



(FETHI BELAID - ARCHIVES AFP)

Tunisia's President, Beji Caid Essebsi, first elected in 2014 following the country's Arab Spring uprising, has died in hospital aged 92 following health complications. A warplane belonging to the forces of Khalifa Haftar made an emergency landing in Tunisia, where the pilot was detained by the authorities.

In Algeria, there have been further developments in the army composition, with new dismissals of generals from their positions. IS has claimed responsibility for the recent suicide bombing in North Sinai in Egypt. Mauritania has begun a new wave of agreements with European partners, and the status of detainees from across Morocco's political spectrum has been prominent there.

Warplane from Haftar's Forces Makes Emergency Landing in Tunisia

19/07/2019-25/07/2019

Algeria

Following months of political unease, there has been further discord in the Algerian army as three generals were dismissed from their duties, while another two were asked to retire early (*Mondafrique*)¹. Meanwhile, in the tense, yet strategically important border region between Algeria and Libya, the military has made new appointments to key positions in the desert region (*Mondafrique*)².

Elsewhere, opposition parties set conditions for their participation in political dialogue proposed by the current authorities, including the release of political detainees and the removal of the “system” in power (*Le Monde*)³.

Egypt

The terror group Islamic State (IS) has claimed responsibility for the recent suicide bombing that killed two people in North Sinai province (*The Arab Weekly*)⁴. Further on this, an Egyptian court sentenced 11 individuals to life in prison on charges of joining IS in Syria and Iraq (*The Washington Post*)⁵. Amnesty International has also released new criticism of the Egyptian penal system, claiming widespread use of arbitrary and excessive overnight probation methods against political activists (*Amnesty International*)⁶.

In other news, Egypt's minister for expatriates' affairs, Nabila Makram, has downplayed the significance of comments she made in a meeting with Egyptian expatriates in Toronto, Canada about critics of the Egyptian State abroad, claiming her words were “manipulated” (*BBC*)⁷. The Minister said in the video that those critics would be “cut”.

Libya

A warplane belonging to the forces of Khalifa Haftar fighting the internationally recognized Tripoli government made an emergency landing in Tunisia where the pilot was detained (*Reuters*)⁸. Representatives of Haftar’s forces have said that they are in negotiations with Tunisian authorities for the pilot’s release.

¹ <https://mondafrique.com/armee-algerienne-lepuration-continue/>

² <https://mondafrique.com/la-crise-libyenne-inquiete-larmee-algerienne/>

³ https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/07/22/algerie-l-opposition-pose-des-conditions-au-dialogue-propose-par-le-pouvoir_5492082_3212.html

⁴ <https://the arabweekly.com/isis-claims-suicide-bombing-killed-2-egypts-sinai>

⁵ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypt-hands-out-11-life-sentences-for-joining-islamic-state/2019/07/22/f9fee60e-ac84-11e9-9411-a608f9d0c2d3_story.html?utm_term=.3ae0bde18796

⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/07/egypt-peaceful-activists-among-hundreds-subjected-to-arbitrary-overnight-probation-measures/>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-49101954>

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-tunisia/eastern-libyan-forces-warplane-makes-emergency-landing-in-tunisia-pilot-held-lna-idUSKCN1UH13I>

Meanwhile, the UN-backed government announced that it had released former Prime Minister al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmoudi for health reasons (*Asharq al-Awsat*)⁹. Al-Mahmoudi served as Prime Minister during the final five years of Muammar Gaddafi's rule. Relating to this, Lebanon has issued arrest warrants for Gaddafi's son, Saif Islam Gaddafi, and former spy chief, Abdullah Sanussi, for involvement in the disappearance of a prominent Shia cleric Moussa al-Sadr (*The Libya Observer*)¹⁰.

Libya's coast guard said it intercepted around three dozen Europe-bound migrants off its Mediterranean coast and took them to a detention center, that center being the one that was bombed earlier this month (*Associated Press*)¹¹.

Mauritania

Negotiations have begun between Mauritania and the European Union for the renewal of the current fisheries agreement (*Sahara Medias*)¹². Elsewhere, French President Emmanuel Macron expressed his country's "firm commitment" alongside his new Mauritanian counterpart, President-elect Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, in the security and economic challenges of the Sahel region (*C.R.I.D.E.M.*)¹³.

Regarding Ghazouani and regional actors, there have been reports that the Polisario is aiming to attend his investiture (*Le360*)¹⁴. Additionally, Mauritania reportedly expelled about 15 Malian nationals in recent days, reinforcing the difficult political conditions the neighboring states are facing (*Agence de Presse Africaine*)¹⁵.

