

1. The Big Picture

LNA flexes military muscle but GNA repels attack & advances West of Tripoli

Fighting intensified between Libyan National Army (LNA) and Government of National Accord (GNA) forces this week. The GNA continued to target LNA supply lines between Tarhunah and Bani Walid, clearly demonstrating the leverage provided by Turkish aerial support. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are taking centre stage in this broader war for air supremacy. Ground operations and artillery attacks have had a limited impact across combat zones, with the exception of Tripoli where both forces continue to rely on shelling.

For their part, LNA forces led by Khalifa Haftar began responding to the GNA's recent Operation Peace Storm offensive this week. The number of airstrikes attributed to Haftar's forces increased relatively compared with the slowdown recorded over the past month. The LNA targeted GNA positions in As Saddadah, Abugrein, Al Qaddahiyah and Um Ikhrab on 11 April. Meanwhile, a total of 13 GNA UAVs were downed by the LNA over the past two weeks. The figure would highlight Turkey's levels of engagement in support of the GNA.

In further evidence of the LNA's offensive posture, Haftar's forces sought to overcome the recent losses in Al-Weshka, East of Misrata, with the appointment of Major General Meftah Ali Shaghlouf as new commander of the Central Military Region and West Sirte Liberation Ops Room on 11 April. Shaghlouf effectively replaced Salem Deriak who was killed in GNA-Turkish UAV strikes in Al-Weshka on 28 March. In a separate development, the LNA deployed a relatively well-equipped battalion dubbed Storm "Asifa" battalion to Tripoli frontlines. In a show of force, the battalion paraded in Benghazi's Al-Keesh Square on 11 April. The development came amid unverified reports of significant LNA air defence capabilities deployed across unknown locations.

Moreover, the LNA's preparations culminated in a brief offensive on Abugrein on 12 April. GNA forces repelled the attack and reclaimed the town at approx. 1630hrs after reinforcements arrived from Zliten and Misrata. The LNA hoped the attack would succeed after a sustained aerial campaign targeting Abugrein destroyed a GNA control room at the National Commercial Bank's local branch.

While the LNA's attack failed, the situation in the area remains fluid and further flashpoints are likely in the short term. On 13 April, fighting then shifted West of Tripoli to Surman, Sabratah, and west of Al-Zawiya. At the time of writing, GNA forces supported by air cover seized the pro-LNA towns of Surman and Sabratah, and advanced further west towards the Tunisian border. It remains to be seen whether GNA forces will prove capable of holding their positions in the short term.

Overall, these rapid combat developments are indicative of how relatively balanced military forces are on the ground today, at least in the West. While the LNA

generally maintains the upper hand over the GNA, UAVs have essentially acted as the "great equalizer", reducing the power gap between both forces. No force is currently capable of winning the war without air cover. Of note, Turkish support to the GNA reportedly extends beyond UAVs and includes Turkish Air Force missions off Libya's coast providing signals intelligence (SIGINT) to Turkish servicemen in Libya to track and target LNA assets.

When LNA forces attack, the GNA retaliates in other frontlines and vice versa with no significant changes to the status quo. This back and forth is expected to continue in the medium term, though it remains to be seen whether the GNA will continue to maintain its defenses. While the GNA has consolidated aerial capabilities, its offensive course has so far failed to upend the status quo in Tripoli.

Overall, an escalation is assessed as likely in the short term. The coronavirus has enabled both forces to engage in combat with relative impunity. Coronavirus cases have reached 25 as of 12 April, with the first recorded cases in Benghazi this week. Meanwhile, pipelines carrying gas and water to Tripoli were cut off from territories under LNA control. These factors have put a strain on civilian life across the West.

Both LNA and GNA forces are now under mounting pressure from the blockade on oil and gas exports. The LNA's recent losses West of Tripoli will put it under increased pressure to deliver on its promises. This holds especially true given the GNA's newly-announced military exclusion zone (MEZ), which effectively cripples LNA supply lines and lays siege to the pro-LNA towns of Tarhunah and Bani Walid. The LNA may find it more difficult to sustain its operations in the long term and/or justify additional funding from foreign backers.

The GNA is equally impacted amid political infighting and pressure from the United States to unify economic institutions. Of note, the public dispute continued this week between GNA PM Fayez Al-Serraj and the governor of Libya's Central Bank (CBL), Sadiq Al-Kabir. The GNA PM held Al-Kabir accountable for delayed public sector salaries and Libya's overall economic woes.

In broad strokes, these crises have led to speculation the blockade on oil exports could be lifted in the medium term by pro-LNA tribes to give Libyans some breathing space. The head of the Zway tribe and key figure in the blockade, Senussi Al-Haleeq, reportedly sent a letter to Al-Serraj on behalf of the High Council of Libyan Tribes calling for negotiations to solve the current crisis. Al-Haleeq's call for negotiations would represent a more dovish tone relatively compared with past tribal statements.

