections in the country. With the help of Libya's Channel, we promoted the democratic path and holding presidential and Parliamentary elections because it is the solution. We were strongly criticized for this stance. It was said that Aref Nayed was promoting the elections because he wanted to run for it. We wanted the elections because we know that if things were not settled through the ballot box, it would be settled with the ammunition box.

We did not support the war for long weeks, but what has happened is that at this moment, it is imperative now for people to support a decisive victory, not stopping the war. In light of the recent developments, the battle must be won particularly after the arrival of foreign fighters from Syria on board of special flights in addition to the daily shipments of weapons from Turkey. The army itself and its leadership are keen to safeguard the civilian population; they are keen not to shed blood or destroy Tripoli. The army could have entered the city center since day one, but chose to stand on its outskirts, and every time these militias and groups advanced, they were pushed back and defeated, one militia after another; tens of campaigns and attacks have weakened all of the army's opposing

forces; now it has become easier to enter with the least amount of casualties. The damage will be even more reduced if the Libyan youth listened to the army and the Libyan army extended its hand to the city's youth.

There are Salafi groups inside Tripoli that have fought ISIS and continue to guard the prisons where ISIS prisoners were kept. They should be the allies of the army instead of opposing it. There are young people from the criminal investigation department in Tripoli, Al-Nawasi Brigade and the Special Deterrence Force, who have stopped several attacks, and many terrorist operations inside Tripoli, saved people's lives, and secured facilities. We do not deny this, but it is better for these people to ally themselves with the people and the army against terrorist groups.

Unfortunately, what happened is that there has been a mistake in the generalizations that were launched and that classified all the groups present in Tripoli as terrorists. Presently the prison in Mitiga Airport is full of ISIS members, which if the desires of the ministers and the Muslim Brotherhood to release them were approved, it would have been catastrophic. We salute those who guard these prisons. In my opinion, we must negotiate and talk with them and there will be a consensus between those who want to fight terrorism. We all have one common enemy which is terrorism, why? Because it represents death itself, and our only ally is life. Libya must survive and live, and this surviving must not be aligned with the culture of death promoted by al-Qaeda and ISIS.

The youth of Misrata, who fought ISIS in Sirte? It is undeniable that Misrata have sacrificed hundreds in this war. How can we allow the death of these young people? The battles currently taking place should be re-calculated. Misrata is significantly more important than Bashagha and more important than Badi, and those public figures that exploit Misrata in the war to serve the Muslim Brotherhood and the Libyan Fighting Group.

**In your opinion, who miscalculated, the battles in the western region and Tripoli exactly? How many say that Hiftar miscalculated this war? In terms of its timing, considering that it was launched few days prior to holding a pan-Libya National Conference in Ghadames, and in terms of declaring war against ISIS, Al-Qaeda and extremist groups today, the commander of the armed groups that control Tripoli declared that the armed brigades controlling Tripoli are the ones who fought and expelled Al-Qaeda, ISIS and senior Islamist leaders who fled to Istanbul and other countries? Wasn't it better to negotiate with them instead of declaring war on them and on others? The result was that they joined ranks.**

The declaration of war is questioned by those who declared it. I did not agree with the declaration of war, and I did not promote it. I only mentioned a few days ago that it was necessary to end the war, Since I am a Libyan army and Parliament supporter, I do not deny that I supported the army from the beginning of the arrangements., I supported Chief of Staff Abdul Razzaq Al-Nadouri, Field Marshal Khalifa Hifter, and the President of the Parliament and the Prime Minister are witnesses of this.

I inquired about who will come and what is his authority? And what are the targeted outputs of the gathering? And what are the mechanisms through which they will be achieved? Are the would-be results of the proposed conference obliging or not? We addressed such questions and waited for many weeks for clarifications, but unfortunately, they were never clarified. There were some speculations regarding the gathering but we do not know if these were true or a just a conspiracy to strengthen the Islamists' position as a former envoy tried to do in the past; there were some suspicions about the entity that organized some meetings before for the UNSMIL. Salame should have clarified

these matters properly. On the other hand, extensive talks and negotiation sessions were held between the General Commander of the Libyan National Army and Fayed Al-Sarraj in a number of capitals on several occasions. I am well informed about some of these meetings. Everyone would reach an agreement and Al-Sarraj would go back to Tripoli where all these efforts disappear into thin air. In his latest appearance before the mayors of the municipalities, Al-Sarraj denied that there were such agreements in the first place, turning a blind eye to the fact that there were foreign governments' representatives who witnessed such meetings. Breaking promises, made the army believe that they are procrastinating to buy time and to perpetuate the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood for another year or two. Thus, there are several factors that caused this tension, whatever the calculation and the reasons. This has been done and the historians will be able to evaluate these events.

The army's entry to Tripoli is inevitable and must be done with the lowest amount of loss and damage, because Libyan blood is dear and precious and so too is Tripoli's infrastructure. Because Tripoli, is our capital, and a city that should not be damaged or demolished. This matter is in the hands of the youth of Tripoli and the surrounding areas. New negotiations should be initiated in order to negotiate the army's peaceful entry into Tripoli and the process of surrender which should be accomplished in a peaceful manner with the provision of all the guarantees of safety to these young people. The other important fact is Misrata's intervention in this war; they must be aware that Bashagha is involving them in this war and is the one who rejected the agreements of Al-Sarraj which he explicitly rejected in the US and during the UNSMIL meetings in Tripoli. Bashagha, Ahmed Maitiq, and Abdul Rahman Al-Swehli, should not monopolise Misrata's decision because it is bigger and larger than these three persons. Misrata has different tribes, and a complex social structure from which civil society leaders may emerge and negotiate.

