

1. The Big Picture

Egypt mulls intervention after Cairo tribal meeting

The security and political environments remain unchanged in Libya. The week was marked by mounting tensions over a looming battle for Sirte and military intervention by Cairo after talks to resume oil and gas production failed to break the deadlock. Reinforcements from the Government of National Accord (GNA) and Libyan National Army (LNA) continued to flock to Sirte, Gaddafi regime's former stronghold in the central region. But against all odds, Egypt's threat to intervene may be the prelude to de-escalation and a return to the negotiating table.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi met on 15 July with a large delegation of Libyan tribesmen in Cairo, where he declared Egypt will not remain idle in the face of developments posing a threat to both countries' national security. Sisi told the Libyan delegation, comprising approximately 185 tribesmen, that Egypt will only enter Libya at "your request" and leave "at your request too" to protect Libyan sovereignty, according to local media. Sisi added Egypt's armed forces are capable of radically transforming the outlook on the ground in Libya. Sisi stated that the limited progress on the political front after the Cairo declaration on 06 June highlights a lack of commitment to a ceasefire.

Overall, the meeting reflects the growing regional stakes in the Libyan conflict. The tribal delegation's meeting was criticized by pro-GNA figures in Libya as "collusion" with a foreign country. The High Council of Zintan tribes published a statement condemning the move and distancing itself from the "so-called tribesmen representing Libya". Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Erdogan described the meeting as a sign Egypt is engaged in an "illegal" process in Libya by siding with LNA commander Khalifa Haftar. However, the growing involvement of tribes across the country may be a conduit to facilitate de-escalation and avert a full-blown conflict. Of note, the Werfalla tribal council proposed a tribal gathering in Bani Walid on 20 July to defuse tensions. Whether these efforts will yield positive results remains to be seen.

Observers are of the view Egypt is laying the groundwork for an intervention, that will likely be defensive and limited in scope. At the time of writing, the Egyptian parliament formally authorized a military deployment during a closed-door session on 20 July. Of note, the tribal meeting in Cairo would closely follow a statement by the eastern-based House of Representatives (HoR) welcoming Cairo's intervention in Libya.

The assessment that an Egypt-led intervention will be limited is premised on the lack of appetite for a

protracted campaign from both sides. Seen from this angle, an Egyptian intervention can materialize even in the absence of combat in Sirte but will likely remain defensive. Observers agree that timing of the potential intervention will be critical; the state of flux will likely continue as Egypt cannot justify a large-scale intervention until Turkey launches an offensive on Sirte, while Turkey is unlikely to cross the Sirte-Jufra "red line" before consolidating its posture in the western region.

In Tripoli and the west, WB recorded some changes, albeit relatively small, to military formations and positions. First, the newly-formed Joint Force under Al-Fetouri Salim Gharbil, began operations across former combat engagement zones south Tripoli. Second, Misrata's 166 battalion, under the command of Mohammed Baaio, also known as "Al-Hasan" (the horse), was assigned Tripoli International Airport (TIP) by the GNA Ministry of Defence. Meanwhile, the Special Deterrence Force's 20/20 Squad will position forces at Tekbali camp, where training of irregular forces is reportedly underway. These developments would come amid allegations the GNA is considering a cabinet reshuffle. According to reports, GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha will take up the Ministry of Defence position, though there is no evidence to substantiate these claims.

It remains unclear whether these "reforms" were conceived locally, sanctioned by Turkey, or part of broader US-GNA security sector reforms (SSR). Regardless, the changes are proceeding with little opposition and could be tentative signs of emerging power dynamics across the western region. It is likely that Turkey's military presence has deterred relatively smaller factions from publicly opposing the reforms.

In the oil and gas sector, production remains shut despite emerging signs that US-led negotiations are progressing. After the LNA officially announced the continuation of the blockade and presented its three demands to resume production, Washington reportedly pressed the GNA for reforms, specifically the audit of the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) and its parallel branch in the east. Reports suggest the audit is moving ahead after state prosecutor Sadiq Al-Sour demanded that CBL Governor Sadiq Al-Kabir and the head of the Audit Bureau, Khaled Shakshak, proceeded with the payment to Deloitte, the auditor, according to a source cited by Bloomberg.

KEY POINTS

- Egypt formally approves military intervention
- Change in positions across Tripoli & west
- Audit of CBL to go ahead after payment released



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2. National Security Map

GNA vehicles spotted en route to Sirte; NOC condemns militarisation of O&G infratsucture