KEY POINTS

- Coronavirus cases reach 25; new cases in East
- LNA forces retreat after brief advance in Abugrein
- GNA forces seize Sabratah & Surman



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2. National Security Map

Surge in GNA airstrikes on Bani Walid-Tarhuna Rd; LNA downs several Turkish UAVs in retaliation

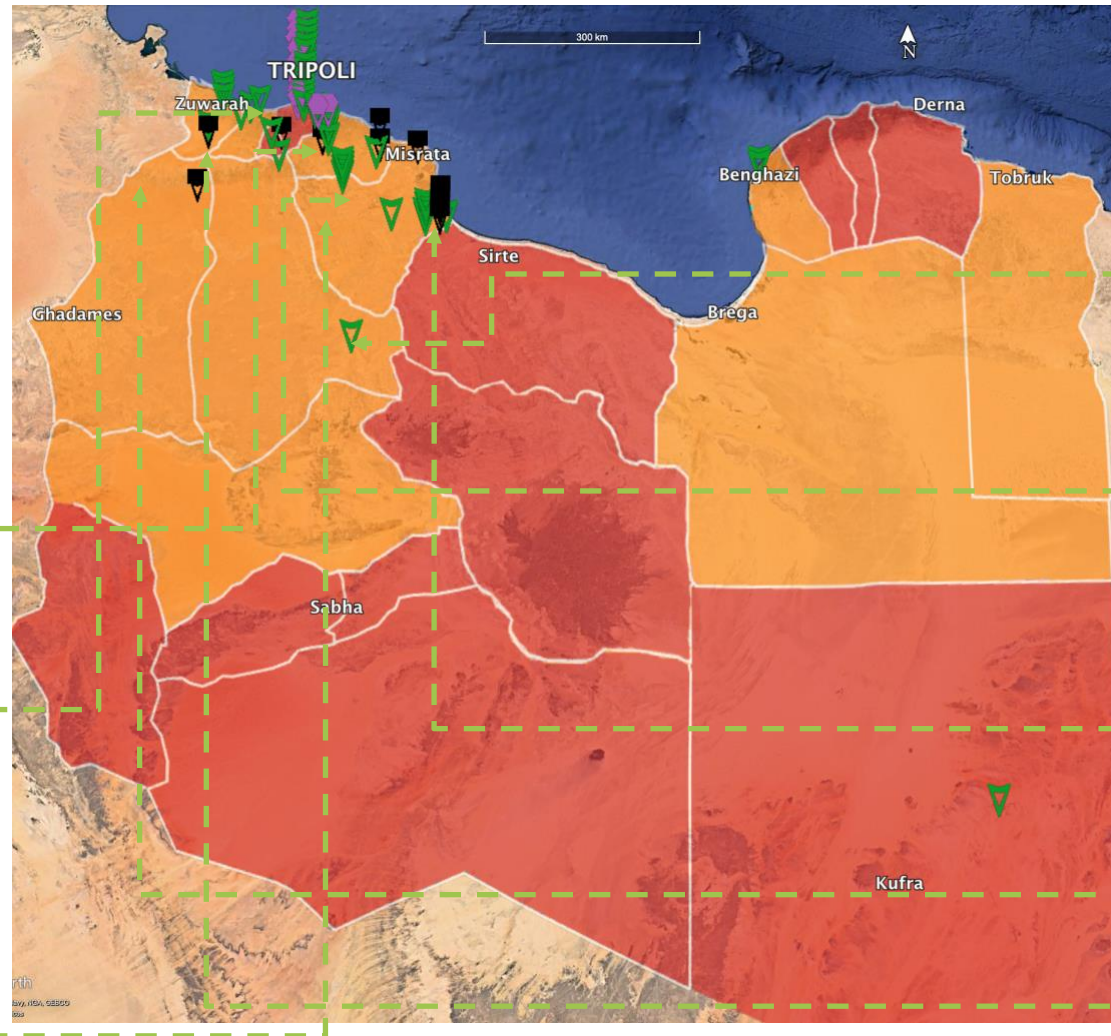
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

- ★ IED | VBIED
- ♦ Violent Clash
- ▲ Isolated Gunfire
- ▼ Other



The GNA's Volcano of Rage Operation declared the western and central regions of Libya as military exclusion zones (MEZ), banning the movement of military and civilian vehicles and fuel/cargo trucks without prior permission.

On 06 April, the Great Man-Made River HQ reported armed men raided the water facility control room located in Ash Shwayrif village and forced the technicians to close the valves, causing water cuts in Tripoli, Tarhunah and Bani Walid, as well as other western mountain towns, including Gharyan.

Reports indicate a GNA airstrike targeted an LNA-affiliated truck near the Wadi Dinar area, north of Bani Walid, in the evening on 07 April. Simultaneously, reports indicate a GNA airstrike targeted an additional LNA affiliated truck near Eshmikh, south of Bani Walid. Pro-LNA accounts claimed the targeted truck was loaded with food supplies destined for Tarhunah.

Pro-LNA accounts claimed two GNA-operated UAVs were downed over Al-Weshka frontline and south of Misrata between the afternoon and evening of 06 April.

On 09 April, the Nalut Military Council issued a decision to withdraw its forces deployed along the Libyan-Tunisian border and return them to Nalut. The move was justified on the basis of the GNA's failure to provide sufficient support to forces amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

The GNA military spokesperson, Mohammed Gnounou, reported airstrikes on the LNA-controlled Al-Wattiyah Airbase in the evening on 09 April.

LNA forces downed two GNA-affiliated Turkish unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) over Tarhuna and Al-Aziziyah on 11 April. The incident was preceded by GNA UAV strikes targeting Tarhuna's perimeters at approximately 1215hrs on 10 April.

The LNA's Dignity Operations Room reported the targeting of GNA forces in Tajoura's Al-Rahba Camp and Surman's Mahmiyat area, resulting in the destruction of several vehicles and the killing of an unknown number of GNA forces on 10 April. The Ops. Room claimed GNA forces were preparing an attack against the LNA-controlled cities of Surman and Sabrataha.