#### **But where is the voice of the majority in Misrata?**

Unfortunately, those who control the TV channels are affiliated with certain ideologies. Misrata has its own national voice but they do not own media channels. We opened our channels as much as possible. Every, patriotic Misratan was given the opportunity to talk through Libya's Channel. The patriotic voice in Misrata must rise and negotiate. This waste of the blood of youth and funerals cannot be reasonable every day. Why do all these young people have to die? To enable some to enjoy their palaces, travels, and advantages? How is it reasonable for the leaders of Operation Libya Dawn of 2014 to control the city of Misrata via the Ministry of the Interior of Fayed Al-Sarraj?

I believe that it is time to negotiate with Misrata. I call on the Libyan Army here to open the negotiations track and I am personally willing to help in any mediation effort with Misrata as a part of the social fabric and not as ideological groups. I believe that negotiating with the Muslim Brotherhood, the LIFG, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS is undesirable and fruitless and is treasonous to the country.

Misrata, the city that has many wise people and a lot of elders among their ranks, may form a delegation to negotiate with the Libyan National Army. Bashagha said that they are ready to negotiate provided that Haftar returns to where he came from. We do not want Bashagha! You are now facing a reality, look at it even if you are not convinced with the Army nor its leadership in a purely interest-oriented way. Which is better: Destroying Tripoli and its youth, Misrata and its youth and opposing the Army in a way that even Misrata will be endangered—or you should secure Misrata, withdraw its youth, save the lives of hundreds of them and reach a compromise? Who can form a government without Misrata and an army without Misrata? They are Libyans and they have the right as any other Libyan. But the problem is that they have acquired corrupt leaders.

**How do you interpret the election of Fathi Bashagha and Abdul Rahman Al-Swehli as representatives in the legislative authority if they represent themselves, and those inside the city have a different point of view, then who elected them?**

I don't want to personalize, but I say look at the numbers and the number of those who participated in the elections; these are few hundred persons while the city contains more than half a million. When a person gets 1,000 to 5,000 votes, what does he represent? There are certain groups, including some of the ideologues and others who financially benefit from the illegal letters of credit trade over the past years; these illicit transactions are controlled by, say, four to five well-known figures of the Commercial Register; this is all accessible online unfortunately. Now they are hidden, and they do not know whom for these letters of credits were opened.

Such public figures control Misrata's letters of credit, and it's a serious mistake to generalize this issue, and it's important to negotiate with their elders, their social and municipal councils, civil society, and women's associations. There must be negotiations and discussions. Now, unfortunately, tens of young people die every day. Those who reap the benefits are not Libyans, not the army, or the Parliament. They are the merchants of death who took over the Central Bank and its credentials, and they profit from the arms trade. They are helping their fellow terrorists everywhere. I do not want to limit the talk to Misrata, as the Zintan has a strange phenomenon represented in Usama al-Juwaili's control over the city of Zintan. This is quite strange.

Zintan is fighting side by side with the Army in the airport and other places. There are devoted Salafist youth in Zintan. It is true that Zintan is fighting alongside the army. How one man can like Usama al-Juwaili monopolize an entire tribe and city and threatens Bani Walid and tries to tarnish the reputation of the Zintan? Yesterday I was present among the elders of Wirfalla and Awagir tribes; they clearly drew a distinctive line that differentiates between Usama al-Juwaili and the Zintan tribe that will not accept to be controlled by him. This had been reiterated in several statements in the same way that Misrata will not accept to be controlled by Bashagha and Salah Badi.

**Why didn't we hear a word of wisdom from Misrata as we heard from the Zintan elders against Usama al-Juwaili?**

I can answer that question and say that the military solution does not mean absolute supremacy or violence until the end. Rather, the military solution may be negotiated and I do not propose a ceasefire until Turkey completes arming terrorist groups using their drones. However, we opt for a military solution that can be negotiated with the reasonable representatives of Misrata, the Zintan and Al-Zawiya, and any other groups that support this idea.

**You have spoken that the army will inevitably enter the capital Tripoli, given Turkey's support for the Presidential Council forces. Do you not see that the scales now are balanced regarding the arming of the different combating parties? Before the Libyan Army had advantage, now, however, after the Turkish shipments of armaments to the Government of National Accord, there is a balance of power. This raises the possibility that the end is open and has no imminent end, contrary to the army commanders' statements that winning the battle was close. What is your opinion on this view?**

There is no doubt that the current battle was affected by the declared shipments of armored vehicles that were unloaded at Tripoli seaport in broad daylight, and also by the drones that were shipped to Tripoli during the past two weeks. Such shipments (that defied UN embargo) had a clear impact on the battle. Unfortunately, the Mitiga airbase was used as a command and control headquarters for



these drones. They should have taken into consideration the adjacent international civilian airport of Mitiga, but it seems they used the civilian airport as a kind of shield against military action (by the LNA) as they did in the Tajoura Migrants Detention Centre.