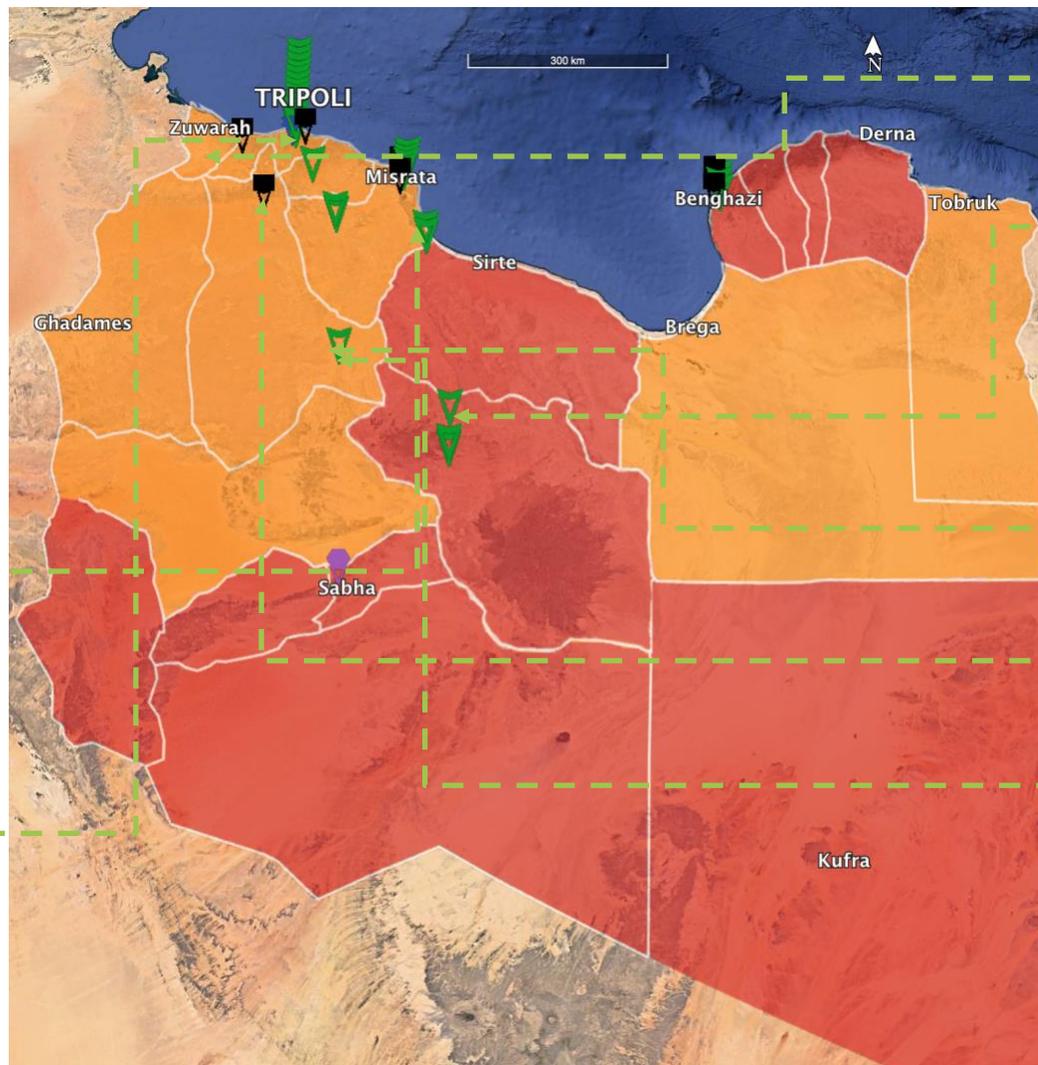
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

- ♣ IED | VBIED
- ♠ Violent Clash
- ♣ Isolated Gunfire
- ♠ Other



Open-source flight tracking software confirmed a Turkish Air Force C-130 cargo aircraft landed directly at Al-Wattiyah Airbase from Turkey on 17 July. Of note, this is the second documented Turkish military aircraft landing directly at the airbase.

Newly-published satellite imagery shows two Su-24 Fencer fighter aircraft parked outside shelters at Jufra airbase on 14 July. The satellite imagery from Planet Labs confirms the Russian-made fighter aircraft, which were condemned by US Africa Command (AFRICOM), continue to operate across Libyan airspace.

Reports indicate a prisoner exchange of eight GNA and LNA forces took place in an unidentified location in the morning 15 July. Details surrounding the nature of the deal struck remain unknown.

Pro-LNA accounts reported an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) airstrike was conducted near Ash-Shwayrif in the afternoon on 14 July. Details surrounding the target remain unclear.

There were reports of explosions and heavy gunfire in Alasaba in the early hours of 15 July. Reports indicate a pro-GNA local militia attempted to arrest a pro-LNA militiaman prompting skirmishes between the latter's relatives and the pro-GNA militia.

The Great Man-Made River Administration reported a group of saboteurs attacked 15 wells of the Al-Hasawna-Sahl Jfara System on 13 July.

The US Department of Defense (Pentagon) published its Lead Inspector General report on East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations, covering Q1 2020 from 01 Jan to 31 March. The report assesses 2500 fighters affiliated to Russian Wagner Group and 3800 Turkey-backed Syrian fighters have been deployed in-country over the reporting period, in the first official estimates from the US government.

Reuters, citing witnesses and GNA military commanders, reported a convoy of approximately 200 vehicles travelled eastwards from Misrata towards Tawergha on 18 July. The development was corroborated across pro-GNA accounts, which reported military reinforcements arriving on the Sirte-Jufra axis.

The GNA extended the COVID-19 curfew from 2100-0600hrs for 15 days effective 18 July. The full curfew on weekends has been cancelled and the new proposed timings will be implemented all days of the week.

