



1. The Big Picture

Ceasefire commitment overshadowed by wave of protests

The week starting 17 August was relatively eventful in Libya with commitment to a ceasefire expressed by the Government of National Accord (GNA) and House of Representatives (HoR) speaker Aguila Saleh as anti-corruption protests gained in size and frequency across GNA constituencies, including the capital Tripoli. This week's on-the-ground developments serve as another reminder of the general discrepancy between local dynamics and top-down approaches to conflict resolution in Libya at the negotiating table.

On 21 August, GNA Prime Minister Fayez Al-Serraj announced cessation of all military operations, and transition to parliamentary and presidential elections by March 2021. Meanwhile, in what was widely perceived as a coordinated announcement, the HoR's Aguila Saleh called for a truce and the establishment of Sirte as the seat for a new Presidential Council (PC) to be guarded by security forces from Libya's various regions. Both sides called for demilitarising the Sirte-Jufra region and agreed on the need for a joint police force to secure the area. The two sides also called for oil production to resume with revenues deposited into an overseas bank account and frozen until a political settlement is met.

On paper, the ceasefire announcement is a positive development and the result of weeks of international mediation by foreign stakeholders. However, there is evidence to suggest the announcement risks exacerbating existing political divisions across Libya. Challenges remain ahead, and critics argue the ceasefire declaration is viewed locally as a political move between Al-Serraj and Saleh as actors responding to international pressure but whose credibility on the ground has taken a hit over the past few years. The critics described the ceasefire as evidence of short-termism and a "last-ditch" attempt to buy time and delay reforms.

In brief, while the alignment reached between opposing blocs sets the stage for a potential new phase in the Libyan stalemate, ceasefire prospects remain significantly limited. Multiple factors undermine the prospect of a lasting ceasefire, including the fact the latest commitment is not shared across the board in GNA and LNA camps. On the LNA side, observers argue Saleh's capability to enforce a ceasefire is relatively limited as LNA commander Khalifa Haftar continues to hold sway over some local military decisions. Haftar, who is widely perceived as having an uneasy alliance with the HoR speaker, has previously rejected the notion of turning Sirte into a demilitarized area. This was recently echoed by LNA spokesman Ahmed Al-Mesmari who rejected the demilitarization of Sirte. Saleh's move is expected to contribute to Haftar's local posture in the eastern region as some pro-LNA voices were critical of the alignment with Al-Serraj.

In GNA ranks, the High Council of State (HCS) under Khaled Al-Mishri, responded by rejecting dialogue with Haftar and stressing the need for the GNA to extend control over the entire Libyan territory. For his part, hardliner Salah Badi who leads Misrata's Al-Sumood Brigade issued a statement referring to Al-Serraj as a "weak" figure unable to lead the battlefield. Badi reiterated commitment to pursue their military operations in Sirte.

On the military front, it remains to be seen whether commitment from Al-Serraj and Saleh will translate into a viable demilitarised solution along the Sirte-Jufra axis. LNA and GNA forces remain skeptical and have doubled down on bellicose rhetoric and preparations for engagement. In fact, LNA spox. Al-Mismari described Al-Serraj's ceasefire declaration as "smoke screen" for an offensive on Sirte and Jufra. Meanwhile, the latest reports at the time of writing indicate GNA forces (largely made up of Misrata factions) remain in position across Sirte frontlines, despite calls for

a withdrawal by the Sirte-Jufra Operations Room commander Ibrahim Bait Al-Mal on 22 August.

More importantly, away from the negotiating table, civil unrest painted a different picture of local sentiment. Hundreds of demonstrators with various inclinations took to the streets across Tripoli, Zawiya, Misrata, and as far as Sabha in the south. While corruption is the central motive behind the protests, observers argue some protesters see the latest movement as an opportunity to voice their opposition to the GNA. The protests closely followed similar mobilisations in support of Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi assuming power across Bani Walid, Badr, Kufra, Sabha, Taraghin, and Sirte on 20 August. The pro-Gaddafi calls have been gradually gaining momentum and have reportedly resulted in counter-protests and arrests across the country. In Benghazi, reports indicate security forces cordoned off Al-Kish Square in anticipation of a pro-Gaddafi mobilization. Meanwhile, in Zawiya for instance, local sources point to a conflation of motives behind the latest protests. Locals took to the streets not only to denounce corruption but also oppose reforms by GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha. In addition, sources suggest the protests may be seen as an opportunity by rival security forces to settle disputes at a local level.

In Tripoli, at approximately 2300hrs on 23 August, the Fursan Janzour Battalion reportedly opened fire on protesters specifically at the Al-Ghiran Roundabout. In addition, reports suggest the Zintani General Security Apparatus under Emad Trabelsi fired warning shots at the Ghut Shaal Roundabout. The use of force was widely condemned by the UN and other political organisations, prompting the GNA Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Tripoli Protection Force (TPF) to distance themselves from the incident and support an investigation. Protests against living conditions across Tripoli, Zawiya, and other GNA constituencies stand as the latest sign of mounting pressure on the GNA cabinet to enact reforms. The protests, which have so far evolved along apolitical lines, provide an opportunity for factions opposed to Al-Serraj across the political spectrum. Observers are of the view what initially began as peaceful protests to denounce living conditions may morph into a political crisis with far reaching consequences for the GNA cabinet, if the protests gain momentum and do not subside.