They have made the migrants human shields for their battalions and groups. The seizure, by their forces, of the Libyan National Army Operations Room in Gharyan, is directly related to unmanned aircraft power. The fall of Gharyan was a Turkish intelligence operation more than anything else; the strikes directed at our forces had a direct impact, but thanks to God, the Libyan National Army corrected the situation and destroyed all the unmanned planes that the Government of National Accord (GNA) received. All other drones were prevented from launching new raids. The LNA carried out preemptive raids against the drones before they were loaded and prepared to hit the Libyan National Army units. Now the LNA has succeeded in destroying the Operations Room of these drones. Now there is full control by the Libyan National Army, and this must be consolidated quickly. If the battle lasts longer, the militias will have more supplies.

There is another weapon that many people are unaware of— the money weapon. Fayez al-Sarraj, (President of the Presidential Council) managed to buy many with the Libyan people's money. It is strange that tens of millions are given to Ali Kana to buy gangs. Of course not every Libyan can be bought. There are, for example, the honorable Tuareg people who refused to sell their loyalty with money. There are also enemies of Ali Kana who have not allowed him to take over the areas where Tuareg people exert control. I salute them for this noble attitude. But he managed to buy some people; the gangs of the Chadian opposition and other mercenaries to use them to attack the people of Murzuq.

Our Libyan Tabu brothers know of my friendship with some of their leaders and elders and my respect for the culture of the Tabu and their history. What is happening in Murzuq is not a just a matter against the Libyan Tabu inhabitants of the city as some people are promoting; it is a matter of gangs financed by Ali Kanna to terrorize the people and the Tabu. Most of them are Chadian mercenaries trying to displace the inhabitants of the city, and even ethnically cleanse its indigenous population. Snipers among these mercenaries are on rooftops of the houses of the Tabu Chadian elders who, in one way or another, managed to break through the ranks and promote that they are leaders of the Tabu in Libya, and this is not true.

The Libyan Tabu community is distinctive, and, unfortunately, now after the infiltration of these Chadian groups that have entered the country, they have been relegated due to the dominance of these foreign groups. They cannot control these people, and what Murzuq is suffering from these days are a fierce skirmishes, the burning of houses, and blocking of roads for the women who are trying to escape with their children, and executing mass killing and hit and run type of attacks.

Who is financing these criminal acts? This is the responsibility of Fayez Al-Sarraj, Bashagha and Siddiq al-Kabir, the Central Bank governor. These are crimes against humanity; they are committing war crimes, not to mention starvation, siege of towns and cities, tightening collective punishment to which the entire south of Libya is exposed and left under captivity just because they welcomed the Libyan National Army. Punitive measures against the pro-Army cities even included severing fuel supplies and the provision of serum for scorpion and snake bites. Murzuq hospital suffers from severe shortages and lack of these crucial serums in addition to medical equipment and sterilizing tools or even ambulances to evacuate the injured.

Personally, I am in direct daily contact with the Murzuq Council of Elders, that is why I am constantly updated on the dire conditions of living and lack of medical care. The air strikes carried out



by the LNA Air Force and the units approaching Murzuq, seek to eliminate these gangs, and this forced them to conduct some mediation. We support any reconciliation, but we condemn at the same time the violence and the shedding of blood committed by these gangs. Notwithstanding, it should be recalled that the real and main responsibility of this violence and mayhem rests with the Government of National Accord, Bashagha and Sadiq-al-Kabir. They initiated and funded it from the beginning. These are war crimes against humanity funded by the stolen money of the Libyan people.

In Tripoli, the citizen cannot afford his own food and fuel consumption or to buy basic life necessities. I salute every Libyan woman who runs a whole house with a meager family budget. This is the daily struggle of Libyan women and men. How can this be allowed to happen, they spend the money on Ali Kanna and his gangs, and spend it on the bandits near Al-Shaqiqa, where they have taken away all those fleeing from Zintan and criminals fleeing from Al Shaqiqa, who were driven away by their own people of Al Mashashya and the Zintani tribes.

These bandits are financed by Usama al-Juwaili, who has given hundreds of millions to close the road. This cannot continue. The sooner we reach a decisive military victory, the sooner will the financing of terrorism stop. This means that the army must reach downtown Tripoli to stop the financial drain and the financing of terrorism. The source of the financing for fighting against the army and the Libyan state must be stopped. The port of Tripoli must be controlled so that Turkish weapons would not come in and also Mitiga airport so that it would not be a foothold for the Turks. Is it reasonable for the Turkish to re-occupy Libya after all this time? Can we accept this? Is it possible that the people of Misrata would allow the Air College in their city to be a place for launching planes to kill people and children in Tarhouna and Qasr Bin Ghashir?

**The Muslim Brotherhood and the Mufti's media, the media against the army, the Presidential Council and the High State Council media are accusing the army with receiving external support. How can you comment on this issue?**

The only legitimacy in Libya is the legitimacy of the Libyan Parliament, as was declared in Cairo yesterday and reiterated by the United Nations all these years. Nobody doubts the legitimacy of the Libyan Parliament in Tobruk which was elected by the people, and the fact that it is originally based in Benghazi. When you leave your headquarters and your presidency and go, the strange thing about it is the Muslim Brotherhood's ability to form bodies without any legal basis. They created the High Council of State, knowing that the original political agreement did not guarantee this matter in the Constitutional Declaration, which means that it has no constitutional basis. They invented it, cars, flags, budgets and media accompanied the declaration. Khaled Al-Mishri sits around and receives delegations. They invented this body out of pure imagination. They brought one another and some deans into elections, in its second round. The funny thing is that there are people who are not in the Parliament and have made a parallel Parliament in Tripoli.