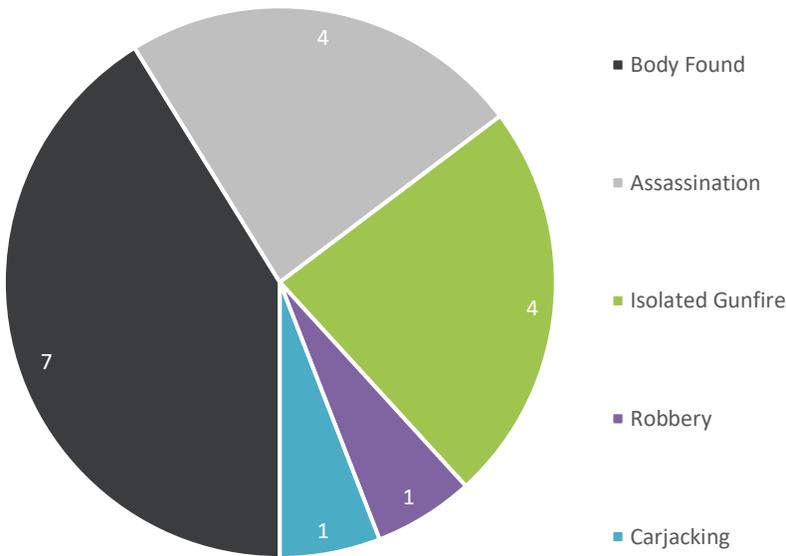
On 18 July, the newly-formed Joint Force conducted fixed and mobile patrols within Tarhuna and south of Tripoli on orders of the Force's commander, Al-Fetouri Salim Gharbil.

The National Oil Corporation (NOC) expressed deep concern at the prospects of a military escalation that could impact oil and gas infrastructure. The NOC condemned the militarisation of oil facilities, including the presence of Janjaweed and Wagner Group private military contractors (PMCs) at Es Sider terminal, and called on the UN to send observers to supervise the demilitarization of key facilities.

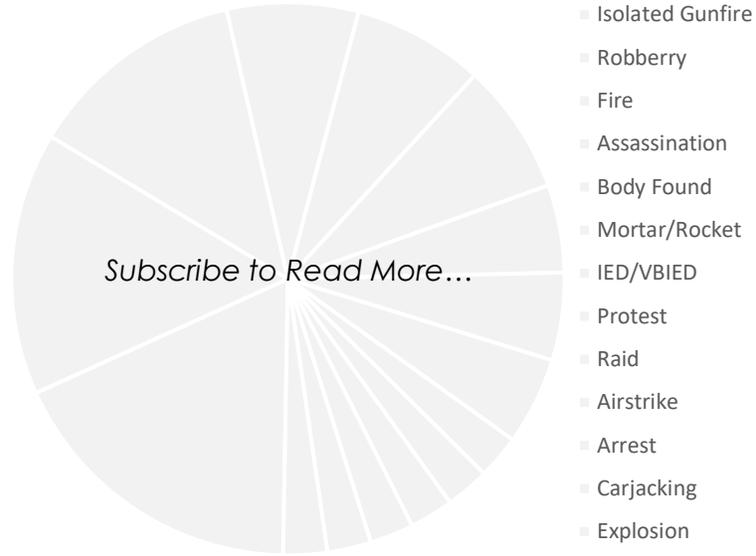
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Criminal activity on rise in west, surge in sporadic incidents in Misrata

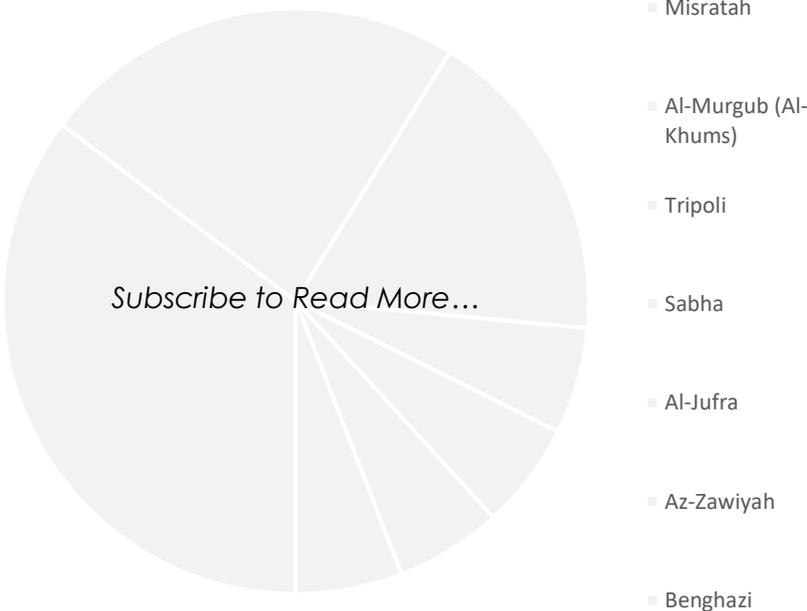
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