The GNA may bank on Ankara's support to provide temporary fixes to the power crisis and other key issues impacting civilians, though observers argue this will do little to boost the GNA's legitimacy and help navigate complex realities on the ground, especially in cities such as Zawiya where the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) formally announced its dissolution. Overall, political risk is forecast to increase in the medium term and protests set to intensify amid preparations for municipal elections. Government building, local security forces, and other high-profile assets are exposed to civil unrest with the potential for road closures and other disruption to operations with little prior notice.

In the oil and gas sector, optimism was short-lived after the LNA's move to temporarily allow the export of stored condensates. In response, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) maintained the force majeure clause across key terminals until armed forces evacuate. The blockade on oil exports is expected to continue in the medium term, especially given the current context of political divisions in the western region, which provide the LNA with further incentives to maintain the blockade to pressure the GNA.



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KEY POINTS

- GNA & eastern HoR ceasefire alignment
- Support for ceasefire not unanimous
- Blockade on oil exports set to continue; FM holds

2. National Security Map

Haftar orders reopening of ports to ease power crisis; nationwide protests

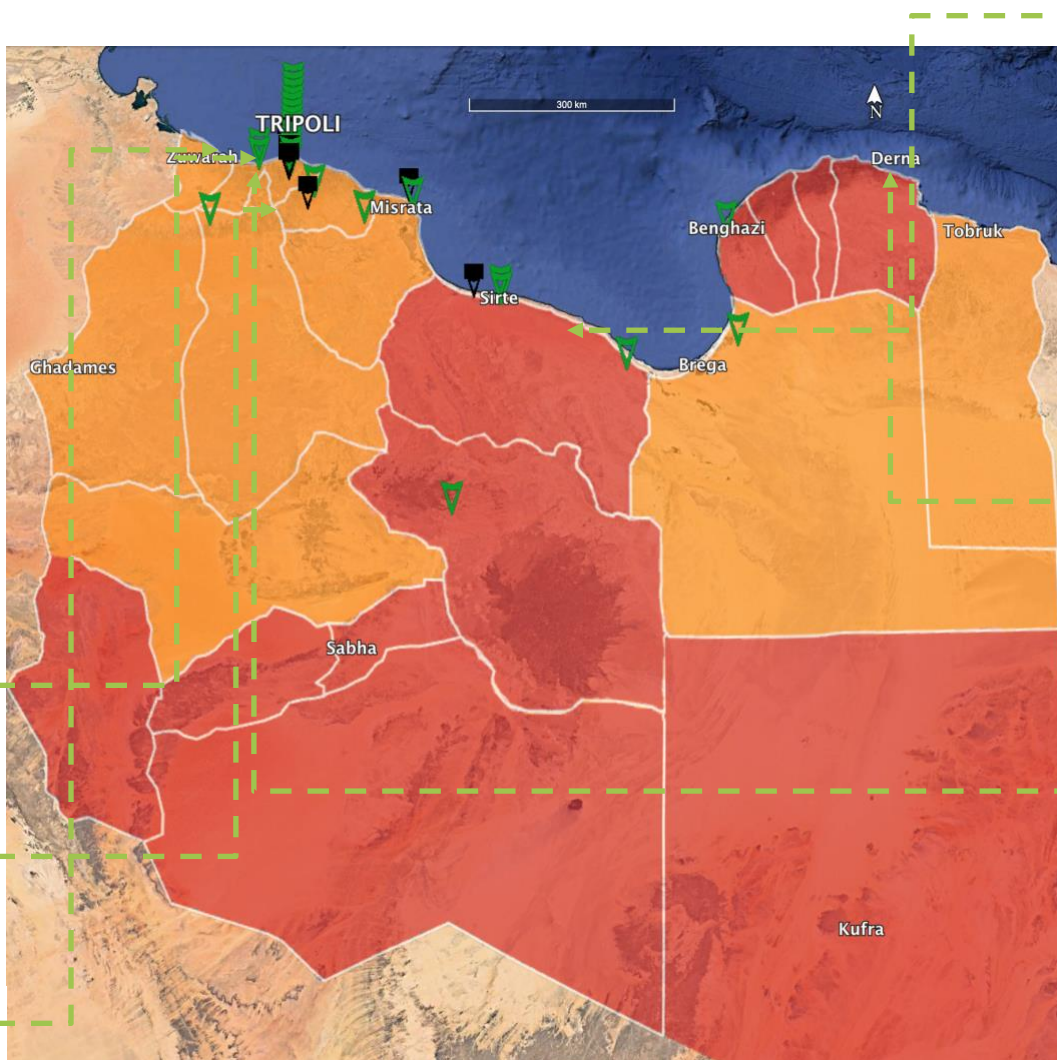
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



Reports indicate two LNA-affiliated helicopters flew at low altitude over the Oil crescent region, east of Sirte, at approximately 1700hrs on 20 August.

A series of protests in support of Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi assuming power in Libya were held across various Libyan cities on 20 August, including Bani Walid, Badr, Sirte, Sabha, Taraghin, and Al-Kufra.

The eastern Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) Naji Al-Maghrabi announced the reopening of oil ports to export condensate stored in tanks in order to ease the electricity crisis after the blockade led to cuts in gas production used for power generation. Maghrabi's statement was televised and came at the orders of the LNA commander Khalifa Haftar.

Following a protest held by employees of Derna's electricity sector calling for the Interim Government Prime Minister Abdallah Al-Thnni to facilitate the release of their detained colleague Mohammed Faraj Idris on 16 August, local reports indicate Idris was released by security services after eight days of detention.

