LIBYA:
FIVE YEARS AFTER
THE 2011 REVOLUTION

Symposium
April 13, 2016
Commons Theater
Virginia Commonwealth University
It has been 5 years since the start of the February 17, 2011 revolution in Libya that overthrew the 42 year-long brutal dictatorship headed by Muammar Gadhafi. However, the promises of freedom, democracy, and prosperity that Libyans united and fought for have not materialized. Few had predicted Libya’s demise into the failed statehood and chaos that we see today. With the increasing presence of terrorist groups, another international military intervention is looming. The Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Golden Key International Honor Society with the assistance of the Arabic Club, the Institute for Global Leadership at Tufts and the Fares Center at Tufts are sponsoring a symposium to assess the current challenges facing the country. Libyan practitioners and Libya scholars will analyze key dimensions ranging from human rights, education, health, and state-society relations to local governance. Against this backdrop and together with the participants, we will discuss these topics in order to shed light on the way forward in Libya.
### Schedule

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| 10:00 - 10:20 | Introductions  
Welcome by Dr. R. McKenna Brown                                                                                                     |
| 10:25 - 10:45 | Opening address by H.E. Wafa Bughaighis, Chargé d’Affaires at the Embassy of Libya in Washington, D.C. and Q&A session.            |
| 11:20 - 11:35 | Break and refreshments                                                                                                               |
| 11:40 - 12:10 | Dr. Omar Abubakr: *The Health Care System in Libya*                                                                                   |
| 12:15 - 12:45 | Shahrazad Kablan: *Challenges and Opportunities for Reforming the Libyan Education System*                                              |
| 12:45 - 2:00 | Break                                                                                                                               |
| 2:00 - 2:30  | Nebras Attia: *Radical Islamist Groups in Derna Five Years After the 2011 Revolution*                                               |
| 2:35 - 3:05  | Hanan Dakhil: *Status of Libyan Women Five Years after the 2011 Revolution: Challenges and Prospects*                                |
| 3:10 - 3:40  | Mohamed Elmagbri: *Assessment and Perspectives of Municipal Council Administrations*                                                 |
| 3:40 - 4:00  | Break                                                                                                                               |
| 4:00 - 4:30  | Najla Mangoush: *The Role of Religious and Traditional Leaders in Track I and II Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities*        |
| 4:35 - 5:05  | Jean-Louis Romanet Perroux: *State-Society Relations in Post-Gadhafi Libya*                                                          |
| 5:10 - 5:40  | Closing notes                                                                                                                        |
Azza Maghur

*The Libyan Political Agreement: Where Does It Stand Today?*

The Libyan political Agreement was signed last December under the auspices of the UN, after a year and a half of negotiations and dialogue. Parties to the Agreement are multiple and diverse. However, two main parties to the political conflict can be identified in the Agreement: the Libyan House of Representative (HOR), which is internationally recognized, and the General National Congress (GNC) that should have been replaced by the former upon the expiration of its mandate, as the sole legislative authority of the state. Today, both the HOR and the GNC are resisting the implementation of the Agreement. Surprisingly, both assert that the Agreement does not reflect their demands, and purport that it is ineffective. They are both asking UNSMIL to amend the Agreement, mainly in relation with the newly established Presidential Council. In light of these premises, the presentation will seek to assess what is left of the Libyan Political Agreement today, and the prospects and chances of making it work.

Dr. A. Omar Abubaker

*The Health Care System in Libya*

The presentation will briefly review the current status of the health care system and provide a perspective on the future of this system. The presentation will also address challenges and opportunities for changes in health care in Libya over the near future.

Shahrazad Kablan

*Challenges and Opportunities for Reforming the Libyan Education System*

Libya has been marked by civil and political unrest in the years since the 2011 revolution ended Muammar Gaddafi’s 42-year rule. Against that backdrop, it can come as no surprise that Libya’s education system is also struggling to rebuild and to meet the demand of a youthful country. Shahrazad Kablan will address the current challenges and the opportunities available for reforming the outdated education system from primary to higher education.
Nebras Attia

*Radical Islamist Groups in Derna Five Years After the 2011 Revolution*

Derna was the first city in which ISIS developed a foothold. What are the conditions leading to this choice and what are the historical antecedents that produced these conditions? Historically, the population of Derna had markedly close family ties and a conservative culture. However, the “white city” was also a center of culture and music. Four decades of systematic targeting of young men from Derna and of a violent repression of conservative Islamic practice carried out by the Gadhafi regime, pushed some conservatives to become extremists and cemented deep familial solidarity with anti-regime Islamic fighters. Once Gadhafi was gone, this opened the way to strengthening ties with various violent jihadi groups (e.g. LIFG; Al Qaeda; Ansar al Sharia; Abu Slim). In light of these premises, this presentation will shed light on the variety of radical Islamist groups in Derna; their respective strength; their sources of funding; their relation with the youth; how they managed to unite their forces and why they divided again. In conclusion, this presentation will assess the condition of Derna after five years under the control of radical Islamist groups and will clarify the relations that exist between Derna and Sirt.

