

Keeping Turkey-EU ties alive 'hugely important for all sides,' says ambassador

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ANKARA: Despite several disputes in Turkey-EU relations last year, including tensions in the East Mediterranean and the migrant crisis, both sides are continuing their cooperation in various spheres.

This work ranges from the demining of vast territories along the Iranian border, opening hundreds of schools for Syrian refugees, and developing cooperation to combat climate change together.

On Sept. 28, the EU and the UN Development Programme launched a 18.6 million euros (\$21.5 million) project to clear 83,000 landmines along the country's eastern border with Iran by Jan. 2023 in partnership with Turkish authorities.

The latest demining operation, which began on Tuesday, is considered the largest ever undertaken by the UN.

Ambassador Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut, who heads the EU delegation to Turkey, said the project was helping the country fulfill its commitments to the Ottawa Convention, which it has been a party to since 2004 and bans the use of anti-personnel landmines.

"The EU funding helps to improve the working conditions of Turkey's border management authorities," he told Arab News. "Anti-personnel mines are very dangerous, indiscriminately killing animals, civilians including many children, and it does not constitute anymore and anyway a modern border management system."

Turkey currently hosts about 4 million refugees. Afghans, the second-largest refugee community in Turkey after Syrians, are mostly arriving through the Iranian border.

In terms of EU-Turkey relations, accession negotiations are almost frozen although EU leaders earlier this year said the bloc was ready to support a concrete and positive agenda with Turkey, especially in the areas of economic cooperation and migration.

On the other hand, the European Parliament is also discussing a report recommending an end to the Customs Union and replacing it with a free trade agreement. For many, giving up the Customs Union would also mean giving up the accession process and that would create political problems, especially under conditions where Ankara supports the modernization of the Customs Union to cover sectors such as services, tourism, business and e-commerce.

"The EU and Turkey, since the beginning of this year, are working toward the implementation of a positive agenda. In several of its decisions, the European Council has mentioned different points that it wishes to make progress on, such as sustained cooperation on migration issues and

cooperation in Afghanistan as well as the resumption of high-level dialogue," the ambassador said.

As a first step, on Sept. 16, the European Commission's executive vice president for the European Green Deal, Frans Timmermans, and the Turkish minister of environment and urbanization, Murat Kurum, met in Brussels for a high-level dialogue on climate.

Brussels also welcomed Turkey's recent decision to ratify the Paris Agreement before the climate change summit in Glasgow next month.

As another avenue for high-level dialogue, the EU commissioner for home affairs, Ylva Johansson, will visit Turkey mid-October to launch the Turkey-EU High-Level Dialogue Mechanism on migration management including visa liberalization issues.

The third high-level dialogue before the end of the year will be about cooperation on health issues, including the alignment of digital vaccination certificates.

Turkey's efforts to integrate the Syrian refugee population have been welcomed by Brussels, which has contributed to several projects.

Young Turkish and Syrian students, sitting next to each other, playing together and learning the same curriculum, as well as young Syrian university students studying law at Turkish universities, were all very positive experiences and these people would be always grateful to Turkey for all they had learned as part of the national education system, the EU ambassador said. "Whatever you are able to teach to the young generation now will be the basis of their future lives. They will be able to contribute to society, they will be able to earn their own lives, pay taxes in whatever country they will be. To give these people a perspective, they should be educated. It is for their personal benefit and the benefit of society. It is the best prevention strategy for not being a lost generation," Meyer-Landrut said.

EU ambassadors approved on Wednesday 149.6 million euros (\$173.5 million) as additional funding for Syrian refugees in Turkey. The support will extend the EU's monthly cash assistance to the refugees.

However, no progress has been made so far on the update of the migration deal signed with Turkey in 2016.

And, despite an on-off peace process over recent years, Cyprus still remains a sticking point for Turkey-EU relations, especially after the divided island became an EU member in 2004.

Despite several diplomatic efforts by the UN, no comprehensive settlement has been reached so far in the decades-long dispute.

"The UN is the roof organization under which Cyprus talks need to take place. The UN resolutions set the framework and the UN is the actor. The EU will support the efforts of the UN and every effort of the parties to negotiate a solution," Meyer-Landrut said.