Reports indicate locals held protests in Al-Zawiya and Riqdalin on 22 August to denounce the latest maneuvers by the GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha in the western region, in addition to deteriorating living conditions. In Al-Zawiya, reports indicate protesters vandalised police institutions at approximately 0130hrs. Meanwhile, protesters closed roads across Riqdalin at approximately 0300hrs.

Pro-LNA accounts claimed Zawiya militias kidnapped four locals from Zuwara as they were travelling along Al-Zawiya's Coastal Road in the evening on 17 August. Reports indicate they were kidnapped in connection to the dispute that erupted at Ra's Ajdir after a military convoy affiliated with Zawiya armed factions raided the border crossing in an attempt to seize it from Zuwara armed factions controlling the border. Additional unconfirmed reports allege Zuwara declared a state of emergency in the city following the incident at Ras Ajdir.

Reports indicate skirmishes erupted between local militias, resulting in the complete destruction of a petrol station and death of two militiamen in Al-Zawiya in the afternoon on 22 August. The skirmishes were reportedly over a fuel smuggling deal.

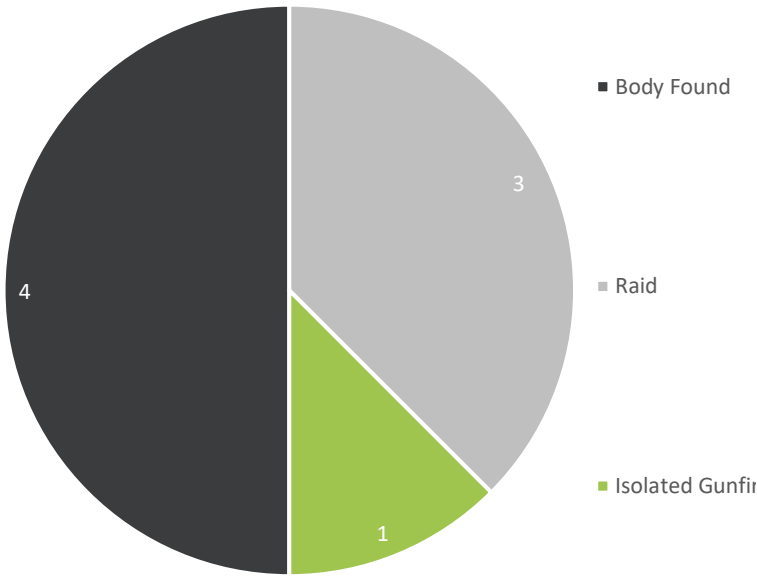
Reports indicate a convoy of approximately 400 military vehicles affiliated with the Joint Force entered Gharyan & Alasaba in the afternoon on 22 August. The convoy was reported heading towards Mizdah and Ash Shwayrif. The latter was corroborated by pro-LNA accounts reporting that a GNA-affiliated military convoy passed through Mizdah and heading towards Ash Shwayrif in the afternoon of 22 August.

Local reports indicate unidentified gunmen kidnapped two cousins from Al-Zawiya in the Melittah area, who were found dead with signs of gunshots on a beach in Sabrata later that night on 20 August. Separately, local reports indicate a 26-year-old man from Riqdalin was found killed on a beach in Sabrata on the same day. It remains unclear if there is any link between the two incidents.

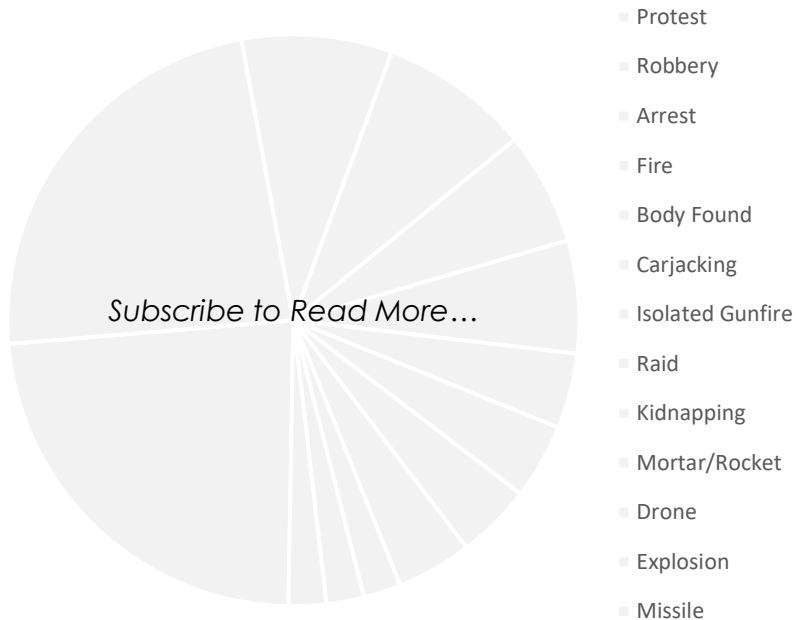
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Decrease in gunfire cases & no deaths in Tripoli; Zawiya incidents on rise