Hanan Dakhil

*The Status of Libyan Women Five Years after the 2011 Revolution: Challenges and Prospects*

Among the surprises of the 2011 Libyan revolution was the pivotal role Libyan women played in its success. In fact, women’s groups were among the most dynamic and active members in the rich and diverse civil society that sprang up following the fall of the Qaddafi regime. Sadly, this was to be short-lived amid the breakdown of Libya’s political transition, the deterioration of security and the rise of religious extremism. Over the last few years Libyan women have experienced increasing discrimination and marginalization in the public space, harassment and unprecedented levels of violence including murder. This presentation will highlight the conditions and obstacles currently facing women in Libya as they continue to struggle for security, social justice and equality in an increasingly challenging environment.
Mohamed Elmagbri  
**Assessment and Perspectives of Municipal Council Administrations**

In 2012, a new local governance law was passed in Libya as a response to the increasing popular demand for a better service provision and for decentralized public administration. This presentation will assess the current status of Municipal Councils in Libya from a few key perspectives, such as the quality of the local governance law, the operational effectiveness of some Municipal Councils, the relationship with security actors, and the process of budgeting. In light of these challenges, the presentation will propose an inclusive local governance approach based on the cooperation between Municipal Councils and some key local society actors.

Najla Mangoush  
**The Role of Religious and Traditional Leaders in Track I and II Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities**

In the context of fragile states and the security crisis, Libya becomes a perfect environment of extremism. The role of religion in current conflicts is much deeper than we think. The ignorance about religion in general divided people into secular and religious groups without thinking of the actual meaning of the definition, which increases the space between both of them with their different worldviews. On the other hand, State-based mediation and international negotiations are facing challenges. The UN and many international agencies seek positive contributions to peace. However, in order for this goal to be achieved the mediators need to expand their toolbox to engage at the grassroots level with moderate religious leaders.

Jean-louis Romanet Perroux  
**State-Society Relations in Post-Gadhafi Libya**

This presentation will highlight a few key social, cultural and political aspects that characterize the relations between Libyans and their state institutions. The aspects covered will range from the dramatic weakness of the state; the militarization and fragmentation of society; the botched democratic transition and the current disaffection of Libyans to politics and to democratic procedures. The aim of this analysis will be to draw some important implications for the stabilization and the recovery a democratic political transition in Libya.
BIOS

**Dr. R. McKenna Brown** is the Senior International Officer of Virginia Commonwealth University and oversees an operation of 49 fulltime faculty and staff charged with the expansion, coordination and support of international activities across the institution. Under his leadership, VCU has completed a multiyear strategic planning process for Comprehensive Internationalization, launched the Quest Global Impact Awards, allocating $500,000 towards over 32 projects aligned with the university’s strategic plan; established VCU Globe: a global education living-learning community, and the International Faculty Development Seminar. He also served as founding director of the School of World Studies where he holds the rank of full professor.

**Wafa Bughaighis** is the senior representative of the internationally recognized government of Libya to the United States. She holds the rank of Chargé d’affaires at the Embassy of Libya in Washington, D.C. Prior to her appointment to the Washington Embassy, she was the Deputy Minister for Political Affairs in the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; she also served as the Acting Foreign Minister. Bughaighis has also had a distinguished career in education as the Director of the International Bureau of the Ministry of Education for Eastern Libya. The bureau worked closely with the United Nations and civil society to ensure that Libya’s youth had access to quality education after the overthrow of Qaddafi. During the revolution, Bughaighis co-founded and chaired the nonprofit organization Commission in Benghazi to Support Women Participation in Decision Making, then opened branches in other cities, including Tripoli. Bughaighis is the first woman appointed as Deputy Secretary for Political Affairs and Chargé d’affaires of the Libyan Embassy to the United States.

**Azza Kamel Maghur** is a Libyan lawyer, human rights activist and expert. She holds a Law degree from Benghazi University and a DEA in international law and international organization from Pantheon-Sorbonne University in Paris. Azza is known for defending political prisoners, advocating for NGO rights and openly calling for a constitution in Libya. After the Arab Spring, Azza played a major role in campaigning for democracy, human rights and women’s rights. She spearheaded a legal committee to draft law concerning NGOs and worked on further legislations, including the election law of 2012. She published numerous legal articles in both Arabic and English. Azza was the only woman selected to join the February Constitutional Committee that was in charge of amending the Libyan Constitutional Declaration that led to the current House of Representatives’ establishment. She is a short story writer and has published two collections of her work.
Dr. A. Omar Abubaker earned a Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree (BDS) from the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Alexandria, Alexandria, Egypt in 1975. After working as a teaching assistant at the University of Benghazi, Libya for two years, he enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh in 1978. In 1984 he earned a Ph.D. in Anatomical Sciences and in 1990 earned a Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) degree. Between 1984 and 1990 he also participated in a residency in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and one-year research fellowship at the Presbyterian University Hospital in Pittsburgh. Dr. Abubaker was appointed to the faculty of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in the School of Dentistry, Virginia Commonwealth University in July 1991 with the rank of assistant professor. Since 2002, he has served as the Chairman and Endowed Chair in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. Dr. Abubaker authored two textbooks, over 50 chapters and over 40 scientific articles in peer review journals. He presented before a variety of local, national and international scientific meetings.