The UN was not fooled by this trick and the US administration this time in the Trump era is smarter and aware of what the Muslim Brotherhood is doing in America, whether led by Omeish and Muntasser or others. The Trump US Administration knows what is going on in Libya and will not be tricked by this. It will not recognize this Tripoli Parliament, which benefits daily from the funds allocated by the Central Bank governor, Siddiq al-Kabir, and through nominations made by Fayez al-Sarraj for posts in Libyan embassies and consulates abroad. This is not a Parliament. These are people who are trying to sabotage the real Parliament.

If the Parliament had applied its rules from the beginning, we would not have fallen into such

troubles, but unfortunately they were patient with them all this time. In return, they are now the High Council of State. Where is the 94 bloc in the State Council? It does not exist. Any of those who resigned and succeeded in handing over power to the Parliament are denied access to the State Council. They are against the Parliament and yet are recognized as Parliamentarians. As for the General National Congress, they have been completely excluded. This is the Muslim Brotherhood methodology which is exclude others. Muslim Brotherhood members come to power but cannot remain in their posts for a simple reason: They have no place for others. Therefore, they lose, each time, like their lost in Egypt and in Libya. The only thing they are playing on, is their ability to manipulate Misrata with many tricks and some young Zintanis with particular tricks. But the tricks are beginning to unfold and Misrata is aware that it is being involved in a war that is of no benefit but which might endanger its own survival.

We are now in the small hours before twilight; we must enter Tripoli in an orderly and organized way. We must be preceded by military police. There must be discipline in the army. Individuals must abide by the military law. There must be no mercy or pity for any soldier who violates military discipline, including photography, mobiles and actions. These matters must be severely punished for by the Libyan Army, which must be as prestigious as we have seen it in parades and what befits the Army, which was established before even the Libyan government. The young people in the regions should secure their areas and communicate with the army. The entrance of the army should be in order, without any chaos. Europe was not established until it fought Nazism and Fascism in Italy and Spain. This Fascism should be fought.

We should organize the surrender and receipt of weapons. Such arrangements should take place as soon as possible. Our only enemy is terrorism, not the youth of Souq al-Juma, or Tajoura, or Misrata. They should be our allies, our youth and our people. The fight should only target terrorism. Anyone who wants to fight terrorism should be our ally. All youth groups in Tripoli should reach out to eliminate terrorism and should be given guarantees. What is more important is that the entry into Tripoli and the military decision should be accompanied by human, political, negotiable decisiveness.

**Are you fully confident in the General Command of the Armed Forces to enter Tripoli or what?**

I am fully confident of the general leadership that it will establish and restore the democratic course to the right track.

**What are the guarantees?**

There is a game played by the Muslim Brotherhood, which involves restricting the army to a person. The Libyan army is a large old institution with a general command, organizations, divisions, and field leaderships and has a social incubator. Since I returned to live in Benghazi, I sense that clearly, people are with the army and also the tribes. This social incubator is a guarantor.

The army was not self-assigned or self-styled. The army leadership was appointed by the elected Parliament. Now the Parliament and the interim government are present, in addition to the tribes and civil society support, and you have a military institution, and national officers. In his direct meetings, I did not sense any kind of deception from Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. He wants to restore Libya's dignity and unity and wants to hold the elections; this is his stance which he expressed repeatedly again and again in many occasions as there is an international community, a Security Council and the notion of individual takeover of power is not easily condoned even if there are ambitions.

I would like to emphasize that Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar has no personal ambitions and wants a unified Libya. Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar supports holding elections in the country, but it is strange that he is accused of seeking to take over power while in reality the Presidential Council, that is accusing him, is indefinitely renewing its expired tenure and procrastinating and obstructing the elections, and no one can say that this is a tyrant who is not preparing for elections.

We judge people by their actions. Field Marshal Haftar fought terrorism and brought back civilian life in the areas he controls. The mayors of the municipalities and the people work as much as they can. I live in Benghazi in safety and security. Yes, there was a bomb at the Hawari cemetery placed by saboteurs, who were paid by the Presidential Council. As the investigations are now underway and will prove that the President is behind every sabotage that took place on the Al-Jufra roads and the roads to Sabha as well as the repeated attacks on the areas in the South. This sabotage is taking place in light of the demands of the body supervising the Al-Sarraj elections to pay the election commitments, but he is procrastinating to pay while he is paying the militias.

Did they investigate the bombing that took place in the headquarters of the High Elections Commission in Tripoli; has it been investigated? Who ruined the elections? We judge by actions rather than words. In view of actions, you find that those who want to spoil the political life are the flawed Presidential Council because Ali Al-Getrani of the Presidential Council, I salute him, and, Musa Al-Kuni, Omar Al-Aswad and Fathi Al-Majbiri knew the game and left the Presidential Council that wasted and spoiled all election opportunities.

#### **What is the content of the agreement in Abu Dhabi between Field Marshal Haftar and Fayez Al-Sarraj?**

The agreement was between two men without any other parties. I don't know its nature, but the main concept was developed for months, in Abu Dhabi, Palermo and Paris, focused on the unification of the military establishment through the six rounds of negotiations that took place in Cairo to achieve a secure military structure for all, with a quasi-veto for Misrata and Zintan, as a military institution that ensures that no is to be attacked. There was also a political track aiming at unifying political stakeholders, and ensuring that the military track is oversighted by the political authorities to ensure a civilian state is administered under a civilian supervision.