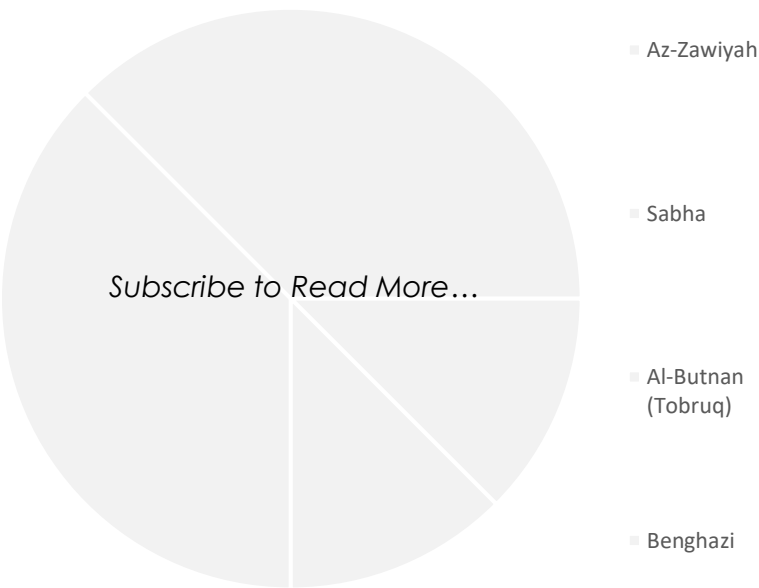
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



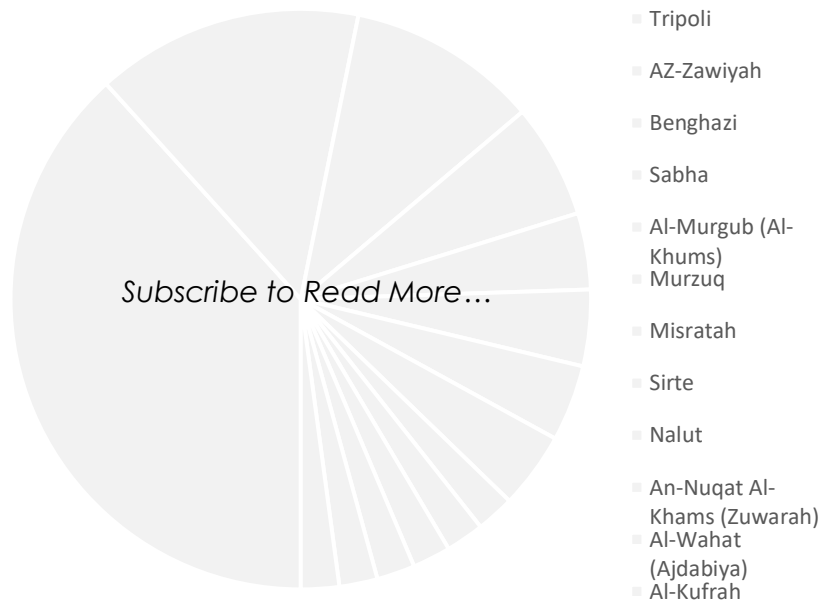
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



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 08 confirmed deaths in Libya compared with 14 deaths reported last week and 12 the week before. The fatalities recorded came as a result of an LNA raid in Ghadduwa, south of Sabha, resulting in three deaths among Islamic State (IS) ranks, as well as two bodies found in Al-Zawiya, one body found in Tobruk and an isolated gunfire case involving security forces in Benghazi. In Tripoli, WB recorded 9 robberies, 3 carjackings, 2 fires, one isolated gunfire case, one mortar/rocket removed, one protest, and one raid. No deaths were recorded in the Tripoli district throughout the reporting period.

In the wider western region, WB recorded an explosion and robbery in the Al-Murgub district. Meanwhile, in Al-Zawiya, WB recorded two cases of bodies found, one kidnapping, one arrest, one missile removed, and one protest. In addition, two protests were held in Bani Walid. Beyond Tripoli, the majority of security incidents were recorded in Al-Zawiya. Local reports indicate unidentified gunmen kidnapped two cousins from Al-Zawiya in the Melitta area, who were found dead with signs of gunshots on a beach in Sabrata at night on 20 August. There are no further details. Separately local reports indicate a 26-year-old man from Riqdalin was found killed on a beach in Sabrata on 20 August. Further, reports indicate locals held protests in Al-Zawiya and Riqdalin on 22 August to denounce the latest maneuvers by the GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha in the western region, in addition to deteriorating living conditions. In Al-Zawiya, reports indicate protesters vandalised police institutions at approximately 0130hrs. Meanwhile, protesters closed roads across Riqdalin at approximately 0300hrs. Of note, a similar incident was reported in Al-Zawiya at approximately 2230hrs on 20 August.

Meanwhile, in the central region, there were no reports signaling a potential confrontation on the Sirte-Jufra front. A cautious calm in the area along with an absence of reports of military reinforcements arriving in the area came after the GNA Prime Minister Fayez Al-Serraj and the House of Representatives (HoR) speaker Aguilu Saleh announced separate nationwide ceasefires, including on the Sirte-Jufra front. As a result, the GNA's Sirte-Jufra Operations Room commander, Ibrahim Bait Al-Mal, welcomed Fayez Al-Serraj's announcement of an immediate nationwide ceasefire and subsequently called on his forces to immediately withdraw from the Sirte and Jufra areas on 22 August. The Room's compliance with the ceasefire declaration came during an extensive meeting led by Al-Mal at their headquarters west of Sirte. Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports allege a convoy of over 50 military vehicles affiliated with Misrata's Al-Sumood Brigade led by Salah Badi entered a valley in Bani Walid at night on 22 August. The reports allege Badi's forces are preparing to launch an attack on the LNA-controlled Al-Jufra Airbase. While the reports remain unfounded on the ground thus far, the Brigade issued recently a statement rejecting Fayez Al-Serraj's calls for an immediate nationwide ceasefire and stressed that it would pursue its military operations in the Sirte-Jufra region.