The EU supports a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation in Cyprus, while Turkey claims the time has come for talks between two states, not two communities. Turkey expects the incoming German government – which still remains a driving force in the EU – to support and contribute to the betterment of Ankara's ties with Brussels, similar to outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel's rule. Turkey's EU ties predate an association agreement that it signed with the EU's predecessor, the European Economic Community, in 1964. The country was granted the status of a candidate country in 1999 and started accession negotiations in 2005.



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Turkey's Erdogan says mulling further defense industry steps with Russia – report 'Ancestor' of Mediterranean mosaics discovered in Turkey

[Qatar women ready to contest polls described as 'extremely positive step'](#)

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Sat, 2021-10-02 00:22

DOHA: Qatari women are standing in the country's first legislative election Saturday, but in far lower numbers than men.

Of the 284 hopefuls running for the 30 available council seats, 28 are women. The remaining 15 seats will be appointed by the emir.

"It's an extremely positive step that women are part of this process," said

Elham Fakhro, senior Gulf analyst at the International Crisis Group.

"However, I think we do have to limit our expectations (of their influence) ... as there are only 28 women running for positions – it really shouldn't be surprising."

One candidate, Leena Al-Dafa, said her priorities if elected would be promoting education for women, supporting female teachers and the issue of citizenship for the children of Qatari women.

Qatari citizenship can currently only be inherited by children from their fathers, meaning the children of a Qatari woman who marries someone of another nationality will not be citizens.

This affects the children's ability to benefit from lavish grants, land allocations and other state support.

"The most important issues for me are (citizenship of) children of Qatari women and documents. This is the most important issue that I adopted from the heart," Dafa said ahead of a campaign event.

Dafa, an education official who is running in Qatar's 17th district against two women and seven men, said competence was more important than gender.

"I do not see it as a competition between me and the men because I see the men as complementary to the legislative process.

"And we are talking about competencies, not gender," she added, before addressing a small crowd of women voters at Qatar's Education City golf club. Fakhro suggested the emir could directly appoint women "to improve the gender balance" if none or few are elected – similar to what happened in Bahrain's legislative election.

Representation of women in Qatar is stronger than in its Gulf neighbors with the Health Ministry led by a woman and the Foreign Ministry represented by a spokeswoman.

Women also hold prominent roles in the World Cup organizing committee as well as philanthropy and the arts, medicine, law and business.

The constitution of Qatar provides for "equal opportunities for all citizens."

Men outnumber women in Qatar by 2.6 to one, according to the latest official data, largely because of the disproportionate number of migrant workers in Qatar who are men.

Qatari officials have previously insisted "gender equality and female empowerment" are central to the Gulf state's "success and vision."

Fakhro, the analyst, said women running in Gulf elections was an important signal "that these countries are ready to advance women and do want them to be part of public life."

"(They can) advance women's rights and to ensure legislative equality in areas of family law and divorce – and across the board," she said.

Human Rights Watch previously acknowledged that Qatari women had "broken barriers and achieved significant progress," pointing to the number of female graduates, which outstrips males, and the high per capita number of female doctors and lawyers.



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Red carpet, prayers and kisses as Qataris go to the polls
Saudi FM meets Colombian, Qatari counterparts

[UN extends mission to Libya, but only until January](#)

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Sat, 2021-10-02 00:21

NEW YORK: The UN Security Council has unanimously adopted a resolution extending its political mission in Libya – but only until Jan. 31, shortly after the country is to stage its presidential election, after a fierce struggle between Britain and Russia over the text.

The 15-member Council had been on track to extend the mission in mid-September for a year, key in the run-up to elections on Dec. 24, which are intended to turn the page on a decade of war.

But a dispute erupted between Britain and Russia, both of which have veto-wielding power on the Council.

Moscow rejected the language in a resolution drafted by London that would have called for the withdrawal of foreign troops and mercenaries from Libya, as well as a clause on the future of the UN envoy to Libya.

FASTFACT

An interim administration was established in March this year to prepare for presidential and parliamentary polls on Dec. 24.

Mired in the standoff, the Security Council was forced to technically extend the mission's mandate by 15 days, until Sept. 30, to give more time for negotiations between Moscow and London – but the talks were in vain. On Wednesday, Moscow once again threatened to veto the resolution as amended. And then Russia pushed the issue even further by putting forth its own text in a rare act of defiance.