I cannot confirm anything about the Abu Dhabi agreement, and I know the international track of the negotiations. This idea, and the military's move, were unfortunately part of Al-Sarraj's arrangements. When he left and went to Tripoli, he told the mayors that there was no agreement or anything. Some people even wonder why, with the international community's support for Al-Sarraj and his Presidential Council throughout these years, it did not support Al-Sarraj when the army declared its advance towards the capital which took place on April 4. The answer is that he keeps breaking his promises.

#### **How do you evaluate the proceedings of the ongoing meetings in Cairo for members of the House of Representatives?**

It is a Libyan-Libyan meeting held in Cairo. Surprisingly, when a meeting takes place in Cairo, they say why this meeting is being held? They previously met in Rome and Paris. Egypt has a great role in Libya's independence and history, as it presented a framework that allowed meetings of Libyan officers and advisors in Cairo. The work that has been undertaken by these officers, on the issue of unifying the Libyan army, is excellent.

Cairo has brought together both the members of the Libyan House of Representatives and its boycotting members to create harmony in the Libyan Parliament, in order to reach a unified vision, and give them the opportunity to rebuild confidence, and establish communication channels. Egypt is trying to create harmony in order to restore channels of communications between all the MPs of the HoR, because this body, in spite of its weakness and its division, remains the last body elected by the Libyan people. This body came through the legitimacy of the ballot box; this legitimacy will protect the people's will and safeguard it against any attempt from Sadiq-al-Kabir to compromise it through financial pressure and temptation.

The meeting in Cairo was attended by a good number of participants. I believe that there will be meetings to reconvene the Parliament and restore its prestige, harmony and confidence of MPs in each other. This is what is going on in Cairo and according to what I know, they will issue a statement.

**Will the Egyptian efforts unify the different orientations between those members of the Parliament whether those who support or those who reject the army operation?**

I have not seen anything from Egypt but fairness and attempts to assimilate all. I even get upset with them and tell them why you don't say anything about this, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the UAE as fighters of terrorism. Anyone who fights terrorism in Libya should be seen as an ally. Anyone who supports terrorism in Libya will be considered an enemy.

I am personally optimistic whenever Libyans meet, especially the members of Parliament. The Parliament has to be consolidated to support the efforts exerted by the military establishment and the government as the legislative body that represents the Libyan people. As for the other issue, they want to reactivate the role played Parliament. Who does not want to get the Libyan Parliament out of its isolation? And who wants it to be weakened? No one wants to divide, disperse, or isolate the Parliament or become Eastern or Western? Only the enemies of Libya would like to see that happen.

Tripoli MPs are not the majority and there are issues of personal interest. Some members have their own personal convictions. The financial corruption side may play a big role in this issue. Some people pay money to create a rift and division in the Libyan Parliament, and there are those who want to make Eastern and Western bodies of legislation in order to divide the country.

**What is the usefulness of the Cairo Meetings outputs?**

The biggest benefit for a Libyan is to sit with another Libyan. When the MPs are reassured that there is no conspiracy and there games behind the curtains to assign anyone and there is no Egyptian attempts to seize the Parliament, they may come and we must encourage them to do so.

**Some say that the Cairo sessions are being held as a cover up for the army's failure to enter Tripoli?**

The army is not failing to enter Tripoli. Dougha and Walid Allafy are the promoters of that, the Muslim Brotherhood and the LIFG are the ones who come out through their television channels and are the ones who succeeded in brainwashing many people, including some MPs. Should the army be blamed for its being stationed on the outskirts of Tripoli and insist that the battles take place on the city cordon rather than in the center its residential neighborhoods? Is it now that the army is being humiliated because it has not entered the Martyr Square? We are sorry for the displaced families Khallet al-Furjan and Ain Zara, and these areas are not empty, and there will be countless injuries and deaths if the army enters the centre of the city.

Some people blame the army, for being late to reach the center of the city because it stood on the city outskirts to push these groups out, because it saved the city from a lot of criminals and saved the lives of many people, which is a success, not a failure.

**Among what I am telling you, Mohamed Al-Raid said that the Cairo meetings are contrary to the Libyan law which stipulates that no session of the Libyan House of Representative shall be held outside Libya?**

It was not a session but a consultative meeting. If Aguila Saleh said this is a Parliamentary session and inaugurated the session, then it would be a formal session. Abdul Rahman Al-Shater also shares this view of Mohamed Al-Raid.

**What is the reason for the absence of the (Interim Government) Prime Minister, and the HoR Speaker, Aguila Saleh, from the meetings in Cairo?**

I respect those who want to take a step back and want something to grow up, if it's a step back to allow more communication between his colleagues, what's the harm? The meeting in Cairo was a conciliation meeting for gathering the boycotters and the attending members.

**It is said that during the Cairo meetings, there will be an agreement on forming a national unity government, and that you are the one who will be the Prime Minister?**

The first media people who promoted this matter were Suleiman Dogha and Walid Allafy. We have colleagues in Libya Al-Ahrar, including those who used to work in our previous channel. The leaders of these media institutions are known as Muslim Brotherhood and some as LIFG. These are utter fabrications.

