



1. The Big Picture

Insecurity & protests challenge NOC ambitions

During the reporting period, Whispering Bell recorded multiple developments related to Libya’s oil and gas sector. The National Oil Corporation (NOC) signed a letter of intent (LOI) with Italy’s Eni and Britain’s BP to resume oil exploration in Libya in London on 08 Oct. The LOI states that Eni will acquire 42.5% of BP’s Exploration and Production Sharing Agreement (EPSA) in zones A and B (onshore) and C (offshore). While the agreement is a mark of confidence in Libya’s oil and gas sector, insecurity and protests continue to undermine the NOC’s ambitions to raise production and attract more energy companies.

The NOC warned of a potential closure of the Zawiya refinery in response to a deteriorating security situation. The NOC noted the most recent security incident occurred on 10 Oct when unidentified gunmen attacked the refinery and security personnel. Meanwhile, operators of the Wafa, Abu Attifel, and Al Feel oil fields staged protests on 12 Oct, demanding salary increases. There appears to be no direct threat to production.

Potential disruptions at the Zawiya refinery come amid reports of security threats at the Sharara oil field, which feeds the refinery. According to reports, there was an increase in local militia activity in the Al-Sharara oil field area over the past week, resulting in the evacuation of oil workers from the fields, whilst travel to and from the fields was halted. Production at the field is currently estimated at approximately 220k barrels per day (bpd), down from 300k bpd in Sep 2018. Security concerns related to local militia activity come amid reports the “Fezzan Youth Anger Management”, a civilian movement, is preparing for a

potential disruption at the field on 25 Oct.

The security environment in the South is expected to worsen in the short to medium term amid a crackdown on Chadian mercenaries and foreign groups. The formation of previously-undocumented katibas to combat Chadian kidnappings and criminal activity in the region appears to be part of a growing trend. Meanwhile, tribal tensions could escalate into clashes with little to no warning between Tebu and Tuareg tribesmen.

In the East, the Libyan National Army’s (LNA) arrest of Hisham Ashmway, a high-profile Egyptian extremist militant, will not only contribute to the LNA’s public image and help uncover valuable information to combat terrorism, but will also bring back under the spotlight Egypt’s role in the Libyan dossier ahead of a planned resumption of military unification talks in Nov in Cairo. Ashmway will likely be extradited to Egypt. Unconfirmed reports suggest an Egyptian proposal seeks to bridge differences between military leaders from Misrata and Haftar’s LNA. The reports suggest the proposal would result in a rapprochement between East and West and could eventually lead to a consolidated military structure. Such an outcome, if achieved, would be an important step in reducing the gap between East and West, despite recent controversial statements by the head of the High Council of State (HCS), Khaled Meshri, which would suggest unification remains farfetched.

KEY POINTS

- Security threat to Sharara output
- Negative security outlook in South
- Egypt-led Military unification talks



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2. National Security Map

LNA captures prominent Egyptian AQ-affiliated militant in Derna; additional militants captured