Morocco

Lawyer Mohamed Messaoudi, a member of the defence team of a Hirak detainee, was also arrested and detained due to a court ruling sentencing him to one year in closed prison (*Yabiladi*)¹⁶. In related news, about sixty people, including family members of three Sahrawi bloggers kidnapped in June 2019 by the Polisario, began a protest in front of the headquarters of the Polisario's "Ministry of Justice" in the Saharawi camps at Rabouni, Algeria (*Le360*)¹⁷.

Morocco's push towards greater international partnerships has continued as a Chinese delegation visited Morocco to discuss strengthening business ties this week (*Morocco World News*)¹⁸. Nearby Spain also approved a €30 million outlay to fund Morocco's efforts at curbing irregular immigration into Europe (*El Pais*)¹⁹.

⁹ <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1822336/sarraj-govt-releases-ex-libya-pm-jail-health-reasons>

¹⁰ <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/lebanon-issues-arrest-warrants-gaddafi-son-and-spy-chief>

¹¹ <https://www.apnews.com/fcd1887b36f34444a7cfd26aa087c060>

¹² <https://www.sahamedias.net/fr/mauritanie-ue-debut-des-negociations-pour-le-renouvellement-de-laccord-de-peche/>

¹³ http://www.cridem.org/C_Info.php?article=725696

¹⁴ <http://fr.le360.ma/politique/mauritanie-le-polisario-tente-de-sinviter-a-linvestiture-de-ould-ghazouani-194971>

¹⁵ <http://apanews.net/fr/news/une-quinzaine-de-maliens-expulses-de-mauritanie/>

¹⁶ <https://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/81453/maroc-l-avocat-d-el-mahdaoui-detenus.html>

¹⁷ <http://fr.le360.ma/politique/tindouf-sit-in-des-familles-des-trois-blogueurs-sahraouis-enleves-par-le-polisario-194987>

¹⁸ <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2019/07/279070/chinese-delegation-morocco-business-ties/>

¹⁹ https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/07/19/inenglish/1563521682_999175.html

Tunisia

President Beji Caid Essebsi died in hospital following months of health complications aged 92 (*BFM TV*)²⁰. Essebsi was elected President in 2014 and was the first Tunisian President following the Arab Spring uprising. Due to the death of the President, the electoral commission will be forced to change the date of the presidential election, as announced by Nabil Baffoun, President of the Independent Higher Court of Elections (*Huffpost Maghreb*)²¹. Until new elections occur, the President of the Parliament, Mohamed Ennaceur, will become the interim President (*RTBF*)²².

However, before his death Essebsi did not ratify the amendments to the electoral law proposed by the head of government, leaving the status of said amendments in doubt (*Jeune Afrique*)²³.

About:

This is a weekly, non-exhaustive snapshot of regional, and international news regarding the politics of the North African region. Selections demonstrate varying perspectives and opinions from French, Arabic and English media sources. Taking such an approach enables regional trends to be observed and documented so they may be used and applied in our detailed research projects.

²⁰ <https://www.bfmtv.com/international/tunisie-le-president-beji-caid-essebsi-est-mort-1721225.html>

²¹ https://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/entry/le-deces-de-beji-caid-essebsi-obligera-lisie-a-changer-la-date-de-lelection-presidentielle-annonce-le-president-de-lisie_mg_5d3995e7e4b004b6adbbbbc4?ncid=fcbklnkfrhpmg00000006&fbclid=IwAR3zwLrD2aQRzos9FKJTzjNs5zE9smX-sNx-GjBNZga4AWf0SBIVS8LZz4

²² https://www.rtbef.be/info/monde/detail_tunisie-le-president-du-parlement-va-assurer-l-interim-apres-le-deces-d-essebsi?id=10279042

²³ <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/806798/politique/tunisie-beji-caid-essebsi-na-pas-ratifie-le-code-electoral-le-debat-sur-son-incapacite-relance/>

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The BIC-RHR is a research organization based in the capital of Europe that works to produce valuable insights into policy debates and political actions taking place in the MENA region and its effects on individuals.

We base our activities in three spheres of work: Social Outreach, Insights and Democratic Development. Combined, they provide a global perspective with actions focused on influencing the individual.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The North Africa Team

Ben Lowings

May Barth

Yasmine Akrimi



Avenue Louise, 89 - 1050 Brussels - Belgium

Tel: +32 02 725 84 66

www.bic-rhr.com

info@bic-rhr.com