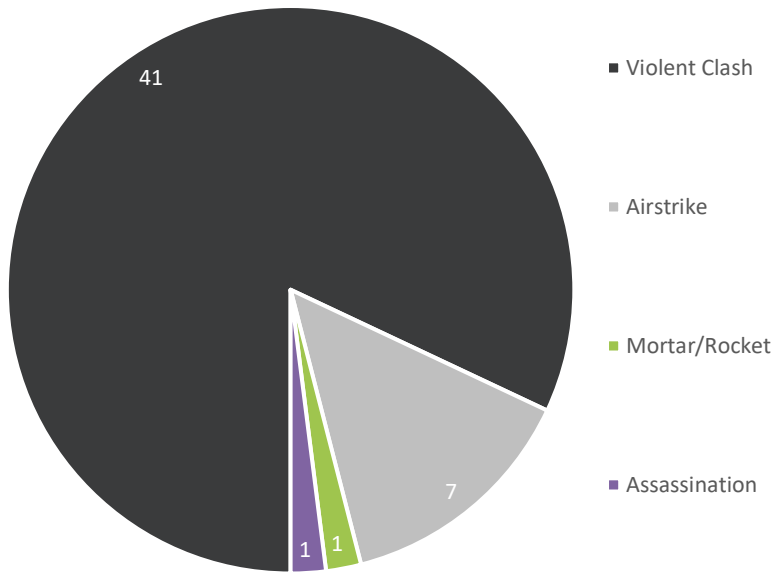
A total power blackout was reported in the western and southern regions after an unidentified armed group closed a gas pipeline feeding the Khoms Power Station in the LNA-controlled Sidi Al-Sayeh area. Beyond Tripoli, Libya's south witnessed 15-hour-long power cuts.

GNA forces claimed an LNA military vehicle was targeted near Tininai village, south of Bani Walid, on 11 April. Meanwhile, an ambulance was targeted in the area, killing two medical staff.

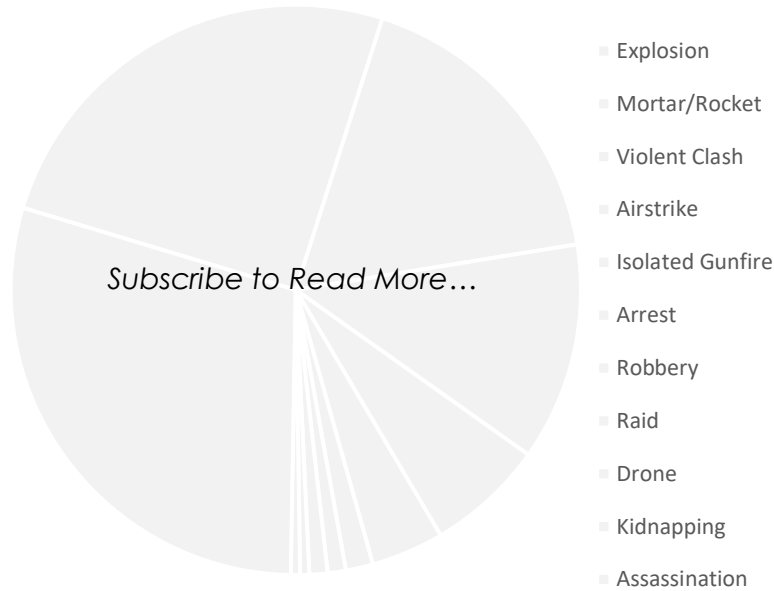
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

41 GNA forces killed in Tripoli clashes; surge in GNA airstrikes ivo Tarhunah

Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



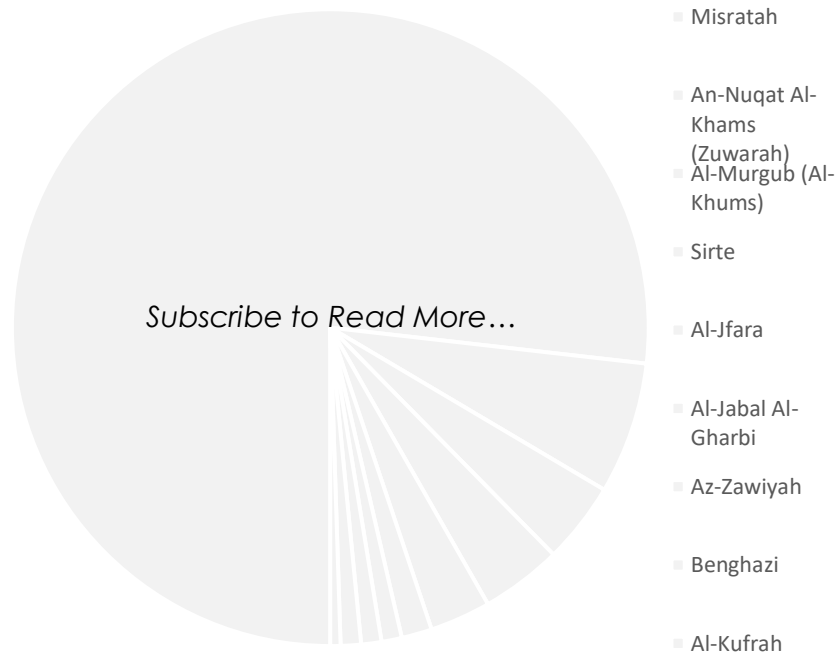
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