For example, today, according to (the propaganda of the pro-Islamists) February Channel the Cairo meetings were held to assign the premiership to Aref Nayed. This show you the ability of those media platforms such as the February Channels Al-Salam, and Al-Manara, their social media pages, their bloggers and their vloggers, their electronic armies, their propaganda machine, to claim yesterday that Aref Nayed had described the people of Tripoli as religious infidels. He said that we should go to Tripoli and establish a new religion. These fallacies were reiterated by media people like Suleiman Dogha and Walid Allafy; these were given the instructions to launch a smear campaign against Aref Nayed. Their videos and posts went viral in Facebook fabricating that Aref Nayed wanted to change the religion of the Libyans during his speech at the tribal gathering in Al-Abyar. I challenge anyone who heard my speech to find one word of what the Muslim Brotherhood found in it.

In my speech I spoke about true Libyan Islam, Islam of mercy, Islam as Muhammad's religion, and I compared the true Islam to what is called the bats of darkness' Islam. It is not Islam. It is cutting heads and killing people and terrorism. Our Prophet Muhammad's religion is the religion of Libya, the religion of love, mercy and respect. I hereby ask all Libyans to listen to my speech or read the transcript of my speech or its translation. I am a professor of doctrine and logic. I know very well the connotation and semantics of the language. I taught logic to my students at Uthman Pasha Al Saqazli Mosque in the Old Medina of Tripoli downtown area. I learned at the hands of the elders of Tripoli, including Mohamed Khalil Al-Qamati and Al-Saadawi.

How on earth could someone doubt the religiosity of his own people? The one who fabricated this blatant lie is the propaganda factory in Istanbul specifically, Suleiman Dogha and Walid Allafy. I have nothing personal against anyone except the plague of terrorism. Their thinking is based on

the ideology of Sayyid Qutb, the root of terrorism in contemporary times. This is a kind of ideology that I completely reject and disagree with from the intellectual point of view, rather than the political one. It is a kind of fascism that has negatively affected religious narrative.

**What about the issue of forming a national unity government? Have you been nominated as a candidate for the formation of a national government?**

The Parliament is the authority that nominates the government, gives confidence, and accepts the oath. The Parliament has nominated me in 2015 as a Prime Minister during the meetings that were held, under the auspices of the United Nations, in the Moroccan city of Skhirat. My name was among the candidates who were selected by the Libyan House of Representative. The ones who put forward this proposal to spoil the meetings in Cairo are the same aforementioned group, and they have directed their efforts and continue their attempts to try to prove that I am an agent. This is part of their smear campaign to damage my reputation, as they were talking in the past about negotiations with the High State Council and the Libyan House of Representative; now this is over because the High State Council has lined up with terrorism with its financial corruption and the pillaged resources of the Libyan people.

The Parliament can summon the Prime Minister and change its President. This is the work of the Parliament. Yes, it is the work of the Parliament to form the new government and make constitutional amendments for the establishment of a Libyan state. The Parliament, the body that nominates candidates for this post, has not announced anything in this regard so far.

I do not seek to form a government. But if the army entered Tripoli and secured the country without a militia holding a gun to my head, then we will assist our country to reach the election phase and form a government. I believe the government can be a technocratic cabinet, with ministers from all over Libya, comprising the wide spectrum of the country, but I have not been asked at this moment to form a government.

The only desire I have is to get Libya out of the dark tunnel and help it reach a fair municipal, Parliamentary, and presidential elections that will produce Libyan leaders chosen by the Libyan people free will, to the satisfaction of God and His Messenger. I firmly believe in the idea of urging the people to demand elections because elections will enable them to avoid the horrors of war, and the elections will eventually create a sustainable legitimacy. We believe in the democratic course and the remaining legitimacy in Libya is represented in the Libyan House of Representatives which should not be compromised and should be compatible and has a vision to get the country out of darkness.

As soon as they heard of the Cairo meetings and I came back to Benghazi to live here, the Muslim Brotherhood leadership got furious; Dogha came out and produced a series of lies, that Aref was brought forward by the United Arab Emirates and the Egyptians to lead the government. This is not true, but it is their trade: rumors and fabrications of lies. I support the idea of a national unity government. The Libyan House of Representatives must prepare for a robust, executive government, or support Abdulla al-Thinni to reshuffle his interim government and enter Tripoli, or prepare a replacing government. Since he is a patriotic man. Whoever is appointed as a Prime Minister must win the vote of confidence at the Parliament to be officially sworn in and enter Tripoli. Both the Presidential Council and the High State Council cannot continue in the political landscape because they were not included in the Libyan Political Agreement.



**What are the indications of your visit to Al-Abyar in response to a media speech that portrays the Libyan army as a regional army representing a certain area of Libya, what is the content of the delegation of the Wirfalla tribes' visit to eastern Libya?**

I encourage people to listen to the words that the Brotherhood distorted. Libya is one tribe, and Wirfalla tribe is one of the largest tribes in the Western region. They have attended the ceremony to present their condolences to one of the largest tribes in Cyrenaica, Al-Awagir tribe, and it is part of tribal and social interaction and cohesion. Tribes are united and interconnected. There are some who say a racist tribal elder gives the tribe bigger attention. Reconciliation and acquaintance are done by the tribe. A sense of unity, and a sense of East-West cohesion are carried out by the tribe. All tribes, the Red Crescent, the Libyan Scouts, civil society, women's and youth associations are the most important civil movements, but the tribe is part of the national unity and the social fabric of Libya.