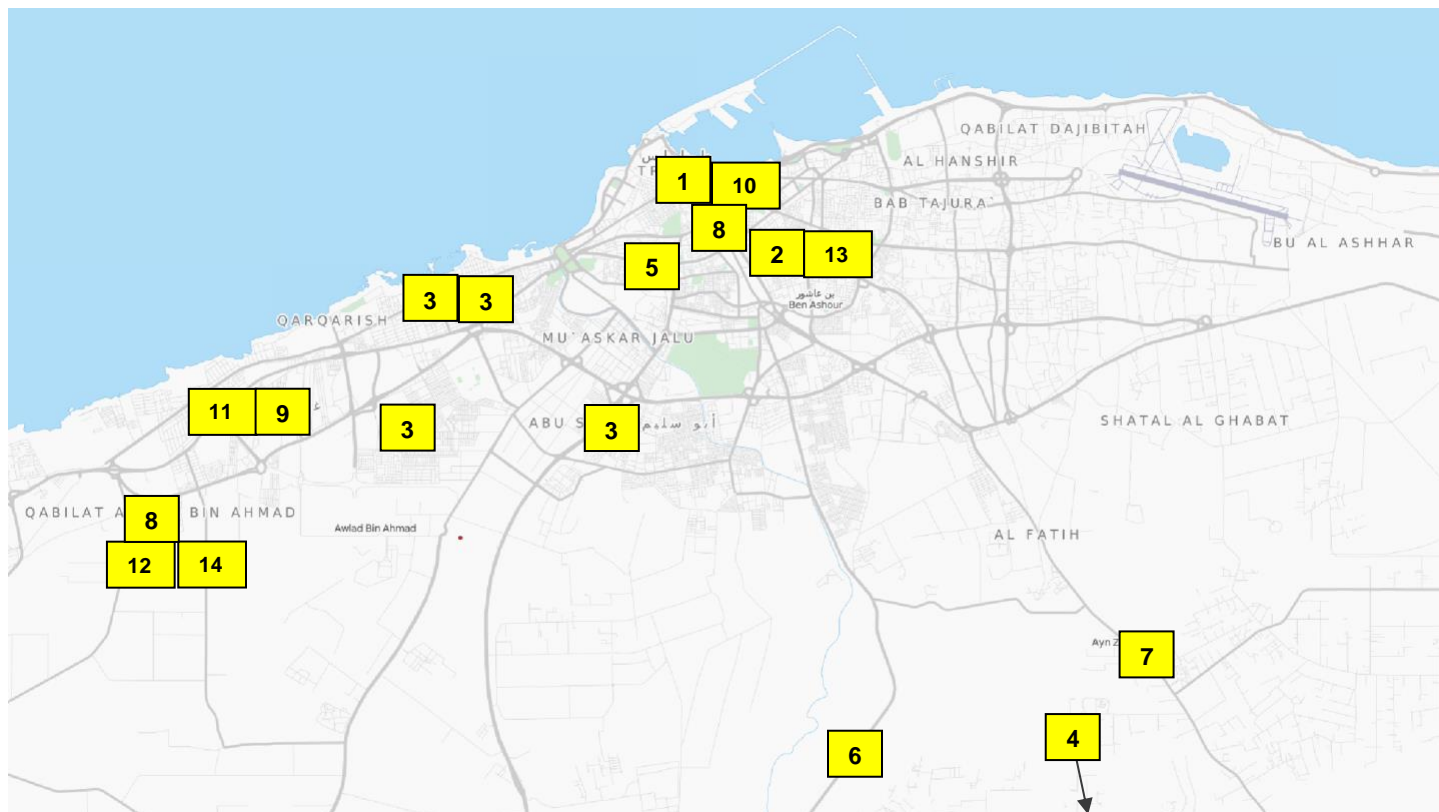
In Sirte, WB recorded locals protested in support of Khalifa Haftar on 20 August. The latter came amid a series of pro-Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi protests held across the country on the same day. Separately, Sirte's Al-Qardabiya Martyrs' Equestrian Club head, Hamad Al-Ghalibi, reported that the headquarters was subject to theft, tampering, and arson by unidentified assailants in the early hours of 15 August. Al-Ghalibi stated that horse riding equipment was burned and looted. There are no further details.

Turning to the south, unlike the pattern witnessed over the past two weeks where no security incidents were recorded in the region, this week WB recorded three incidents in the Sabha district, two in Murzuq, and one in the Wadi Al-Shatti district. In the Sabha district, two local protests were held to denounce deteriorating living conditions with protesters holding banners written on them "revolution of poverty". In addition, LNA's Tariq Bin Ziyad Battalion raided an Islamic State (IS) hideout in Ghadduwah resulting in three deaths among IS ranks after skirmishes erupted between the two sides. Meanwhile, in Taraghin, a protest calling for Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi to assume power in Libya in light of deteriorating living conditions took place. In addition, a fire broke out across several farms in Taraghin's Basco area. Beyond, reports indicate an unidentified unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) flew over some areas in Wadi al Shatii district at night on 15 August.