Data Analysis

WB recorded this week a total of 50 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 32 deaths reported last week and 62 the week before, marking an overall increase in the number of fatalities recorded in contrast to last week. The majority of fatalities came as a result of a repelled Government of National Accord (GNA) attack targeting Libyan National Army (LNA) positions on the Wadi Al-Rabei frontline resulting in 41 deaths among GNA forces. Meanwhile, an additional six deaths were recorded among GNA forces as a result of an LNA airstrikes in the Zuwarah vicinity, as well as one fatality among GNA ranks in the Al-Wattiyah Airbase vicinity which continues to be struck by GNA forces since the latter's failed offensive on the airbase on 25 March. Further, shelling on Tripoli's Ghot Al-Romman area resulted in the death of a Ghanian worker, whilst a Zintan-sanctioned assassination targeting a resident of Tripoli's Ghut Shaal vicinity was also recorded throughout the reporting period. Meanwhile, the number of mortar/rocket shelling incidents dropped in contrast to last week, in addition to the number of airstrikes conducted. However, this week saw an uptick in isolated gunfire cases largely due to an evident surge in LNA forces downing GNA-affiliated Turkish unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) over Al-Weshka, Al-Wattiyah Airbase and Tarhuna vicinities. Meanwhile, beyond military operations, this week was marked by the assassination of a man in Tripoli's Ghut Shaal vicinity fueling tensions between the latter and Zintan armed factions responsible for the assassination. Road closures and skirmishes between the two sides were reported in the aftermath of the incident. In addition, WB recoded three robberies, two raids and one kidnapping across the country. Several incidents were recorded throughout the country including 57 explosions audible mostly across the capital city due to an intensified shelling campaign, 49 mortar/rocket shelling incidents, 34 violent clashes, 24 airstrikes, 13 isolated gunfire cases, 8 arrests, 3 robberies, 2 raids, 2 reports of drones flying over the western region, 1 kidnapping and 1 assassination.

In western Libya, WB recorded a total of 185 incidents, including 149 in Tripoli, marking an overall decrease in security incidents recorded in contrast to last week's statistics. In Tripoli, WB recorded 48 mortar/rocket shelling incidents and 57 audible explosions as a result, 34 violent clashes across southern frontlines, 3 arrests, 2 LNA airstrikes, 2 isolated gunfire cases, 1 raid and 1 kidnapping. In relation to the mortar/rocket shelling incidents, this week saw the LNA's targeting of Tripoli Port, as well shells landing on the Khadra Hospital for two consecutive days resulting in the injury of at least one staff member. Meanwhile, local grievances were exacerbated by lengthy power cuts after an unidentified armed group closed a gas pipeline feeding the Khoms Power Station in the LNA-controlled Sidi Al-Sayeh area. Separately, reports indicate the manager of Radio Garaboli and public relations manager of Garaboli's Municipality, Mohamed Al-Gheil, was kidnapped on the Garaboli Coastal Road in the evening on 03 March. Neither the identity of the assailant(s) nor the motive behind the incident are known, although the pro-LNA 9th Brigade Tarhunah has been very active in the area over the past few months. Likewise, arbitrary detentions by Misrata forces along the coastal road have been frequently reported over the past few months. Further, in relation to military operations, LNA forces downed a GNA-affiliated Turkish UAV in the Ain Zara vicinity between 08-09 April.