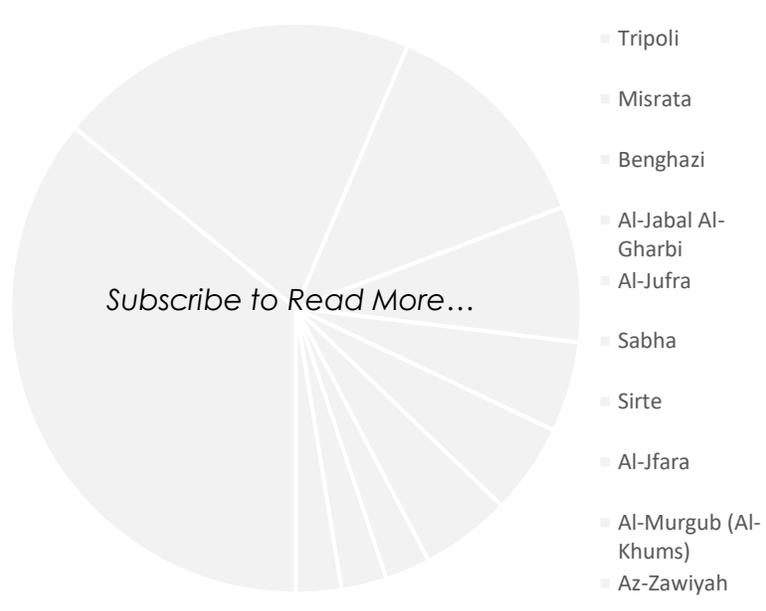
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



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 17 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 12 deaths reported last week and 25 the week before. Seven bodies were found across the western and southern regions, while four assassinations were recorded in Tripoli. Meanwhile, four isolated gunfire cases resulting in subsequent fatalities occurred in Misrata. Meanwhile, two fatalities were recorded in a carjacking and robbery incident in Misrata and Benghazi respectively. In Tripoli, WB recorded five fires, two protests, two robberies, two IED/VBIED incidents, two assassinations and one gunfire incident.

In the wider western region, WB recorded sporadic security incidents across the districts of Misratah, Az-Zawiya, Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi, Al-Murgub, and Al-Jfara. This week saw one airstrike conducted in the Ash-Shwayrif area. Pro-LNA accounts reported an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) airstrike was conducted near Ash-Shwayrif in the afternoon on 14 July. Details surrounding the target remain unclear. Meanwhile, there were reports of explosions and heavy gunfire in Alasaba in the early hours of 15 July. Reports indicate a pro-GNA local militia attempted to arrest a pro-LNA militiaman prompting skirmishes between the latter's relatives and the pro-GNA militia. Separately, the Bani Walid Directorate in cooperation with the Central Support Agency raided a black market petrol station on 15 July. The Directorate reported the raid comes as part of the Municipality's instructions to remove all unlicensed petrol stations. Beyond, The Great Man-Made River Administration reported a group of saboteurs attacked 15 wells of the Al-Hasawna-Sahl Jfara System on 13 July. Equipment inside the control rooms was sabotaged, while electrical wires were cut.

WB recorded a particular surge in criminality across Misrata. Two gunfire incidents, one robbery, one raid, one explosion, one carjacking, one body found and one arrest were recorded throughout the week.

Meanwhile, in the central region, reports of LNA and GNA military reinforcements amid ongoing GNA threats of an imminent attack on the Sirte-Jufra frontline continue to dominate the security environment in the central region and on the Misrata-Sirte border areas. WB recorded LNA forces shelled GNA positions to the west of Sirte and Al-Weshka area between 12-15 July. The latest reports from Reuters indicate 200 GNA vehicles were spotted travelling from Misrata eastwards towards Tawergha on 18 July. Meanwhile, likely in response to ongoing movements in the region, LNA reported fixed and mobile patrols in Sirte, Brega and Ras Lanuf.