After an emergency meeting on Thursday between the five permanent members of the Security Council – Britain, China, France, Russia and the US – they adopted an abbreviated resolution, extending the mission until January 31, 2022.

Western and African members of the Council deplored the outcome on Thursday. The US called it “unfortunate,” while Kenya called for an African to lead the process.

Libya was gripped by violence and political turmoil in the aftermath of the 2011 NATO-backed uprising that ousted dictator Muammar Qaddafi.



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Wrangling over UN mission in Libya continues in Security Council Officials:
Libyan forces round up 500 migrants in crackdown

[How Saudi Arabia, UAE can turn decarbonization strengths to their advantage](#)

Fri, 2021-10-01 23:07

DUBAI: As Arab Gulf states step up action toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the lead-up to the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow in November, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have emerged as regional leaders in the shift to renewables and decarbonizing the energy sector.

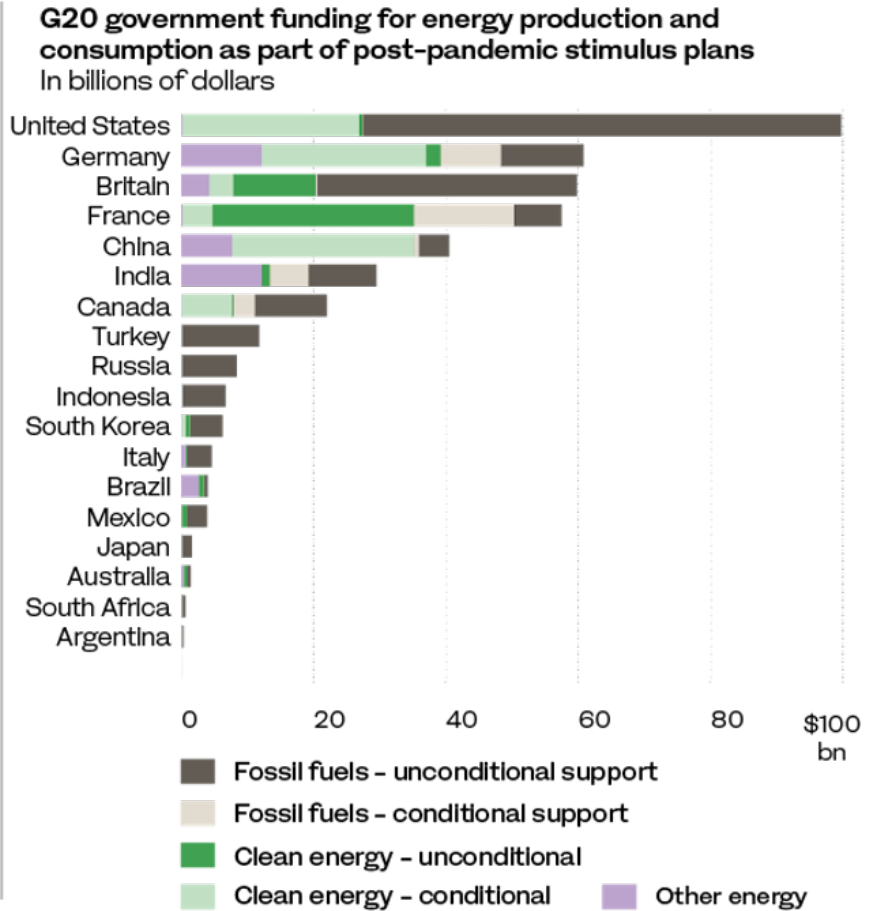
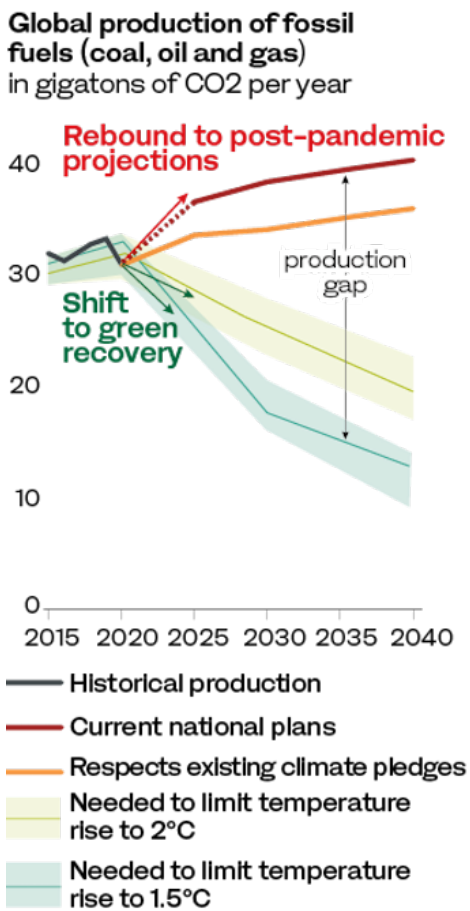
A recent report by the Atlantic Council, a US think tank, highlights steps taken by both countries, while also offering a view of the unique challenges each faces in the global energy transition.