Anyone who thinks he can divide the Libyans is delusional: the Libyans are one social fabric. What happens in Murzuq hurts every Libyan, and whoever is killed from the cities of Tajoura or Misrata makes other Libyans feel sad. Libyans are brothers and cousins tied by bonds of blood and marriage. There are some parasites that entered Libya's which is in their favor to disperse the Libyans; the Libyan army standing now on the outskirts of Tripoli is consisted of conscripts from many different tribes and cities and ethnicities and the Libyan army is one of the most important unionist institutions.

I am really astonished at any speech in which there is a denigration or an undertone or a tint of superiority because the Libyan people are equal and we are all Libyans provided that you are a citizen, not a member of an international organization or a terrorist group or loyal to Al-Baghdadi, but rather a Libyan citizen ruled by law, cohesion, social fabric and Libya.

**How do you understand the contradiction of Fayeze Al-Sarraj when he asserts that his forces defeated ISIS in Sirte while there are extremist fighters fighting the army under the Presidential flag?**

I cannot understand this paradox, and it is the reason for my resignation from my position as Libya's Ambassador to the UAE when I saw the Minister of Defense visit Al-Sarraj and photograph with Al-Qaeda organization. I told Sarraj that this is not right. I cannot represent a government that its officials take pictures and selfies with Al-Qaeda and the Benghazi Defense Brigades trying to take over the Oil Crescent region. The Benghazi Defense Brigades tried nine times to reenter Benghazi with the support of Al-Sarraj government. We are still waiting for the results of the Presidential investigation into the Brak-al-Shatti massacre. It seems we are waiting for Godot. Strangely enough, both Omeish and Muntasser in Washington DC accuse the army of war crimes. The Brak al-Shatti massacre was a war crime which took place with the government's permission with documented papers.

**What is your explanation for the recent video footage released by ISIS of the four-wheel vehicles that were captured by the Southern Protection Force, led by Ali Kanna, which reports to Fayeze Al-Sarraj?**

The Muslim Brotherhood would do anything in their power to continue to exert their control over the Central Bank and the capital. Libya is the only country with Al-Qaeda and ISIS presence, because those who pay them are one party, and war crimes are committed by those who pay these groups. When the army enters Tripoli, it enters it not to fight Libyans, but to fight the terrorist monsters that do not wish to let go of the Central Bank.

**As we speak now, there are TV channels that broadcasted breaking news about you support a decisive military victory and that you reject a ceasefire.**

Of course, there are those who say that Aref Nayef promotes war. What do you expect from the same people who pillaged the resources of the country and caused the ongoing ordeals and disasters suffered by our people. They made the elderly women stand in long queues under the scorching sun in front of the banks. I trust the people's awareness, and I refrain from commenting on the media content of both the Libya Al-Ahrar and February TV channels.

**How do you view the two initiatives put forward by Fayed Al-Sarraj and Field Marshal Haftar, which initiative is closer to being a real political plan?**

The events are accelerating. After the last speech of Fayed Al-Sarraj and his initiative, he destroyed all the channels of communication and self-destructed himself. As for what Field Marshal Haftar proposed in a joint interview with Al Marsad and the Libyan Address newspapers, he provided a political roadmap that resonated internationally and was welcomed in the international press. Then we read the interviews made by both the Interim Government prime minister, Abdulla al-Thinni, and Chancellor Aguila Saleh, the Speaker of the Libyan House of Representatives. Everyone is saying that the Skhirat political agreement is finished now. The entry of the Libyan National Army in Tripoli will restore power and mandate to the Constitutional Declaration. The Parliament will restore its powers and its headquarters shall be in the city of Benghazi, and becomes the legislative body of the country with a national unity government that is not based on quotas, but on technocratic competency. It will be made up of all of Libyan components. The established government's debut will focus initially on providing urgent services and preparing for Parliamentary and municipal elections. The issue of handing over and storing weapons is a technical issue that the United Nations can help with, and I think this will be speeded up.

**How can these negotiations take place in the light of the existence of all these in the picture?**

Very easy. If Misrata announces a negotiating team and announces that it wants to negotiate and that it will withdraw its men from the frontlines in Tripoli, and return to the city of Misrata, and arranges for safe handover to the Libyan Army, then what is the problem?

**May it be seen as surrender by the army?**

Why? Look at the benefits, it will save Misrata, Tripoli, the Libyan youth and the army. What is the problem? Why is there this idea of defeat? It is a kind of national arrangement, that even the Libyan Army, when it negotiates with Misrata, would not see it as a defeat for it or even for the youth of the regions.

**If we assume that this happens and the channels for negotiation and communication were open, what will the fate of people like Al-Sarraj, Bashagha, and others be?**

It will be negotiated. It is true that there is a legal and criminal prosecution, and there is a general amnesty. But when you are besieged in Abu Sitta, for example, you give up. The longer the Libyan Army's progress continues, the chances for negotiations decrease.

**How do you see external attitudes towards internal conditions, especially the battle of Tripoli?**

The world is bored, not only the Libyan people, from the political discourse and the fight. The citizens

want the provision of services. We have not reached a result for 9 years, knowing that most countries of the world want a military solution, if they didn't want it they would have issued a UN Security Council resolution to stop it.

**Why did they not support the establishment of the state in 2014?**

What has gone is dead. What I see is that the world wants the military resolution to take place quickly; the Libyan army is capable of resolving the crisis.

