

Abdulmagid Breish resumes leadership of Libyan Investment Authority

Reinstated Chairman and CEO dismisses rival claims for control of the LIA and regrets the interference with multi-billion dollar litigations in London

19 May / Tripoli, Libya – The Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) today confirms that Mr Abdulmagid Breish has been reinstated as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective 18 May 2015. He replaces Mr. Abdurahman Benyezza, who served as interim Chairman and CEO.

Mr Breish says:

“I am pleased to resume leadership of the LIA and will continue the ambitious reform programme to fight corruption and increase transparency throughout the LIA’s operations. A critical part of the LIA’s work is the pursuit of the litigations, which I initiated against Goldman Sachs, Société Générale and others to recover billions of dollars lost through improper transactions during the Gaddafi regime.

“We are grateful to Mr. Abdurahman Benyezza for his service as interim CEO and Chairman, and I look forward to his continued involvement as a non-executive director of the LIA.

“I am aware that, during my absence, there has been an attempt by other persons to take control of the LIA, serving to challenge the independence and neutrality of the organisation. I look forward to demonstrating conclusively that their claim is baseless, and to focusing all our efforts on returning to the Libyan people, through the litigation, the funds that we believe have been stolen from them.”

The LIA is pursuing substantial legal claims in London against Goldman Sachs, Société Générale S.A and others to recover billions of dollars lost through improper transactions done in their dealings with the LIA during the Gaddafi regime.

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Notes to Editors:

- Mr Abdulmagid Breish was appointed Chairman and CEO of the LIA on 1 June 2013.
- In early 2014, Mr Breish initiated legal proceedings against Goldman Sachs and Société Générale S.A to recover billions of dollars lost through improper transactions done in their dealings with the LIA during the Gaddafi regime.
- Like many officials holding public office at the time, Mr Breish was asked to leave his positions pursuant to an inquiry under the Political Isolation Law passed by the General National Congress. Mr Breish therefore stepped aside on 8 June 2014 and appealed the decision.
- While Mr Breish's appeal was being considered, Mr Abdurahman Benyezza was appointed to serve as Chairman and acting CEO of the LIA, pending the decision of the court on Mr. Breish's appeal.
- Upon the creation of the House of Representatives and its installation in Tobruk, in the autumn of 2014 Mr Benyezza sought to ensure that the LIA maintained its political neutrality and independence, establishing in November 2014 a litigation committee also approved by Mr. Hassan Bouhadi.
- The litigation committee therefore became responsible for instructing the English law firm, Enyo Law, to pursue the litigation.
- However, on 21 April 2015, Mr Bouhadi unilaterally terminated the agreement and has since challenged the authority of the management of the LIA.
- Mr Bouhadi's actions are an attack against the absolute necessity that the LIA like other organisations such as the Central Bank of Libya and the National Oil Company must remain neutral and independent. This position is also shared by the governments of the EU, including the United Kingdom, the United States and others. They said in a joint statement on 11 May 2015:
 - "At a time when the UN-sponsored political process is making progress towards a lasting resolution of the conflict in Libya, we express our concern at attempts to divert Libyan resources to the narrow benefit of any side in the conflict and to disrupt financial and economic institutions that belong to all Libyans. We reiterate our expectation that those on all sides representing Libya's independent institutions, namely the Central Bank of Libya (CBL), the Libyan Investment Authority (LIA), the National Oil Corporation (NOC) and the Libyan Post Telecommunications and Information technology company (LPTIC) will continue to act in the long term interests of the Libyan people pending clarification of unified governance structures under a Government of National Accord." <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2015/05/20150512315491.html?CP.rss=true#ixzz3aZRU8QbNhttp://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2015/05/20150512315491.html?CP.rss=true#axzz3aZQnBSrV>
- In compliance with English law, Enyo Law has been unable to continue acting for the LIA on the litigations. Mr Bouhadi's actions have thus caused the LIA to incur substantial unnecessary legal costs and have created serious risks to the litigations against Goldman Sachs and Société Générale.
- Meanwhile, on 13 April 2015, the Libyan Court of Appeal ordered that the decision on the removal of Mr Breish in June 2013 be cancelled immediately and ordered that Mr Breish be restored to his previous positions immediately.
- Mr Breish formally returned as Chairman and CEO on 18 May.
- English law firm Stephenson Harwood are representing the LIA based in the Tripoli headquarters in relation to Mr Bouhadi's actions.