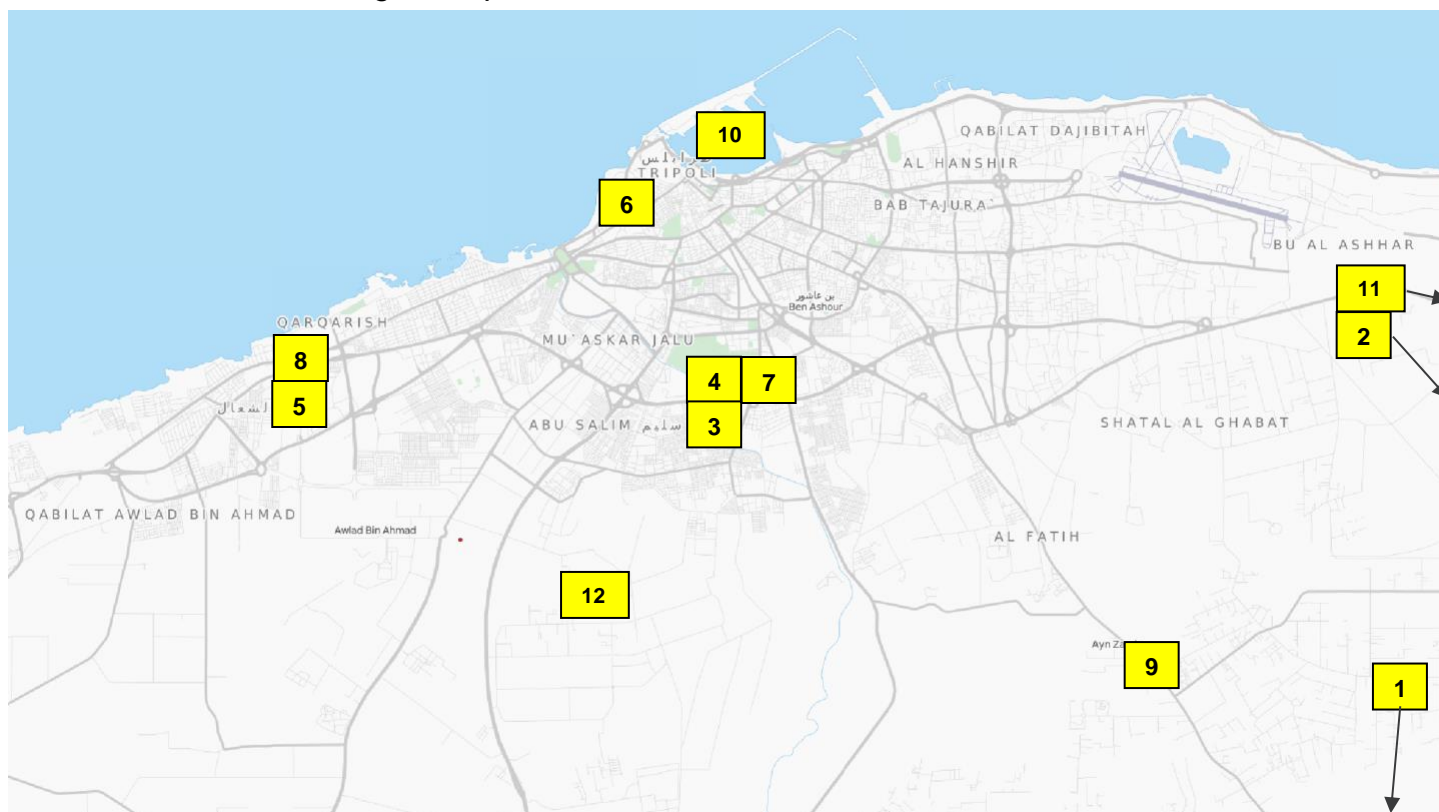
In the wider western region, parallel to last week, this week was dominated by tit-for-tat airstrikes targeting strategic locations aimed at weakening the opponent's supply lines. In response to a surge in GNA airstrikes targeting LNA supply trucks on the Bani Walid-Tarhunah road over the past ten days, the LNA retaliated with increased targeting of GNA-affiliated Turkish UAVs striking LNA positions. WB recorded a total of 9 GNA UAVs downed in Al-Weshka, Al-Wattiyah and Tarhuna vicinities. Meanwhile, out of a total of 24 airstrikes recorded this week, 14 were conducted by the GNA, largely concentrated on the Bani Walid-Tarhunah Road.

Meanwhile in the central region, WB recorded ongoing military activity on Al-Weshka frontline with the downing of GNA UAVs over the area. Separately, the latest reports as of 12 April indicate GNA forces repelled an LNA attempt to seize Abugrein, south-east of Misrata, after LNA forces temporarily advanced on the area. Unverified reports suggest up to 110 fatalities among LNA ranks as a result of the failed advance.

Turning to the south, the LNA's Kufra-based Subul Al-Salam Battalion reported the confiscation of two trucks carrying 25 illegal migrants involved in human trafficking and illegal gold mining on Libyan territory. Meanwhile, in the east, two arrests were recorded in Benghazi. No further security incidents were recorded across the region throughout the reporting period.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

LNA targets Tripoli Port; tensions between Zintan forces & Ghut Shaal residents



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (04 Apr) LNA repels GNA attack on Wadi Al-Rabei frontline killing 41 GNA forces
2. (04 Apr) Tajoura's Central Force frees abducted citizen after raiding farm in Al-Gwea
3. (06 Apr) Shell lands on Khadra Hospital & Abbas Bin Mutalib Mosque injuring two staff
4. (06 Apr) TRB confirms killing of 13 members including senior TRB commander
5. (06 Apr) Zintan armed factions assassinate man on Ghut Shaal 10 St. raising tensions
6. (06 Apr) Ten armed men dressed in civilian clothing gather at Burj Bou Laila traffic lights
7. (07 Apr) Shells hit Khadra Hospital; no casualties
8. (07 Apr) Road closures & skirmishes due to tensions b/w Zintan forces & Ghut shaal residents
9. (08-09 Apr) LNA downs GNA-affiliated Turkish UAV in Ain Zara
10. (10 Apr) LNA forces launch rockets on Tripoli Port damaging FDCC building
11. (10 Apr) LNA claims airstrike targeting Tajoura's Al-Rahba Camp
12. (11-12 Apr) LNA temp. advances in Rabish Abu Slim; alleged new batch of Syrian fighters

LNA targets Tripoli Port; no casualties

LNA forces positioned in southern Tripoli launched rockets on Tripoli Port resulting in heavy explosions audible in the capital's city centre at approximately 1245hrs on 10 April. There were no imminent reports of casualties, though the Food and Drug Control (FDCC) building consisting of 15 offices sustained severe damage, according to the Port's director, Mesbah Habib. Habib noted that sixty employees work in these units on a daily basis, with the building considered as a vital facility due to its task of monitoring food and medical supplies arriving at the port. Meanwhile, dozens of migrants among a group of 277 aboard a vessel that returned to Tripoli by the Libyan Coast Guard and were forced to remain at the port due to security concerns, fled the facility as it was being shelled. Of note, prior to the attack, local reports indicate the port was expecting the arrival of several vessels, including those carrying gasoline. The targeting of Tripoli Port coincided with GNA airstrikes on LNA supply trucks en route to Tarhuna in the Wadi Dinar area, suggesting that the LNA's targeting of Tripoli Port came as an act of retaliation.

