ENERGIES MEDIA · LIBYA · UPSTREAM

Libya loses 350,000 bopd as Sharara pipeline shuts

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Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) has reported a production loss of approximately 350,000 barrels per day (bopd) following the forced closure of the pipeline serving the al-Sharara oil field. The NOC attributed the shutdown to an unauthorised group, though no further details on the identity or demands of the group were provided in the corporation's statement.

The al-Sharara field is one of Libya's largest producing assets, and disruptions to its output have an immediate and material impact on the country's overall crude export volumes. A loss of 350,000 bopd represents a significant share of Libya's total production capacity, which has historically fluctuated due to recurring infrastructure interruptions and security-related shutdowns across the country's oil network.

The pipeline closure follows a pattern of periodic disruptions that have plagued Libya's upstream sector for over a decade, with unauthorised groups, local militias, and tribal factions periodically blocking or seizing control of oil infrastructure to leverage political or financial concessions from the central government or the NOC. These interruptions create sustained uncertainty for international operators and service providers active in the country and complicate long-term investment planning.

The NOC has not publicly confirmed when the pipeline is expected to reopen or whether negotiations with the group responsible are under way. The duration of the shutdown will determine the full scale of lost revenue, with Libya's export-dependent economy highly sensitive to even short-term production outages of this magnitude.

International crude markets have been notified of the force majeure situation, as is standard practice when Libyan output is curtailed by events outside the NOC's direct control.

Libya holds Africa's largest proven crude oil reserves and has long been targeted by international oil companies and service providers seeking to expand operations as the country attempts to stabilise and rebuild its upstream sector. However, the frequency of infrastructure disruptions continues to represent the primary operational risk for companies considering deeper engagement with Libyan projects. The NOC has repeatedly called for investment in pipeline security and field infrastructure resilience, but progress has been constrained by the country's divided political landscape and the difficulty of enforcing agreements with non-state actors in producing regions.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

The shutdown itself does not create immediate procurement opportunity, but Norwegian well services, pipeline integrity, and infrastructure security specialists should monitor the situation closely. If the NOC moves to rehabilitate or harden pipeline infrastructure following restoration of flow, there may be scope for integrity assessment and maintenance contracts. Relationship-building with the NOC and international operators active at al-Sharara is the appropriate near-term step.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Pipeline:** A post-shutdown integrity assessment and rehabilitation programme at the al-Sharara pipeline could create scope for Norwegian pipeline inspection and maintenance specialists once flow is restored.
- **Drilling:** Extended shutdowns at al-Sharara may delay or defer well workover campaigns; drilling contractors should monitor NOC restart communications to time re-engagement.
- **Service:** Norwegian well services and oilfield logistics companies with existing Libya presence should maintain NOC contacts to position for accelerated restart support when the pipeline reopens.

- **Subsea/FPSO:** If prolonged onshore disruption accelerates NOC interest in offshore tie-back or export alternatives, FPSO and subsea contractors should track any tender activity that follows.

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Saga Advisory

General: info@saga-advisory.com · saga-advisory.com

STAVANGER · CAPE TOWN