The report comes as climate scientists urge nations to drastically cut their carbon emissions and to make the transition away from fossil fuels toward clean renewable energy in an effort to prevent global temperatures rising any further.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have accelerated action toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including the adoption of renewables and methods to remove carbon from the atmosphere, as well as addressing their economic reliance on the export of hydrocarbon products.

FOSSIL FUEL PRODUCTION ON TRACK TO BREAK CLIMATE PLEDGES

World set to produce 120% more fossil fuels by 2030 than is consistent with the aim of limiting warming to 1.5°C



Source: productiongap.org/2020 report (SEI, IISD, ODI, E3G, UNEP)

ARAB NEWS

According to the Atlantic Council report published last month, the amount of global energy demand met by traditional renewable energy sources, including wind, solar, geothermal, tidal and hydro, has risen by more than 70 percent in absolute terms since 2000.

But with rapid population growth and accelerating economic activity, the report warns there will likely be a lag in the rate of penetration of new technologies designed to offset further emissions.

The report, titled “The Energy Transition in the Arab Gulf: From Vision to Reality,” and written by Jean-Francois Seznec and Samer Mosis, said that there is huge potential for solar energy in the Gulf region.

Indeed, both Saudi Arabia and the UAE rank among the top 15 countries worldwide in terms of practical photovoltaic power potential. Studies have shown that annual average solar radiation in the GCC countries is equal to 1.1 barrels of oil equivalent per square meter.

The report’s authors praise the Kingdom’s adoption of the circular carbon economy platform, or CCE, which lends an overarching strategy to Saudi Arabia’s approach to the energy transition.



Circular agricultural fields are seen in this aerial view of Saudi Arabia's desert near the oil-rich area of Khouris, 160 kms east of the capital Riyadh,

on June 23, 2008. (AFP/File Photo)

They recommend the creation of a unified vision for decarbonization and, for good measure, centralized and transparent planning in the shift to cleaner energy and economic activity.

CCE is a closed-loop energy strategy designed to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of carbon products and even their removal in an effort to eliminate harmful pollutants from the atmosphere.

Energy ministers from the G20 group of leading economies endorsed Saudi Arabia's CCE approach to managing greenhouse gas emissions last year when the Kingdom held the G20 presidency.