In the eastern region, WB recorded a total of five security incidents in the city of Benghazi. In Benghazi, three arrests, one fire, and one isolated gunfire case were recorded throughout the reporting period. In relation to the gunfire incident counting for one of this week's fatalities, Local reports indicate unidentified assailant(s) opened fire on Benghazi's Morality Police, killing one member in Benghazi's Serti area on 21 August. Meanwhile, Benghazi witnessed a heavy deployment of security forces as part of a wider security plan. Benghazi's Al-Kish Square was reportedly cordoned off by police in anticipation of protest calling for Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi to assume power in Libya. Meanwhile, a body was found inside a school in Tobruk on 18 August.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Security forces open fire on local protesters following acts of vandalism



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (23 Aug) Locals protest deteriorated living conditions; security forces open fire
2. (22 Aug) GNA PM receives Turkish Ambassador to Libya
3. (22 Aug) Locals burn tyres & close off Gorje, Hai AlAndalus, Edraiby, Al-Hae Al-Senaea & Abu Slim areas
4. (22 Aug) Vehicle theft in Bier Alalem area
5. (21 Aug) Vehicle theft in As-Sarim
6. (20 Aug) Gunfire audible in Khallat Al-Forjan, motive unknown
7. (20-23 Aug) SDF, TRB & Al-Daman militia establish CPs to tighten security
8. (19 Aug) Vehicle thefts in Al-Serraj & on Al-Nasr Street
9. (18 Aug) Carjacking in Ghut Shaal
10. (18 Aug) Locals protest deteriorated living conditions & corruption allegations
11. (18 Aug) Carjacking on Ghut Shaal's 10 St.
12. (18 Aug) Vehicle theft in Al-Serraj
13. (18 Aug) GNA PM receives ICRC head to discuss humanitarian situation in Libya
14. (17 Aug) Vehicle theft in Al-Serraj

Protesters dispersed by gunshots

WB sources reported locals protested against deteriorating living conditions by burning tyres and closing off several roads in Tripoli's Gorje, Hai Alandalus, Edraiby, Al-Hae Al-Senaea, and Abu Salim areas between 200hrs-0000hrs on 22/23 August. Of note, there are calls across social media outlets by the civilian movement "Mettle of Youth" for similar demonstrations to be held across various areas of the capital on 23 August. The latest reports indicate the protests went ahead, where security forces opened fire to disperse protesters after police and civilian vehicles were attacked.

Landmine explosion injures three ivo Airport Rd.

Reports indicate a landmine explosion wounded three men, including a Sub-Saharan African worker, and resulted in the damage of a black Hyundai Sonata in the Airport Road's Wildlife area in the afternoon on 20 August.

SDF, TRB & Al-Daman militia establish CPs

WB sources reported the Special Deterrence Force (SDF) and the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) established several checkpoints (CPs) in the minor roads of Tripoli's Ain Zara area over the past 72hrs. The SDF-manned CPs were established to tighten security, while the TRB-manned CPs were established to impose the curfew. In addition, the Al-Daman militia established several CPs on the roads linking Tajoura with Ain Zara to impose the curfew over the past 72hrs. Of note, the GNA has not issued any official decision to extend or lift the curfew thus far. Sources reported travellers are commonly threatened with fines despite there being no official extension of the curfew. Similar TRB & SDF manned CPs were established to suspect suspicious vehicles in the Ben Ashour and downtown areas on 18 August.

Locals protest deteriorating living conditions

WB sources reported dozens of locals protested against deteriorating living conditions and corruption allegations against the General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) and COVID-19 officials in Tripoli's Algeria Square at approximately 1800hrs on 18 August.

Intoxicated gunmen raid house

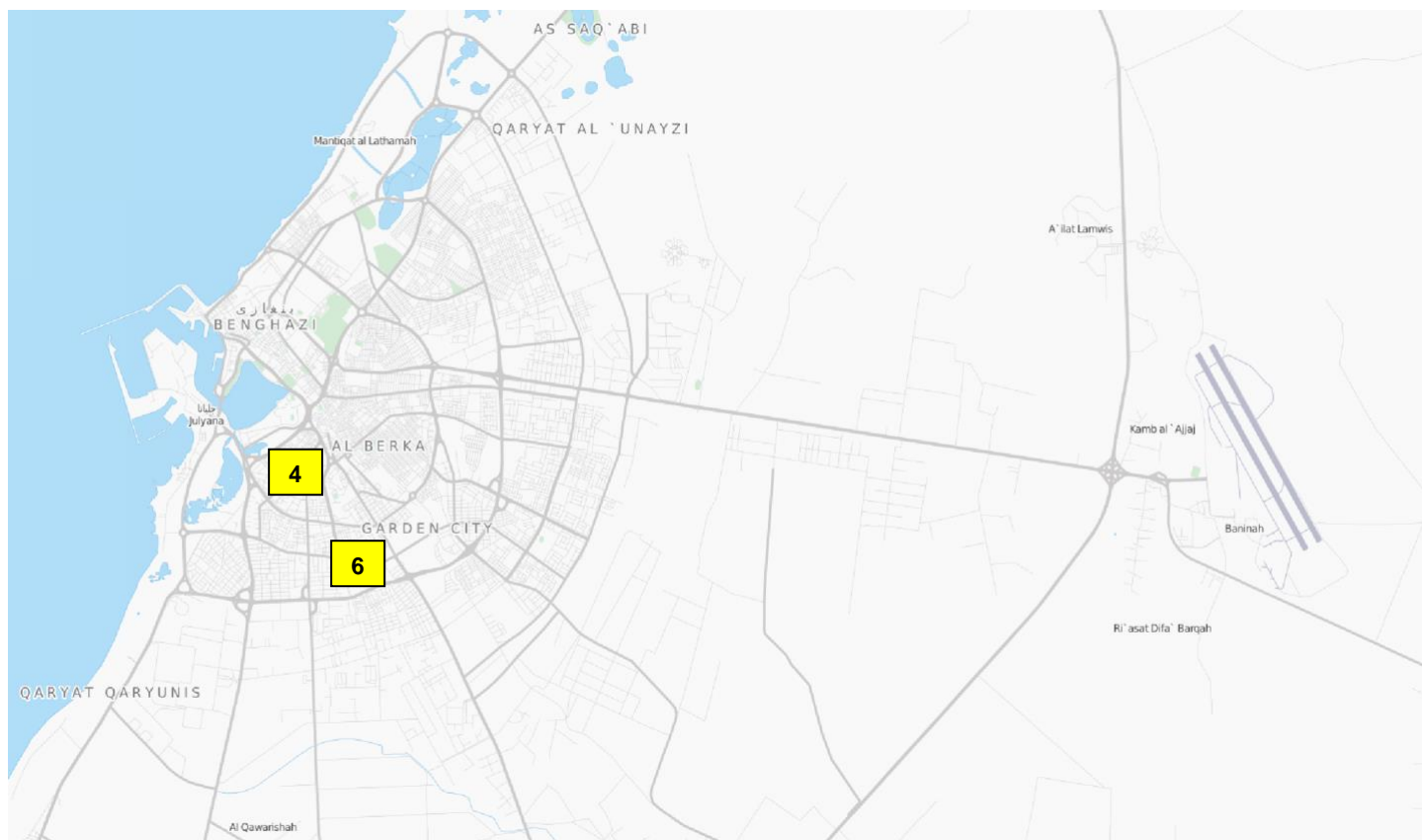
WB sources reported four gunmen dressed in plain clothing, and under the influence of alcohol, raided a house near the Cordoba Clinic in Tripoli's Ghut Shaal area at approximately 0300hrs on 18 August. Reports indicate a dispute between the gunmen and a family.