Heightened tensions b/w Zintan forces & locals

WB sources reported Zintan armed factions assassinated a man identified as Ayoub Dabdoub on Tripoli's Ghut Shaal 10 Street at approximately 1800hrs on 06 April. Reports indicate the targeted man was spotted in front of his house during curfew hours by a Zintan patrol who threatened to arrest him. The man refused to enter his house prompting a verbal altercation. Subsequently, the man was shot dead by Zintan forces. Later that night, the victim's relatives and neighbours burned tyres and closed off the southern and northern entrance of the 10 Street while firing indiscriminately into the air.

Similar road closures and skirmishes were reported the following day. Ghut Shaal residents issued a statement in the name of the Ghut Shaal area and Hai Alandalus Municipality in which it called on the GNA's Ministry of Interior (MoI) to dissolve the Zintan armed factions also known as the General Security Apparatus led by Emad Trabelsi, based at the Tobacco factory. The statement referred to the involvement of Trabelsi's forces in acts of extortion and intentional killings, as well as causing a security vacuum in areas under their control. In addition, the locals called on the Ministry to hand over the Zintan forces behind the killing of Ayoub Dabdoub. Of note, sources reported that the LNA is exploiting recent tensions between GNA-aligned Zintan armed factions and Ghut Shaal residents to rally against the GNA camp. Pro-LNA accounts releasing a purported voice recording of the commander of the Zintan forces, Emad Trabelsi, threatening Ghut Shaal residents.

Khadra Hospital targeted with shells

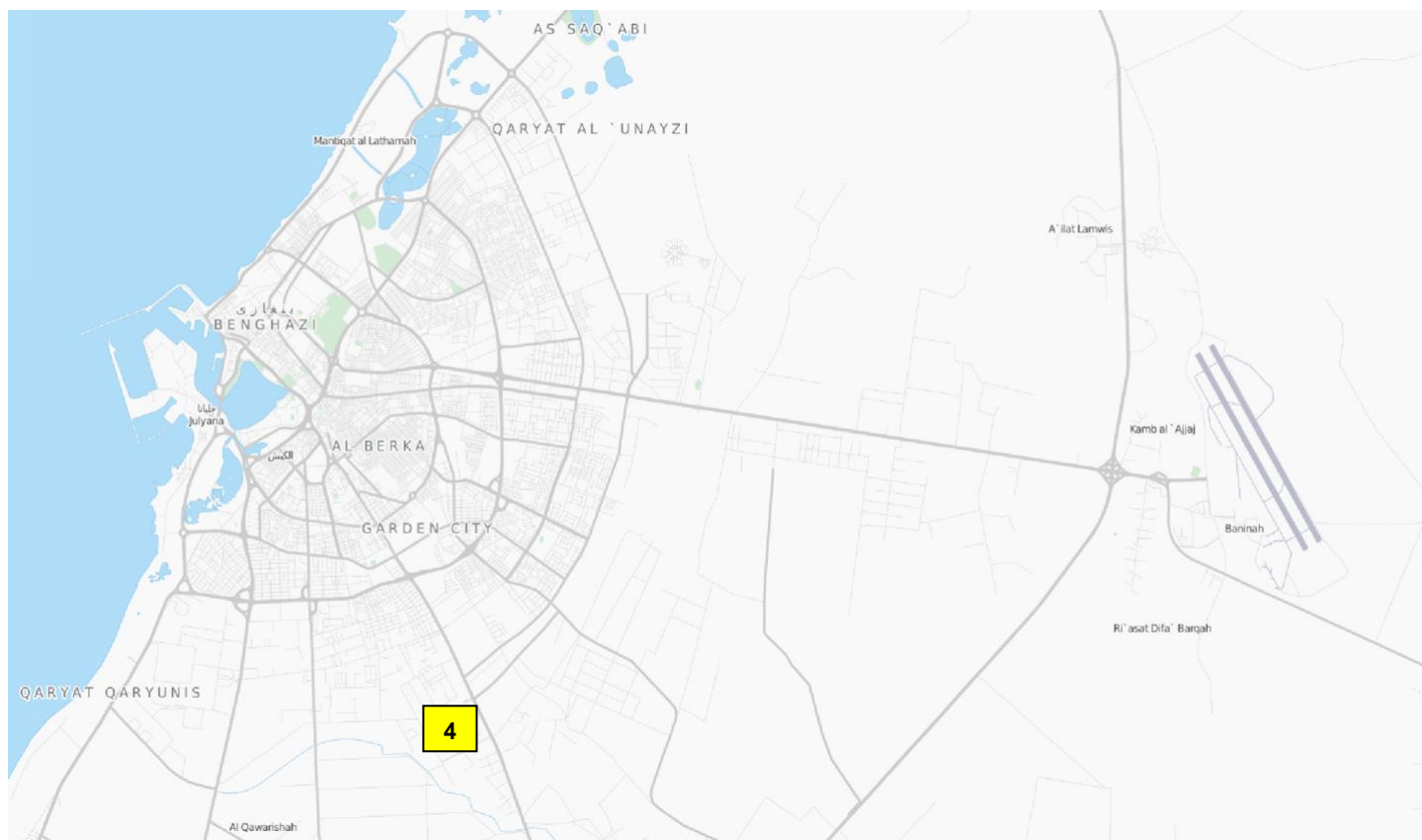
Indiscriminate shelling targeted Khadra Hospital with a shell landing on the building at approximately 1500hrs. There were no immediate reports of casualties. On 06 April, a shell landed on the Khadra Hospital garden resulting in at least one injury among a cleaner and severe damage to the building. Of note, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Yacoub El Hillo, strongly condemned the shelling and noted Hillo noted that the 400-bed Khadra Hospital stood as one of the potential COVID-19 assigned health facilities.