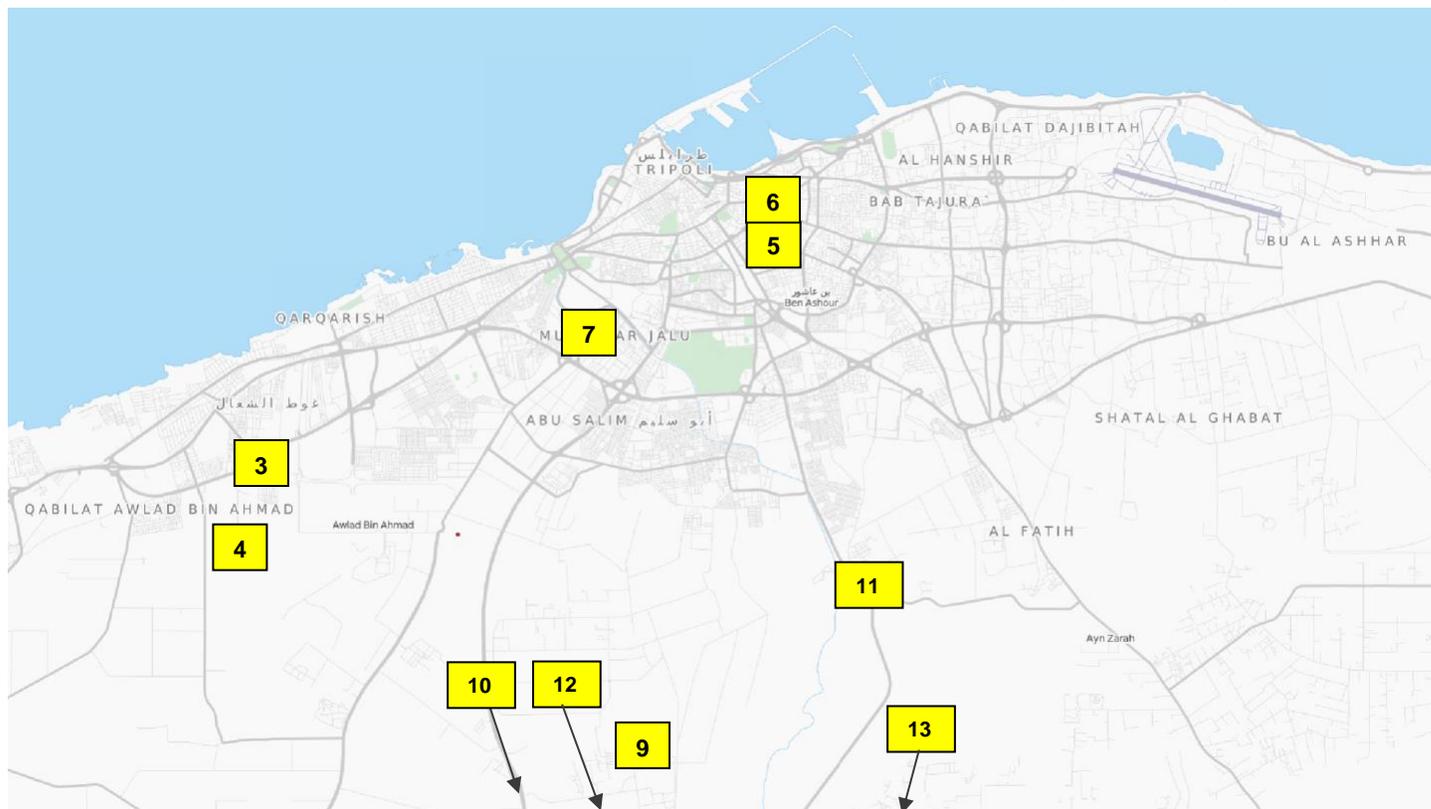
Turning to the south, WB recorded a total of two security incidents in Sabha this week. The Libyan Red Crescent (Sabha branch) located an unidentified body in the Wadi Al-Anz desert area and transferred it to the Sabha Medical Centre on 17 July. Separately, local reports indicate heavy clashes erupted between members of Al-Hasawna tribe in Sabha on 11 July, with no confirmed reports of casualties. WB sources confirmed the clashes erupted after a killer behind the recent death of two brothers in the area was identified over the past week, while noting that this is the second round of clashes prompted by the killing. Sources reported the clashes took place in Sabha's Hay Al-Fatah area.

Separately, on 17 July, Major General Belqasim Al-Abaj, the LNA's southern military region commander, held an extensive meeting with commanders of the Kufra military region to discuss security measures in place and ways to reopen the border crossings with Sudan and Niger after the closures prompted by the COVID-19 crisis. Al-Abaj also discussed new measures to deal with smugglers detained in Kufra, emphasizing that detainees will no longer be held locally and instead sent to prisons in the north. Meanwhile, LNA commander Khalifa Haftar assigned Salim Ali Barka as the Brak Military Region commander on 18 July, succeeding the late Mohammed Bin Nayel who recently died in Benghazi from surgery complications.

In the eastern region, all security incidents were recorded in Benghazi throughout the reporting period. WB recorded two isolated gunfire cases, two robberies, and one mortar/rocket incident. While the eastern region remains relatively stable in contrast to Libya's other regions, this week saw an evident surge in sporadic criminal acts in Benghazi. Beyond Benghazi, pro-GNA accounts claimed a convoy of new military vehicles and artillery was spotted in Tobruk on 14 July. Reports suggest military reinforcements from Egypt were delivered via Tobruk Seaport in April 2020.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Joint Force conducts evacuation ops. in south; MJJ may resume ops. in August



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (16 July) Misrata Fursan Rage BN kill two
2. (17 July) Drug dealers arrested
3. (17 July) GNA Volcano of Rage Op. force found killed near Ghut Shaal roundabout
4. (17 July) Two separate vehicle thefts in Al-Serraj
5. (19 July) Anti-GECOL protest
6. (15 July) Anti-GECOL protest
7. (15 July) BRSC families protest detention of BRSC members on SDF-controlled prison
8. (15 July) Joint Force commander gives armed formations 24hrs to evacuate their HQs
9. (15 July) Deminers remove two cluster bombs & three mortar shells in Al-Hadba Al-Mashro'
10. (14 July) ERW removed on sidewalk in the Airport Road area
11. (14 July) 20/20 Squad to position forces in Tekballi Camp in Salah Eddien in coming days
12. (13 July) Defence Ministry mandate Misrata's 166 Battalion to secure TIP
13. (13 July) Joint Force conducts extensive op. to evacuate squatters from civilian & military buildings in Tripoli's southern areas
14. (13 July) Landmine explodes inside house injuring three children in Khallat Al-Furjan

Drug dealers arrested

The Libyan Customs Authority reported the Anti-Smuggling and Drugs Department (Tripoli) arrested a gang of drug dealers in the capital city on 17 July. The Authority reported the gang includes men and women who engage in narcotics trafficking. The suspects were found in possession of a large amount of cannabis resin (hash) and psychotropic pills.