Series of vehicle thefts & carjackings

WB recorded a series of vehicle thefts and carjacking across Tripoli this week. Reports indicate a grey KIA Forte was stolen from in front of a house in Tripoli's Bier Alalem area in the afternoon on 22 August. Similarly, sources reported two men aboard a dark-grey KIA Optima stole a white KIA Forte from in front of a house in Tripoli's Al-Sarim area in the morning on 21 August. On 19 August, reports indicate a white Hyundai Elantra 2012 model was stolen from in front of a house in Tripoli's Al-Serraj area in the morning. Simultaneously, reports indicate a gold Hyundai Tundra was stolen from in front of a house on Tripoli's Al-Nasr Street. On 18 August, reports indicate gunmen carjacked a white KIA Optima 2014 model in Tripoli's Ghut Shaal area at approximately 1500hrs. In addition, reports indicate a white KIA Optima was carjacked on the 10 Street in Tripoli's Ghut Shaal area in the afternoon. Earlier that morning, WB sources reported a grey Hyundai Sonata was stolen from in front of a house in Tripoli's Al-Serraj area. On 17 August, a grey KIA Forte was stolen from in front of a house in Tripoli's Bawabat Al-Jebs area in the morning.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

Heavy security presence across city; Al-Kish sq. cordoned off in fear of protests



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (22 Aug) Morality Police arrest two Libyans on charges of stealing gold
2. (21 Aug) Unidentified assailant(s) open fire on Morality Police injuring one
3. (20 Aug) CID arrests Sudanese man on charges of trading alcohol
4. (20 Aug) Heavy security deployment across city; Al-Kish Sq. cordoned off
5. (18 Aug) Mol-affiliated security agencies arrest pro-Saif supporters
6. (18 Aug) Morality Police raids Benghazi Children Hospital & arrests owner
7. (16 Aug) Haftar discusses oil sector with oil officials amid power crisis

Series of arrests

Benghazi's Morality Police reported the arrest of two Libyans on charges of stealing gold in a house robbery in Benghazi on 22 August. The criminals had agreed with a merchant based in the western region to trade the stolen gold in exchange for facilitating their illegal migration to Europe.

Separately, Benghazi's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested a Sudanese man on charges of trading alcohol in an automobile repair shop on 20 August. The suspect confessed to the charges against him and noted the involvement of two other individuals who provided him with the alcohol.

Meanwhile, on 18 August, reports indicate security agencies affiliated with the Interim Government's Interior Ministry carried out arrest campaigns across Benghazi to crackdown on Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi supporters calling for a demonstration to be held against deteriorated living conditions on 20 August. The group called for demonstrators to demand the overthrow of Al-Thinni-led Interim Government. Reports indicate at least three men were arrested on charges of inciting public opinion.

Further, reports indicate a force affiliated with Benghazi's Morality Police raided the Benghazi Children Hospital and arrested the hospital's manager on charges of corruption in the afternoon on 18 August. There are no further details.

Morality Police attacked with gunfire

Local reports indicate unidentified assailant(s) opened fire on Benghazi's Morality Police, killing one member in Benghazi's Serti area on 21 August.

Heavy security deployment across city

Local reports indicate a heavy security deployment across Benghazi as part of a security plan implemented by the Benghazi Security Directorate in coordination with additional security services on 20 August. The security plan includes the deployment of over 1000 officers, non-commissioned officers, and members of the directorate, as well as military equipment and vehicles. Of note, reports indicate security forces cordoned off Al-Kish Square in anticipation of a pro-Saif Al-Islam protest on 20 August.