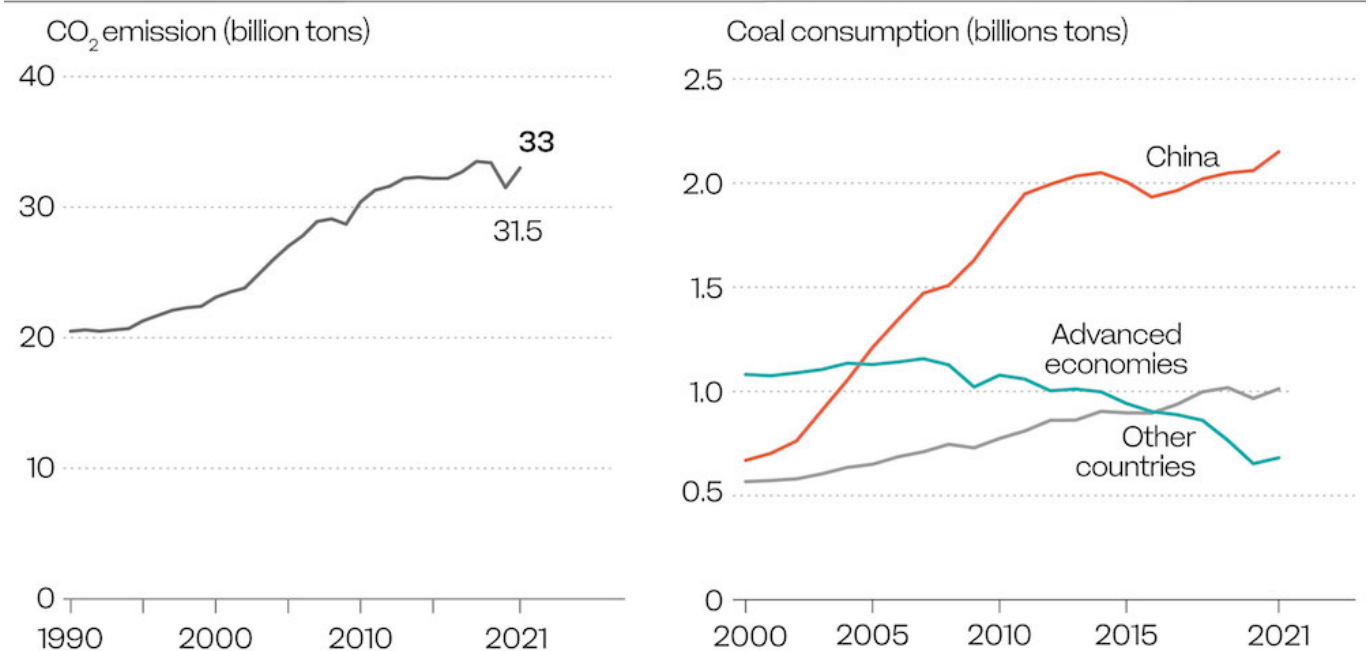
In partnership with Saudi Aramco, the Kingdom has made energy efficiency and the minimization of flaring at its oil fields top priorities in mitigating climate change, alongside fossil-fuel reduction through substitution with low-carbon energy sources such as renewables, hydropower, nuclear and bioenergy.

Seznec, one of the report's authors and a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council Global Energy Center, praises efforts made by Saudi Aramco toward carbon capture and describes the main transition challenge as organizational.

"I am a great admirer of it and how it is managed," Seznec told Arab News. "But their view is that, to have a proper transition and a decarbonized economy is to use the assets they have, which is carbon and oil, and to decarbonize that."

SURGE IN COAL USE IN POWER SECTOR

Global CO2 emissions expected to rebound in 2021



Source: IEA

ARAB NEWS

“The capture of CO₂, which comes out of oil when they burn it, is then reinjected underground, and they’ve done some of that with medium-sized plants.”

By using this kind of technology, CO₂ can be captured from the air and stored in the ground, or reused for useful products, such as fuels, bioenergy, chemicals, building materials, food and beverages. It can also be chemically transformed into new products such as fertilizer and cement, or other forms of energy such as synthetic fuels.

Methods such as these involving carbon capture, utilization and storage technologies, or CCUS, are seen as a potential game-changer in the world’s efforts to quickly reduce CO₂ emissions.

In its latest report published in August this year, the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that without the widespread adoption of CCUS technologies, long-term global climate goals may be unreachable.

But because the type of plants used by Aramco are expensive, only a handful has been built worldwide. Aramco is in the process of developing more, which could make such technologies increasingly attractive to other countries.

Nevertheless, “from the point of view of oil producers, such as the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and Aramco, it is very important to continue producing, by keeping the value of the asset in the ground,” Seznec added.



In partnership with Saudi Aramco, the Kingdom has made energy efficiency and the minimization of flaring at its oil fields top priorities in mitigating

climate change. (Supplied)

According to the report, although Aramco is at the forefront of the Kingdom's work on the CCE, it is not the only big player. Sez nec argues that it makes sense to have a more centralized approach.

"In Saudi Arabia, this means support from the country's leadership for Saudi Aramco and SABIC's technologies in CCUS, crude-to-chemicals, and the circular carbon economy," the report read. "For the UAE, this means staying the course with ADPower and ensuring that it has the bandwidth to extend its expertise to broader portions of ADQ."