Anti-GECOL protests

WB sources reported the civilian "Movement of Change" held an anti-General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) protest in front of the Prime Minister's Office in Tripoli's Ben Ashour area at approximately 1130hrs on 19 July. A similar protest was held on 15 July. Of note, the GNA Prime Minister Fayeze Al-Serraj previously met with GECOL's general assembly during which they agreed to appoint a new board of directors at GECOL in a scheduled meeting on 19 July.

Two killed by Misrata Fursan Rage Battalion

Reports indicate Misrata's Fursan Rage Battalion members killed two individuals, one of which was an aide to the Battalion's commander in Tripoli in the evening on 16 July. Details surrounding the motive behind the killing remain unknown.

GNA member found killed ivo Ghut Shaal

Reports indicate a GNA Volcano of Rage Op. member was found killed near Tripoli's Ghut Shaal roundabout in the evening on 17 July. The member was a resident of the Soug Al-Juma'aa area. The motive behind his killing remains unknown.

MJJ to reportedly resume ops by early August

Local reports speculate Mitiga International Airport (MJJ) will fully resume operations by early August. While the development remains unverified by

competent authorities, there have been recent reports of ongoing maintenance work at the airport to accelerate the resumption of operations. Of note, satellite imagery from 14 July confirms damage to hangars in MJJ's military section. The satellite imagery also confirms the presence of a likely Korkut Turkish air defence system at the airport.

AFRICOM: landmines & IEDs planted by Wagner

The US Africa Command (AFRICOM) stated that it acquired verified photographic evidence of "Russian employed state-sponsored Wagner Group" planting landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in and around Tripoli in violation of the United Nations (UN) arms embargo, while endangering civilian lives. AFRICOM stated that the evidence shows booby-traps and minefields being placed around the outskirts of Tripoli extending to Sirte since mid-June, which were "introduced into Libya by the Wagner Group."

BRSC families call for release of relatives

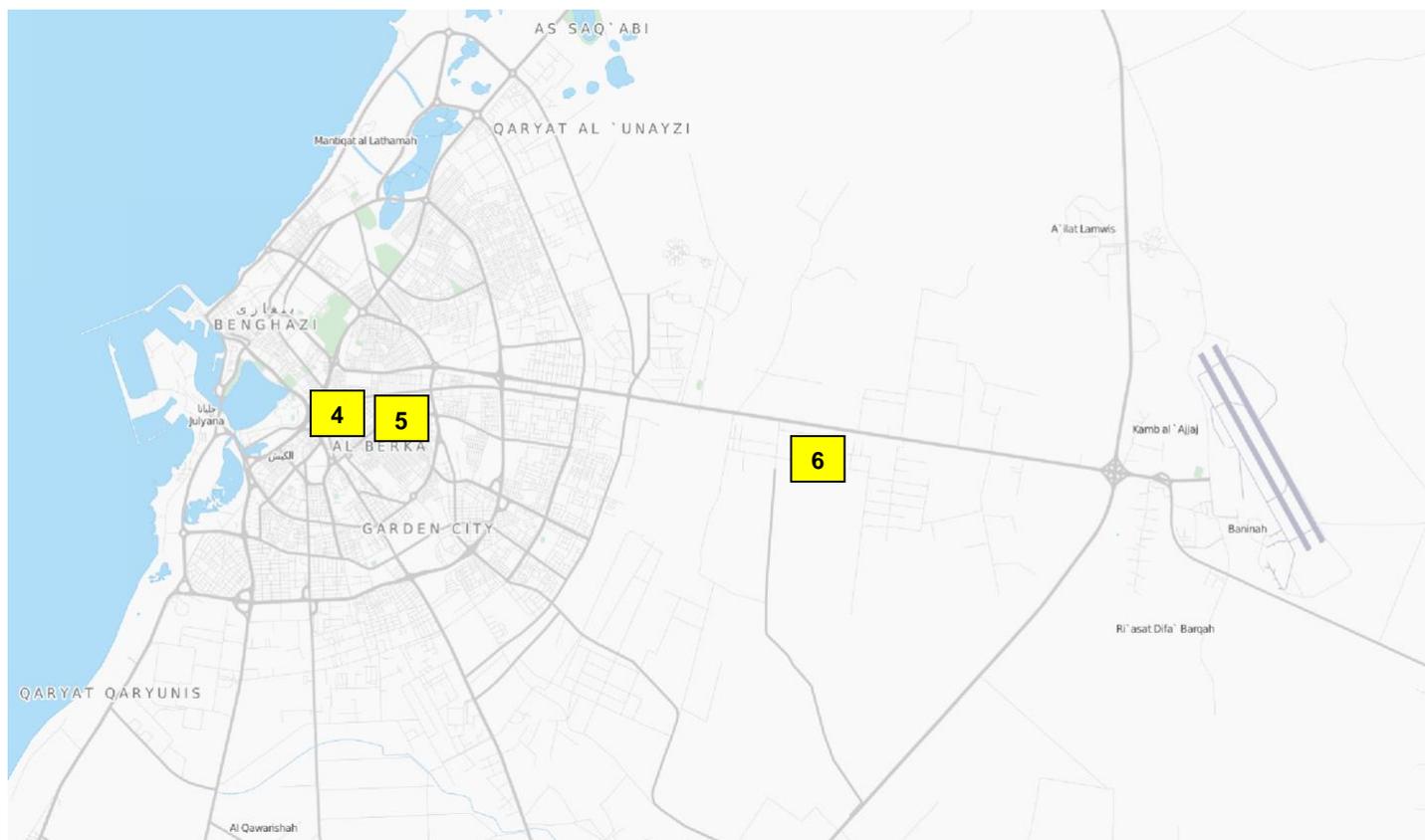
Relatives of Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council (BRSC) members protested against the detention of BRSC members in the Special Deterrence Force (SDF)-controlled Mitiga prison in front of the GNA's Justice Ministry at approximately 1500hrs on 15 July. The protestors called on the Ministry to facilitate their release.