TRB members eliminated in failed GNA attack

Hakim Al-Zayn, senior Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) commander, died in combat in the Ain Zara engagement axis on 06 April. Al-Zayn was in charge of the 42nd battalion and had close ties to TRB commander Haytham Al-Tajouri. The TRB mourned the death of 12 other commanders killed in Ain Zara via its official Facebook page. Of note, LNA forces repelled the GNA attack on the Wadi Al-Rabei frontline resulting in at least 41 fatalities among GNA ranks.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Authorities warn of return to full curfew after confirmed COVID-19 cases in city



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (06 Apr) Police raid illicit wine factory located on farm & arrest one suspect
2. (07 Apr) Municipality Guards in cooperation with relevant bodies inspect trucks carrying goods from Tripoli, Khoms & Egypt
3. (07 Apr) Civil Status Authority branches closed with exception of burial permits in light of coronavirus cases in city
4. (08 Apr) NCDC announces first coronavirus case under isolation in Al-Hawari General Hospital
5. (08 April) Benghazi Security Directorate head warns over potential 24hr curfew after first coronavirus case
6. (10 Apr) Abara Factory (Medical Supplies Factory) closed after found to be operating without license
7. (10 Apr) NCDC confirms three new cases of coronavirus in Benghazi

CDC: total of four cases in Benghazi

The Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) announced three new cases of coronavirus in Benghazi, bringing the total number of cases in-country to 25 as of 10 April. The three new cases recorded in Benghazi were confirmed after 106 suspected samples were tested in Al-Kuwaifiya Hospital. Of note, the CDC announced the first coronavirus case in Benghazi on 08 April. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Ibrahim Bushnaaf extended the 1500-0700hrs curfew across areas under its control until 15 April.

Ashwayrif locals under interrogation in Benghazi

Water cuts across the west followed tensions between Ash-Shwayrif locals and the LNA's head of the region, Mohamed Bin Nayil, over the arrest of several suspects from the area on charges of planting explosives in the area. The suspects are reportedly affiliated with the GNA Southern Protection Force (SPF) commander Ali Kana. Bin Nayil reportedly transferred the suspects to Benghazi for questioning. Subsequently, locals from Ash-Shwayrif demanded the release of their sons, claiming that they were not involved in the attack. Bin Nayil responded by stating that he could not be biased toward his own tribe (Mgarha) and requested them to wait until the investigations were complete. In response, a small group from Ash-Shwayrif raided the water facility control room and forced the technicians to close the valves, resulting in causing water cuts in Tripoli, Tarhunah and Bani Walid, as well as other towns in the West. The Interim Government Prime Minister, Abdallah Al-Thani, condemned the water cuts and referred to the incident as "cowardly" while denying any form of involvement in depriving Tripoli's

residents of water. Al-Thinni stated that despite their political dispute with the GNA, his cabinet would never revert to cutting off water to the people of Tripoli. Al-Thinni claimed that the incident stood as an individual act and is not associated with a particular tribe. To conclude, Al-Thinni called for strict measures to be taken against those responsible and called on the notables and dignitaries of the southern region to urgently intervene in order to restore water to the capital. On 12 April, the factions announced the resumption of water supply to the West for a limited period of time to allow authorities to release their detained relatives.

Asifa Battalion parades in Al-Kish Square

The LNA announced the deployment of a relatively well-equipped battalion dubbed Storm "Asifa" battalion to join Tripoli frontlines. The battalion paraded in Benghazi's Al-Kish Square on 11 April.

Police seize illicit wine factory

Benghazi's Security Directorate reported Al-Magzhab Police Station seized an underground liquor factory located in a farm on 06 April. According to the Directorate, two individuals operated the factory, including the owner of the farm. In addition to alcohol manufacturing, the suspects were also accused of drug use. Police members seized approximately 1,000 Libyan dinars (LYD) in revenue from the sale of intoxicants. One of the suspects was arrested and referred to the Public Prosecution.

6. What's next

Renewed LNA offensive on Abugrein; GNA forces attack Wattiyah airbase

POLITICAL FORECAST

The decision to cut public sector salaries by 20% from next month bodes ill for the GNA. Protests and anti-GNA sentiment are expected to increase in the medium term as a result. The GNA's recent military gains may be short-lived if the LNA proves capable of securing political alliances with anti-GNA elements in the West. Domestically, the east-based interim government is expected to double down on political efforts on the international front to advance the LNA's interests in light of the recent losses endured by Haftar's forces West of Tripoli. This strategy was evident in the statement by the east-based foreign ministry calling on the Turkish people to denounce the dictatorship of Turkish President Erdogan and his AKP party. The statement was published on 13 April and would come after the resignation of Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu due to disagreements with the Erdogan government's curfew measures. On the international front, the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG), Antonio Guterres, launched the search for a new envoy to Libya after the US Mission to the UN refused to endorse the former candidate, former Algerian Foreign minister, Ramtane Lamamra, according to reports citing diplomatic sources. Lamamra stood as the leading contender to take on the role up until early March, though reports indicate the US increasingly questioned his candidacy despite Lamamra's widespread support. Reports indicate Guterres launched the search for a new candidate during a closed-door meeting on Libya. Of note, the former UN envoy to Libya, Ghassan Salame, resigned in early March, citing health reasons. Meanwhile, in a Bloomberg interview published on 10 April, Stephanie Williams referred to the current escalation amid the coronavirus as "reckless" and "inhumane". The acting UN Special Representative added that efforts to audit the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) are being obstructed by Libya's very own Audit Bureau.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