Haftar discusses power crisis with oil officials

The LNA commander Khalifa Haftar chaired a meeting with a Board of Directors (BoD) member of the eastern-based NOC, Jadallah Al-Awkali, and the Arab Gulf Oil Company (AGOCO) chairman of the BoD, Mohammed Bin Shatwan, in Benghazi on 16 August. According to the LNA, the meeting was centred around the oil sector, including the latter's role and ability in providing citizens with fuel supplies in order to recover from the electricity crisis across the region. Of note, the eastern-based General Electricity Company of Libya (GECOL) reported a fire broke out in Al-Khouaibia distribution station due to high temperatures and excessive loads in Benghazi's Qawarsha area on 16 August. The fire completely damaged the station, according to GECOL.

6. What's next

Protests continue as anti-GNA sentiment grows

POLITICAL FORECAST

Diplomatic efforts are set to focus on the ceasefire initiative in the short term. GNA PM Al-Serraj has been reportedly invited by French President Emmanuel Macron for an official visit at the Elysee. The ceasefire commitment has been viewed as an initial step towards negotiations. Turkey and Egypt, who support opposing sides of the Libyan conflict, both welcomed the ceasefire with the Turkish Presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin voicing support for the demilitarisation of Sirte. While this would be viewed as a breakthrough given recent heightened tensions between Cairo and Ankara, Haftar's position remains vital to solidify any agreement. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Egyptian President al-Sisi has recently increased cooperation with the HoR's Aguila Saleh, particularly after the LNA's failed offensive on Tripoli. Ultimately, details of a demilitarised Sirte-Jufra axis will likely be decided in consultations between Russia and Turkey, slated for August/September. Of note, Russian President Vladimir Putin held a telephone conversation with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan and discussed the Libyan conflict on 17 August. The two sides agreed on the need to make concrete steps towards a lasting ceasefire on 17 August. Regardless, it remains to be seen whether a top-down resolution of the conflict will resolve local grievances and implement a lasting ceasefire. Regionally, the Algerian Foreign Ministry stressed its readiness to host an inclusive dialogue based on a ceasefire in order to reach a peaceful solution. Meanwhile, the GNA Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha stated that Algeria's position in support of peace in Libya is appreciated, noting that the Ministry looks forward to an "active Algerian role to push the reconciliation process in Libya." Bashagha stated that the people of Libya and Algeria are one and thus share a common destiny.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

Speaking to *Bloomberg*, United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) acting head Stephanie Williams expressed optimism over ceasefire prospects against the backdrop of the latest alignment between Saleh and Al-Serraj. Williams described the development as "an important moment that should not be lost". Williams spoke of consensus between Saleh and Al-Serraj over "fundamental" issues, which could pave the way for fruitful ceasefire negotiations. Further, Williams noted the latest wave of protests adds urgency to pursue the ceasefire negotiations and reach a settlement. Williams told Bloomberg "There is now an overwhelming domestic and international consensus that this needs to happen and we have the added urgency of the specific crises of the electricity shortages". Williams also described international responses to the ceasefire initiatives, including from Egypt and Turkey, as positive.

SECURITY FORECAST

Protests across Tripoli, Zawiya, Misrata, and other cities across the western region are set to continue with possible flashpoints as forces respond. Alliances are expected to continue shifting in the GNA cabinet against PM Al-Serraj. Reports speculate an alliance may form between Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha and GNA Deputy PM Ahmed Maiteeg, supported by Islamist elements and Zintan against Al-Serraj. This alliance is plausible as it would come against the backdrop of tensions between Al-Serraj and Maiteeg, as well as long-standing tensions between the GNA PM and other senior figures such as CBL governor Sadik Al-Kabir. In Zawiya, tensions are high and opposition to both GNA PM Al-Serraj and Interior Minister Fathi Bashagha is set to intensify, as well as tensions between the municipal council and security directorate. Of note, local reports suggest Zawiya armed factions temporarily seized the Libyan-Tunisian Ras Ajdir border crossing on orders of a prominent militia leader identified as Mahmoud bin Rajab in the afternoon on 17 August. The force reportedly moved from Al-Wattiyah Airbase via Zelten. Zuwara forces regained control of the crossing. For its part, the Joint Force continues to expand its presence across the western region, moving towards Gharyan, Alasabah, Mizdah, and conducting at least one anti-smuggling operation in the vicinity of Zintan this week. The Joint Force's operations may face local resistance, especially after reports of arbitrary killings and detentions. Of note, UNSMIL expressed concern over ongoing developments in Alasaba and surrounding vicinities, with reports of at least one civilian death and a number of arbitrary arrests, detentions, and an "apparent forced lockdown" of the city on 23 August. In the southern region, reports indicate the LNA is gradually consolidating its presence in key cities such as Sabha, where a joint security room was established. Reports indicate the LNA is intent on expanding across the Fezzan to limit local dissent after a wave of pro-Gaddafi demonstrations.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

On 21 August, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) noted that efforts are underway to provide a ship to empty condensate tanks to ensure the continued supply of gas to the Zueitina and North Benghazi power plants. The Corporation noted that all gas production is due to cease in the evening of 22 August. The NOC reported it sent a diesel shipment to Benghazi on 19 August in order to support the city's power stations as much as possible given the severe shortage of fuel supplies and accumulation of huge debts due to the closure of oil fields and suspension of refineries. Notably, the NOC stated that all oil facilities must be freed of military occupation prior to the lifting of force majeure and the resumption of export operations. The NOC concluded its statement by extending its thanks to local and international partners, while singling out the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the US Government for "helping achieve progress to date." Of note, the LNA's commander Khalifa Haftar instructed the eastern Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) commander, Naji Al-Maghrabi, to reopen oil ports to export condensate stored in tanks in order to ease the electricity crisis after the blockade led to cuts in gas production used for power generation.

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