**There has been systematic restrictions by the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Presidential Council in the western region specifically in cities that support the General Command and the military operations that are being carried out by the Libyan Army. A lot of information has come out from these cities complaining of essential services being cut off and also the threat issued by Juwaili about Benina Airport. What is your comment?**

I am surprised that there are people who are guilty of war crimes against humanity, continue to increase the number of their crimes. As the GNA is responsible for Gharyan, therefore they are responsible for the murder or for the wounded. When a civilian airport is threatened and you have no proof that a bullet came out of it, you are violating the Montreal Convention on the protection of civil infrastructure. It constitutes a terrorist act, and when you shut the fuel on Tarhouna, Bani Walid and Batin al-Jabal, and close the entire South, you are practicing collective punishment and economic pressure on civilians and it is a crime against humanity!

They think that people do not document. Personally, I have a team of lawyers documenting everything that is happening and even who is buried in Gharyan. The papers are there, and the coroner revealed it before the burial, so their families have rights before the law.

**Is there no truth to what Juwaili said about the airport in Bani Walid? That it is being used for some kind of purpose?**

The airport was used in Bani Walid for the wounded when the road-blocking gangs began to push down and take down the wounded from ambulances until they died on the roadside. The army contacted them and brought airplanes to help the wounded and injured, and that is what Bani Walid airport was used for.

**You replied to this with a message, and some considered it as a threat to Juwaili?**

What do I have to threaten? I am a civilian, and I am not a military man to be able to threaten him. But I wrote to Ghassan Salamé. The response that came from the Wirfalla is something I am proud of, and what Juwaili did is frankly foolish.

**What if the Juwaili carried out his threat to the airport?**

The control of the airspace is with the Libyan National Army's Air Force. I am not threatening him with the Army but the Army said any threats will be dealt with. Our dear Zintani brothers are supposed to tell Juwaili whether he has vested interest, or is he being paid by Al-Sarraj, or does he want a promotion, or gifts and prizes, but that it should not damage the reputation of the whole tribe that he belongs to.

**On the other hand, it is reported that after the militias took control of Gharyan, the Libyan Army's supply lines were cut and Bani Walid became the Army's new supply line south of Tripoli. Is this what prompted Juwaili to say what he said? Is this the same reason given by the LNA Air Force and Army about Mitiga?**

The Air Force struck a military base and its military aircrafts and did not threaten the civilian part of the airport. The matter is different and the citizens filmed the Turkish drones as they took off and bombarded Qasr Bin Ghashir and Tarhuna and they congratulated the Libyan army for bombing the drones.

**The positions of Sanalla raise a lot of controversy particularly his statements about the militarization of some of the oil facilities and installations. How do you understand his position?**

Sanalla disappointed everyone. We had commended Sanalla through the Libya's Channel; we described him as a technocrat, but to everybody's dismay the NOC airliner is used sometimes for military purposes. Unfortunately, he is involved now in military negotiations. Everything is documented in a world that has turned into a small village thanks to technology. We have all the dossiers and documents of the companies they are currently negotiating with for air defense weaponry through NOC funds. All these documents shall be submitted to the judiciary at the appropriate time. Everyone will have to answer all the legal questions before the Libyan courts and fair justice according to Libyan law; not the United Nations law. God alone knows whether Sanalla is a closet member of the Muslim Brotherhood or he has actually changed into a different person, or the current events changed him, but certainly, he is not the Sanalla we knew.

**What was mentioned by the isolated Mufti Sadiq Al-Ghariani about you recently, and what is your comment on it?**

The man is old and I think that even his mental abilities sound anymore, so he may not be blamed. As he has already declared that I will be in the hellfire and that I cannot repent and the reward for the people who I have accused will take all my good deeds, therefore legally speaking his words are irresponsible and cannot be taken seriously.

**The issue of incitement to cut water in Tripoli, how do you respond to that accusation?**

In 2011, when water was cut off from Tripoli, I negotiated with the Greeks and the Italians and brought ships full of water. This water was distributed to people of Tripoli at the mosques. Is it reasonable for anyone to cut water and electricity? This is one of the biggest sins religiously, legally and ethically. Someone you hosted here came to the channel and made wrong statements means that the channel is held accountable for what the guest said, as evidence that I did not talk about such a thing.

**Why are you specifically the one being targetted in these systematic campaigns?**

In April 2011, I warned in a well-known and documented meeting the threat these people posed to the Libyan situation, namely the Muslim Brotherhood and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), and I have been warning against their danger for years. This is normal. My stance has always been clear. I declared my hostility to these people, not because of their person, but because of their hateful and fascist ideas. There is no problem and the army will settle this matter. The civil state will be established because Libya can be the best country, not only among Arab countries but also among European ones.

**After the liberation of Tripoli, will Aref Nayed be a presidential or governmental candidate?**

If the Libyan House of Representatives asked me and told me that the country needs my services, I would comply with their request. If I were asked to be a Prime Minister, I would submit my programme to the Parliament. I have the First 100 Day Programme; complete plans for running the country; what we will do, how, and the mechanisms of action. If my programme is accepted, then why not? It is not wrong to serve your country. I announced my candidacy even before there were elections. I support the civil state and its establishment and the army that secures and protects the civil state.

I hope that God will help our country out of this dark phase. May God preserve Tripoli. I pray to God to keep its people safe and God willing it will be a peaceful entry. I call on the youth of the capital to show their solidarity with the Libyan National Army so that this ordeal ends with the least amount of human loss.