Shahrazad Kablan is the Recipient of the 2011 Paul Swaddling Award from Ohio Education Association for International Peace & Understanding. She is a teacher, education consultant. Shahrazad became a political activist supporting the implementation of the No Fly Zone and the military intervention in Libya and pushed for the UN to carry on its mandate to protect civilians in Libya. She became the first female anchor in the first non-governmental TV station, Libya Alahrar TV that was launched in Doha, Qatar on March 30, 2011 in support of the February 17, 2011 Libyan revolution. Working with the International Organization for Migration, Kablan was the Libyan National Advisor for the Libya Out-of-Country voting in the USA in the GNC elections of 2012, the Constituent Assembly, and the House of Representatives in 2014. She is now involved with several initiatives addressing future sound US foreign policy towards the Middle East and keeping a close contact with the newly formed government in Libya to promote peace. She is the founder of several organizations, including the Mason International Club, and Educate Liberate Foundation. She is founding member of the Libyan Women Platform for Peace.

Nebras Attia is a human rights activist and journalist from Libya. Her focus is on the defense of women’s rights. She obtained a BS in Architectural Engineering from Omar Elmokhtar University in Libya. Nebras graduated from the Leaders for Democracy Fellowship at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in 2014 and from the Peacebuilding course at the School for International Training Graduate Institute in Vermont (USA) in 2015. Nebras has worked as a Field Program Assistant with Chemonics / USAID, as a translator and program manager with UNDP in Derna (Libya). She worked as a supervisor at the Benghazi University Research and studies Center. Nebras also worked as a journalist from 2011 to 2012 for Libya’s Elhora and Shaa’ TV channels and for Elmokhtar journal.
**Hanan Dakhil** is a Libyan-American freelance writer and activist with a BS degree in Political Science and International Relations from UCLA. She is a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy. Through social media and her published writing, Hanan has been an active civil society participant and observer of the Libyan revolution and its democratic transition. She has worked to raise public awareness of the challenges Libya continues to face with particular emphasis on women’s rights. Last year she participated in the USIP Conference on Women’s Rights in Islamic Constitutionalism in Dubai in addition to the ABA Rule of Law Initiative’s Gender Analysis and Libyan Constitutional Drafting Workshop in Istanbul. Prior to that, she published a memorandum to the Libyan Constitutional Drafting Assembly arguing for equal citizenship rights for Libyan women and was also a contributor to the Charter of Libyan Women’s Constitutional Rights released by the Libyan Women’s Platform for Peace in early 2015. Hanan is married with two daughters and resides in Los Angeles where she works for a financial investment firm.

**Mohamed Elmagbri** received a BS in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Benghazi, where he became a Teaching Assistant in the Petroleum Engineering Department. Mohamed is a youth civil society activist, he has been a part of various civil society projects ranging from humanitarian assistance, local governance initiatives, social research and constitution building projects. His most recent focus is on strengthening the relations between civil society organizations and Municipal Councils, as well as preventing youth radicalization and building a sustainable peace by using sport activities through the “Rugby 2018 Project.”

**Najla El Mangoush** is a PhD student at the School for Conflict Analysis & Resolution and a lawyer and professor of law, with a focus on war-to-peace transitions and peace processes. She is interested in political negotiations, religion and violence, conflict resolution, peace-building and promoting social justice. She is a practitioner in restorative justice and Customary practices. Najla was a Fulbright Scholar and received an MA in Conflict Transformation from the Center for Justice and Peace-building (CJP) at Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg, VA). She is fluent in English and a native Arabic speaker. Recent publications include: “My Benghazi Will Flourish Again,” Huffington Post; and “Customary practice and Restorative Justice in Libya,” United States Institute of Peace.
Jean-Louis Romanet Perroux is a doctoral researcher at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and a Junior Scholar Fellow at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies in Boston (USA). The topic of his dissertation is “Associational Life and Democratic Change in Post-Gadhafi Libya” in which he focuses on state-society relations in the challenging democratic transition. Overall, his work and research focus on political culture, civil society, governance and security in Libya and the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Jean-Louis has obtained a Bachelor’s in Aeronautical Engineering from the Italian Air Force Academy, an MA in Political Science from the University of Trieste (IT) and a M.A.L.D. in International Relations from the Fletcher School in Medford (USA). Jean-Louis has conducted research and humanitarian work in Sub-Saharan and Central Africa. Most recently, Jean-Louis worked on building civil society capacity in Libya from November 2011 until December 2013. In parallel, he conducted research on justice, security and governance in Libya and collected the data on voluntary associations for his doctoral research. Reports are available at www.facebook.com/LibyaCSOreports