Joint Force calls on armed groups to evacuate HQs

The head of the newly-formed Joint Force, Al-Fetouri Salim Gharbil, extended an official letter to all armed formations to evacuate their headquarters within 24hrs in order for competent authorities to retake the buildings and impose the "rule of law" on 15 July. Reports indicate the armed formations are positioned across an estimated 12 civilian buildings in the areas of Al-Hadba, Salah Eddien, Al-Sedra Road and Al-Shouk Road.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Surge in sporadic criminal acts; delayed salaries to be processed across east



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (16 July) Interior Ministry's Financial Administration processes delayed salaries
2. (15 July) CID arrests four suspects on charges of stealing 15,000 LYD
3. (15 July) Indiscriminate shell lands on children's care home
4. (14 July) Prominent LNA commander dies due to surgery complications
5. (14 July) Gunmen raid cake shop and open fire on workers
6. (14 July) Suspect arrested on charges of opening fire on security forces
7. (11 July) Egyptian man kills local in house burglary in the Boatni area

Delayed salaries processed across east

The financial administration of the eastern-based interior ministry processed employees' delayed salary payments for May, June, and July. In a letter dated 16 July, the financial administration reported it received liquidity from the interim government ministry of finance and will process the salaries on 20 July. The salaries include security directorates and other key agencies under the interim government ministry of interior. Travellers are advised to operate with caution in the vicinity of financial institutions in Benghazi this week as crowding is expected and tensions may escalate into disputes. Delayed salary payments from other organisations are also expected to be processed the week starting 19 July.

CID arrests four thieves

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) under Benghazi's Security Directorate arrested four suspects on charges of stealing 15,000 Libyan dinars (LYD) from a local on 15 July. The victim requested two individuals to fix his vehicle and during their inspection of the vehicle they noticed the amount of money and subsequently planned to steal it. The suspects stated that the vehicle needed repair parts and proceeded to a garage, after which two of the suspects' associates arrived and smashed the vehicle's windows and stole the money.

Prominent LNA commander dies

Reports confirm the death of prominent former regime and LNA Barqa Military Region commander, Maj. Gen. Mohammed Bin Nayel, in Benghazi from

surgery complications. Bin Nayel was from the Megarha tribe and exerted influence across Libya's Fezzan region by leading the pro-LNA 12th Battalion. Bin Nayel was instrumental in negotiating a ceasefire and mediating between factions in Sabha.

Armed raid on cake shop

Reports indicate gunmen dressed in plain clothes raided a cake shop and opened fire on the workers resulting in two injuries, before fleeing the scenes in Al-Berka area in the afternoon on 14 July. The altercation was reportedly due to the fact an unidentified vehicle parked in front of the shop, prompting staff to request the driver to park in a different location. The driver refused and called on his relatives in the area to intervene, resulting in the incident.

Three security forces injured in shooting

Benghazi's Security Directorate arrested an individual on charges of opening fire on security forces resulting in three injuries in the Ruwaisat area on 14 July. The suspect opened fire on security forces as they attempted to arrest him on criminal charges. The suspect was seized in possession of several firearms and intoxicants.

Indiscriminate shell lands on care home

Reports indicate an indiscriminate shell landed on a children's care home in an unidentified location in Benghazi at night on 15 July. No casualties were recorded. Unconfirmed reports suggest a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) was launched from a nearby area during a wedding celebration.

