**Subject:** Libya -- Flash –  Local perception of public backing by Algerian leadership for GNU Prime Minister Dbeiba and his plans to prioritize parliamentary elections

**FACTS**

* President Tebboune yesterday publicly confirmed the GNU’s narrative of continuous Algerian support for PM Dbeiba’s government including parliamentary elections as a priority. In a local TV interview, he underlined that for Algeria, the GNU remains the only Libyan government enjoying international legitimacy, although the Libyan parliament appointed an alternative government, which resulted in differences in the previously unified position of Arab countries on Libya.
* Any solution to the Libyan crisis would therefore necessitate a popular legislative vote to re-establish legitimacy for any subsequent government, since the current Parliament’s representation of the people had, at the current stage, become “relative”. President Tebboune further confirmed that Algeria is currently looking  into a GNU request to organize an international conference on that matter.
* At the same time, Algeria’s ChoD Chengriha instructed Algerian forces deployed along the joint border with Libya to increase their level of attention towards possible security related challenges.
* Following GNU PM Dbeiba’s visit to Algiers for consultations last Monday, Libya’s public debate repeatedly touched upon potential scenarios of active Algerian support for the GNU against a potential imminent take-over of Libya’s capital by PM Bashaga’s parallel GNS.
* In the debate, the motivation of Algeria’s leadership was explained as an attempt to draw a red line against moves by foreign and other regional powers (particularly Egypt) to achieve hegemonic influence over Libya, in light of recent events such as the inception of GNS cabinet sessions on Libyan soil, as well as the blockade of over 50% of Libya’s oil production by General Haftar’s LNA, interpreted as preparing a final push to remove GNU PM Dbeiba from office.
* In order to underscore the importance of the above “red line scenario”, some media suggested that Algeria might assist the GNU in forcibly reopening the blocked oil facilities, in addition to various other rumors about activities suggesting a substantial increase in Algerian involvement in Libya’s economical, security and political affairs. To date, those rumors did NOT gain further traction in Libya.
* Commenting on the implications of above developments, Algerian Ambassador to Libya and previous President of Parliament, Slimane Chenine, told EUDEL today that the bottom line of Algeria’s position vis-à-vis Libya remains its unwavering strong support for the efforts of the international community including UN SASG Williams, in order to steer Libya’s political class towards general elections as the only way out of the current crisis and towards stability. He further told EUDEL that, following the broadcast of President Tebboune’s above interview, he received various calls from local Arab ambassadors (including UAE) commending Algeria’s stand in support of international  legitimacy, which to date only the GNU would continue to enjoy.
* Ambassador Chenine also corroborated that, following PM Dbeiba’s visit  to Algiers on Monday, the country’s government had basically not seen any need to publicly confirm or deny the GNU’s narrative of full Algerian support for the GNU. However, President Tebboune’s recent comments were then made in response to questions by local Algerian media, and would simply express the country’s strong conviction that any change in Libya’s executive without legislative elections were a recipe for perpetuating the country’s crisis and further undermine its stability.
* The statement by ChoD Chengriha regarding increased attention to security related challenges emanating  from Libya was described by Ambassador Chenine as strictly non-operational and limited  to standard instructions routinely given to all of Algeria’s armed forces present in the different border regions of the country. Thus, according to the Ambassador, allegedly a clear case of media hype.

**COMMENTS/ASSESSMENT**

* The red line scenario promoted by local and regional media is plausible. It is utterly in line with the history of the Libyan crisis. Algeria’s position has always been to, if necessary, actively limit Egyptian influence in Libya as a matter of national security. The same scenario was most prominently invoked by Algiers during General Haftar’s major LNA assault on Tripoli (2019/2020).
* However, all rumours on potential action to  enforce such red lines remain unconfirmed media speculation, most likely motivated by political interests of Libyan stakeholders and/or regional and international actors.
* The Egyptian tendency to deny any potential Algerian role in jointly facilitating a political solution for Libya together with the international community could further reduce the margins for compromise on all sides and thus prove counterproductive in the mid-term.
* Beyond the motivation to keep foreign influence in Libya to a minimum level, out of its own national interests, Algeria potentially shares important common denominators with the international community, Europe, and Libya’s neighbours, including Egypt, with a view to re-establishing stability and government control over Libya’s vast territory and porous borders. Regarding Libyan domestic politics and the system of government (constitutional track: parliamentary vs. presidential), Algiers is undoubtedly pursuing a long-term strategy of containing the clout of extremist Islamist elements.
* The recent appointment of previous President of Parliament, Slimane Chenine, as Algeria’s Ambassador to Libya is conducive to further developing Algier’s contacts with Tripolitanian actors, as Ambassador Chenine was reportedly the country’s first poIitician with Islamist leanings to previously become President of Algeria’s Parliament.

*Signed-off: José Antonio SABADELL, HoD*