Metin Gurcan for Al-Monitor explores Turkey's recent military support to the GNA and the central role played by aerial capabilities, specifically drones, in the Libyan conflict. The author analyses the recent GNA-led attack on an LNA command centre in Al-Weshka that led to the death of senior commanders. Gurcan argues the LNA's Russian-manufactured Pantsir air defence systems were ineffective in the attack likely because of Turkey's use of the Koral radar jammers. The author's thesis is that the "the conflict in Libya has evolved into limited clashes on the ground, with the real warfare going on in the air. Against a backdrop of old, good-for-nothing helicopters and combat aircraft, it has essentially become drone warfare." The author confirms Turkish Navy Goksu and Gokova frigates have been providing support to GNA forces off the Tripoli-Sabratih coast since February 2020. Gurcan anticipates Ankara's deployment of more advanced HISAR-O surface to air (SAM) system to compensate for the limited air defence support provided by the frigates. The author further argues "Though Operation Peace Storm has relied heavily on armed drones, a Turkish Air Force Boeing E-7T, flying off the coast to provide signal intelligence to Turkish forces on the ground, has been instrumental as well. Besides supplying intelligence about targets on the ground, the plane has tracked LNA drones, using Turkish anti-drone systems to jam and shoot them down." Both the Moscow talks and the Berlin Conference in January appear null and void amid the rekindled fighting and the parties' escalating warfare for airspace control. Despite the UN arms embargo on Libya, both Turkey and the Emirati-Saudi-Egypt bloc have continued to ship weapons to their respective allies. Similarly, Russian mercenaries of the Wagner Group remain in Libya, backing Hifter's forces, even though Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had voiced hope they would withdraw following talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in early March."

SECURITY FORECAST

In Tripoli, LNA forces continue to alternate advances and tactical retreats to bleed GNA forces. LNA forces reached yet again the Rabish Abu Salim on 11 April, before later retreating towards the Rabish Crossroads in the evening. This would be the second documented LNA advance in the vicinity of Rabish Abu Salim over the past two weeks. The development lends further credence to the assessment that LNA intent is to continue pushing northward from the central part of Tripoli's southern frontlines with the ultimate objective of reaching areas with key GNA ministries and buildings at the heart of the capital. The LNA is expected to deploy more resources and prioritize Tripoli frontlines after the recent losses West of Tripoli. Meanwhile, sources reported the LNA is exploiting recent tensions between GNA-aligned Zintan armed factions and Ghut Shaal residents over the killing of a man to rally against Tripoli's authorities. West of Tripoli the situation in Surman, Sabratih, and Al-Ajaylat will remain fluid with the possibility of sporadic attacks and skirmishes between rival factions. GNA forces could attempt to consolidate forces and attack Wattiyah airbase. In Zuwara, sources reported elders are negotiating with the LNA, however, young fighters remain hostile to any LNA presence in the area. The sources indicate Zuwara armed factions have occasionally fired towards LNA positions on the outskirts of the city. Sources reported locals were finding it difficult to acquire essential goods due to the risk of detention when passing through Sabratih and Surman. With these two towns now under GNA control, Zuwara will no longer be encircled, though it remains to be seen whether GNA forces will maintain their positions. In the central region, further skirmishes and LNA incursions are expected in the vicinity of Abugrein and Al-Weshka in the medium term. The GNA will look to expand the range of its UAVs by establishing a new control room in the area after the LNA's targeting of the command & control centre in Abugrein's Commercial Bank

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

Kamel Abdellah provides an overview of the Libyan conflict a year after Haftar's forces attacked Tripoli. Writing for Al-Ahram online, the author describes the current state of affairs on the political front and how prospects for a resolution remain bleak. Abdellah writes "The escalation of the Libyan Civil War into an overt proxy war worked to complicate the situation as never before. Turkey and Russia became the most salient outside players, each backing their respective factions militarily in the field, which alarmed Western powers fearful of the threat this posed to their strategic interests in oil-rich Libya. It was the Turkish and Russian interventions in Libya in 2019 that accelerated moves to convene an international conference on Libya in Berlin on 19 January 2020. Although the conference initiated three "dialogue" tracks, two of which began in Geneva while the third was launched in Cairo in February, the process ran aground on the shoals of the intransigence of the main Libyan factions which remain set on scoring military advances on the ground, despite the fact that neither has been able to secure a definitive upper hand. When the political track stalled after two three-day rounds in Geneva, the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) submitted a draft ceasefire agreement to the joint military committee which has not met again since February. The national dialogue — the third track in the process — failed to get off the ground because most of the invitees insisted on progress in the military track first. At the same time, critics from both sides assailed Salame, accusing him of partiality to the other side. Ultimately, he felt compelled to submit his resignation, ostensibly for health reasons, in early March. Former Algerian foreign minister Ramtane Lamamra was nominated to succeed Salame. Although the veteran diplomat was enthusiastically supported by France, Russia and regional powers, his appointment was held up by Washington, according to a number of diplomatic sources and US news reports. In the interim, on 12 March, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres designated the former deputy head of UNSMIL, Stephanie Williams, as his acting special representative and head of UNSMIL. The move was a sign of the UN's resolve to press forward with the "Berlin process" which is strongly backed by the US."

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