New technologies are set to play a pivotal role in cutting CO2 emissions worldwide and in the Gulf's economic energy transition in the future. For Sez nec, decarbonization will serve the Kingdom and the UAE best as they develop technologies to improve the process and sell it to the rest of the world.

"I would strongly suggest that the Gulf countries make an effort to control and develop the technology themselves, just as they did for chemicals, because once they do, then they can make money on the technology and the new sources of energy," he said.

"It's very important that it's centralized and developed very actively on both sides. It should happen as quickly as possible, and it can only happen if what's efficient is pushed first."

Developing CCUS technologies could provide regional countries with another potentially valuable line of exports, Sez nec said. But the future lies in the hands of inventors and engineers.



An employee connects an electric car cable to a loading station of German carmaker Volkswagen. (AFP/File Photo)

“Saudi Arabia has done this superbly in many other areas in the past, so I’m not worried they can’t do it in the future,” Sez nec said. “The development of technology is really what needs to be centralized and the tech experts have to be given the means to do what they need to do to achieve that.”

The means to do this include strengthening the private sector through investment, in addition to government investments in state-owned companies.

Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE were advised in the report to limit the extent to which private firms can be taken over by state entities, while actively helping their respective private sectors acquire foreign tech firms, with a priority on knowledge and skills transfer.

It will also require investment in education. The report urged both countries to help universities and existing state entities, such as Aramco and SABIC, to research and commercialize locally developed technologies.

“Both countries should set a goal of making CCUS commercially viable, emphasize local content requirements in all renewables and circular carbon economy projects, much like Saudi Aramco has done with the In-Kingdom Total Value Add (iktva) program,” the report said.

It also urged the Kingdom and the UAE to “encourage national oil companies, such as ADNOC and Saudi Aramco, to match the goals set by many international oil companies of getting to zero net emissions by a target date.”

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Musk to offer \$100m prize for 'best' carbon capture tech
Carbon capture key to global climate targets, warns IEA

[**Officials: Libyan forces round up 500**](#)

migrants in crackdown

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Fri, 2021-10-01 21:50

CAIRO: Libyan security forces on Friday detained at least 500 African migrants, including women and children, two officials and a refugee group said.

The authorities described the raid as part of a crackdown on illegal migration but made no mention of any traffickers or smugglers being arrested. Libya's Interior Ministry said the migrants were rounded up in the western town of Gargaresh and taken to detention centers in Tripoli – places that rights activists say are rife with abuse and where migrants are kept in miserable conditions.

The ministry did not say how many migrants were detained. Gargaresh, a known hub for migrants and refugees, is about 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) west of Tripoli, the Libyan capital.

Two security officials and the Norwegian Refugee Council said that “more than 500” were rounded up. The officials said many of those detained had “lived illegally in Libya” for years. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

The chief prosecutor office said hundreds of arrested migrants were taken to detention centers. The Interior Ministry posted images purporting to show some of those detained, sitting clustered together on a street with their hands tied behind their backs. Another image, an aerial photo, showed men lying face-down on the ground at a crossroads, with military trucks and guards around them.

Tarik Lamloum, a Libyan activist working with the Belaady Organization for Human Rights, described the raid as the fiercest crackdown in western Libya in years.

Dax Roque, the Norwegian Refugee Council's director in Libya, expressed his concerns over the detentions, saying the arrested migrants are at risk of abuse and ill-treatment. “Torture, sexual violence, and extortion is rampant in Libyan detention centers,” he said.

Libya has for years been a hub for African and Middle Eastern migrants fleeing war and poverty in their homelands and hoping for a better life in Europe. The oil-rich country plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime autocrat Muammar Qaddafi in 2011. Traffickers have exploited the chaos and often pack desperate families into ill-equipped rubber or wooden boats that stall and founder along the perilous Central Mediterranean route. Thousands have drowned along the way, others were intercepted and returned to Libya.

Those returned to shore have been taken to government-run detention centers, where they are often abused and extorted for ransom under the very nose of UN officials.



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Libyan leader to hold international conference on country's security, stability
Charity boat rescues 50 African migrants in sea off Libya