6. What's next

Egypt deploys on Libyan side of border; negotiations continue

POLITICAL FORECAST

Diplomacy continues to be limited to backchannel negotiations. The tribal element is gaining momentum in negotiations. Multiple tribes in the west called for a national conference to resolve the conflict internally. Regionally, Algerian President Abdelmajid Tebboune told local media that multiple negotiation channels are open between Algiers, Moscow, Cairo, Tunis, Paris, and Ankara. Tebboune reiterated his country's intent to facilitate a Libyan-Libyan diplomatic solution with Tunis. Further, Tebboune warned that arming tribes risks transforming Libya into Somalia, a scenario he described as worse than a "Syrianization" of the Libyan conflict. Tebboune's comments were described by observers as a tacit reference to Egypt's recent threats to intervene militarily. Further, the week was marked by threats of sanctions from EU countries. On the sidelines of the EU Summit in Brussels on 18 July, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte called on all foreign powers to stop interfering in Libya and respect the United Nations (UN) arms embargo. Of particular note, the three countries threatened sanctions should breaches of the embargo at sea, land, or air continue. The development would mark the first time the three countries threaten sanctions amid increased fears of a military confrontation in Libya's central region and subsequent risk of regional escalation. The statement, however, did not point to a particular party in the conflict, although Turkey was the likely target. Similar threats were recently echoed by the US, warning that any party undermining Libya's economy and clinging to military escalation will face the risk of isolation and sanctions. In a separate development, Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and his American counterpart Donald Trump, agreed on further cooperation in Libya to ensure stability in a telephone conversation on 14 July. According to the Turkish presidency, the two sides also discussed bilateral relations and a trade target of 100 billion US dollars (USD).

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

The US Department of Defense (Pentagon) published its Lead Inspector General report on East Africa and North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operations, covering Q1 2020 from 01 Jan to 31 March. The report assesses 2500 fighters affiliated to Russian Wagner Group and 3800 Turkey-backed Syrian fighters have been deployed in-country over the reporting period, in the first official estimates from the US government. The report adds that Turkey's deployments likely increased ahead of the military operation to drive out LNA forces from the western region. Furthermore, the report confirms that Russia and Syria agreed to deploy 300-400 former Syrian opposition rebels from Quneitra to Libya for 1000 USD per month. Meanwhile, the report states the US military found no evidence that the Syrian mercenaries and fighters were affiliated with the Islamic State (IS) or Al-Qaeda (AQ). The report confirms the financial motive behind the fighters' presence in Libya. An excerpt from the report reads "It appears that the Wagner Group mercenaries in Libya also include some Syrian fighters. Shortly after the end of the quarter, USAFRICOM, citing social media, reported that an undisclosed number of Syrian fighters are "traveling" to Libya to support the Wagner Group and LNA. According to media reporting, Russia and the Syrian government initially agreed to send 300 to 400 fighters from Quneitra in southwest Syria to Libya. The fighters are former Syrian opposition rebels who reportedly agreed to fight in the Libyan civil war in exchange for \$1,000 per month and clemency from the Assad regime."

SECURITY FORECAST

The military build-up continues in the central region with no significant developments recorded over the reporting period. Meanwhile, the civil aviation ban has been extended by 15 days, but outbound flights are set to resume from Misrata International Airport (MRA) by 26 July. An inspection of the airport is slated for 24 July to ensure compliance with safety measures, especially COVID-19 preventive measures. Commercial operations at Mitiga International Airport (MJI) could resume in 15 days, though the surge in COVID-19 cases will likely limit the scope of flights operated from MJI. Meanwhile, open-source reports suggest the Turkish Air Force operated multiple cargo flights directly into Al-Wattiyah, while two Su-24 aircraft were spotted at Jufra airbase. In Tripoli, after weeks of civilian-led service delivery protests, the General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) appointed a new board of directors headed by Abdulsalam Al-Ansari. The development is expected to temporarily alleviate local grievances but is unlikely to provide a permanent fix to the power crisis across the western region. More protests and disruptions are expected during summer. Further, in Tripoli and the west, shifts in formations and military structures are expected in the next few weeks amid efforts to implement reforms. Factions are yet to publicly oppose the reforms. Reports allege the reorganization and training of forces is underway in Tekballi and Yarmouk camps. The presence of Turkish forces acts as a deterrent and limits the likelihood of armed opposition to the reforms. Skirmishes, however, are possible. Meanwhile, skirmishes were reported at a petrol station in Misrata between the Mahjoub brigade and another faction. Similar skirmishes are expected across the western region amid long queues and soaring temperatures. In the southern region, sources reported fuel shortages in Sabha and other key towns. The LNA is expected to continue reconnaissance sorties in the area in the short term. Of note, LNA aircraft have been spotted over the Wadi Al-Shatti area over the past few weeks.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an article published by *Eurasia Review*, defence expert Egypt Defense Review, provides granular commentary on the challenges Egypt's armed forces may encounter in Libya if an intervention was to materialize. The article reads "If Cairo does intend to move towards the Sirte-Jufra line, then it would impose several logistical and operational challenges for Egypt's army and its relatively short-legged air force. These two military branches would likely play the most important role in any deployment. Rather than mimic Turkey's relatively light footprint (which is partly due to limitations in geography and distance, too), Egypt's exercise posturing indicates that any move into its neighbor is likely to include serious conventional formations, which include armored brigades, tactical fighter wings, and navy warships." However, Egypt Defense Review warns that the risk of miscalculation is high. Despite the challenges facing an Egypt intervention, the threat of a military campaign should not be downplayed. "While Cairo has been known to redraw its red lines and redefine its interests in Libya, the brazen threat of military action from the country's president and the very public nature of its military posturing requires some semblance of victory and assurance that its interests are not at risk before it can reasonably climb down the escalation ladder. Should this opportunity not make itself available, then the prospect of clashes in the Mediterranean between Egypt and Turkey may be the inevitable result of an inertia that forces these geopolitical foes to rise to each other's challenges without the presence of any avenues through which they could reasonably backdown without losing face or abandoning their respective campaigns."

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