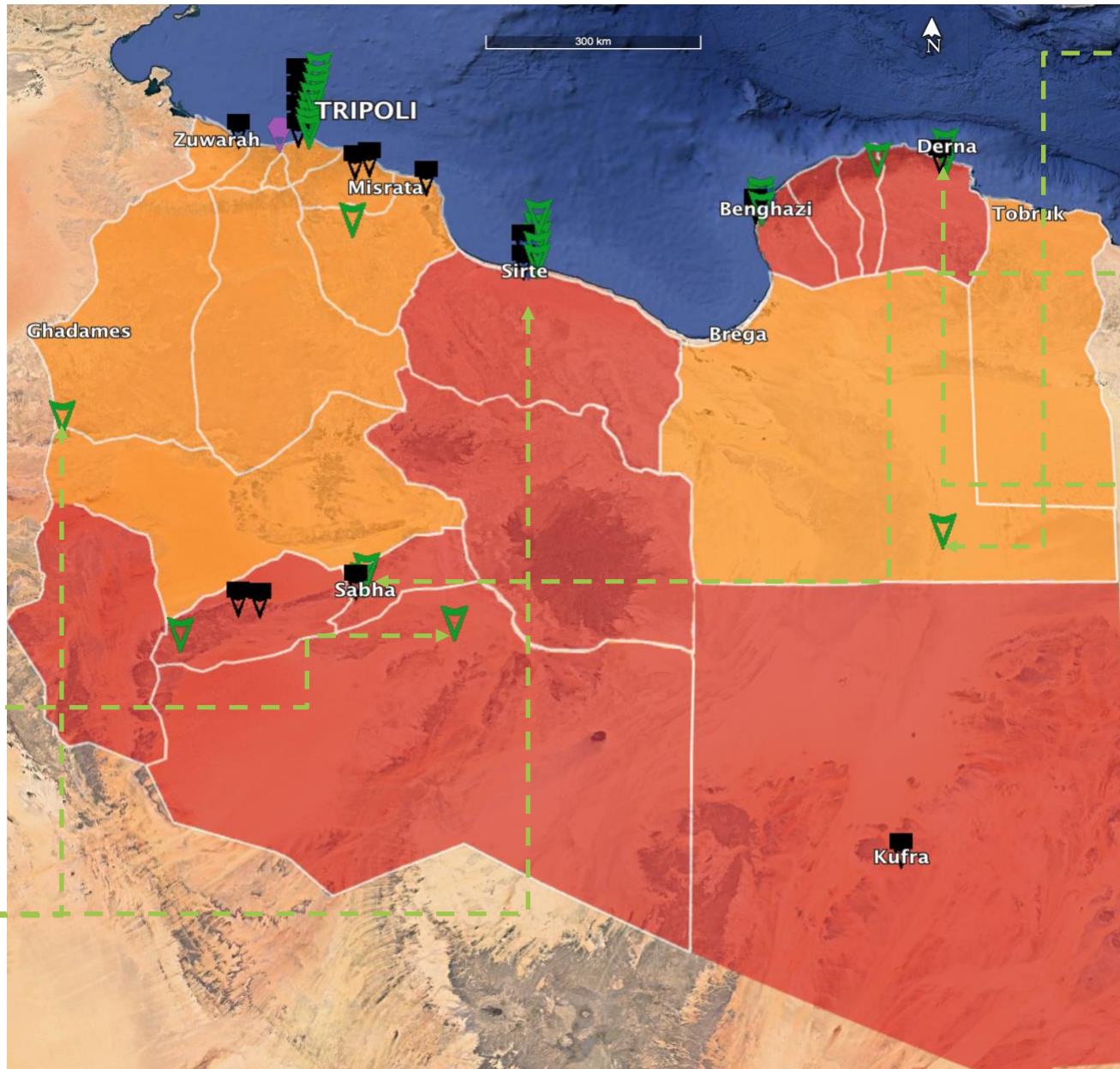
Key

THREAT INDICATORS

- Severe Threat
- High Threat
- Moderate Threat

EVENT INDICATORS

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



Reports suggest the manager of the Sarir Oil Field was kidnapped from the power plant on 07 Oct, and was reportedly later released.

Chadian gangs reportedly kidnapped 6 men travelling on the road between Fuqaha and Sabhā at night on 07 Oct. The assailants reportedly robbed the men's vehicles and kidnapped them, whilst leaving behind women and children and a disabled man.

The Libyan National Army (LNA) captured one of Egypt's most wanted militants in Libya, a former special forces officer in the Egyptian military, and leader of the Al-Qaeda (AQ)-affiliated Al-Mourabitoun militant group, Hisham Ashmway, during a raid in Derna's Al-Mughar area in the morning on 08 Oct. The LNA spokesman stated that they also captured the wife and two daughters of the prominent militant Omar Rifia Surour, former Mufti of the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council (DMSC) who died in Jun 2018 in clashes with LNA forces. Additionally, Al-Mismari stated that an AQ-affiliated leader, Mur'ii Abdelfatah Khaleel Zughaihi, was also captured along with Ashmway.

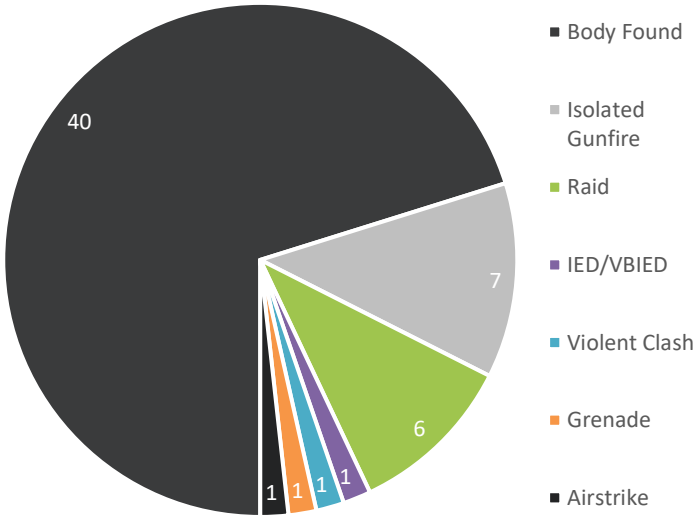
The Libyan National Army (LNA) reported its Air Force targeted a group of Chadian mercenaries with airstrikes in the Tmassah area, approximately 160kms southeast of Sabha, on 13 Oct. The LNA claimed the airstrikes resulted in the death of a Conseil de Commandement Militaire pour le Salut de la Republique (CCMSR) militia leader.

Local reports suggest masked gunmen accompanied by military vehicles with black flags established a mobile checkpoint 70 kms South of Sirte, on the Abu Hadi - Waddan Road in the morning on 13 Oct. According to reports, the gunmen searched travellers' vehicles, resulting in a state of panic amongst locals who believed the gunmen were fleeing remnants of the Islamic State (IS) from Sirte.

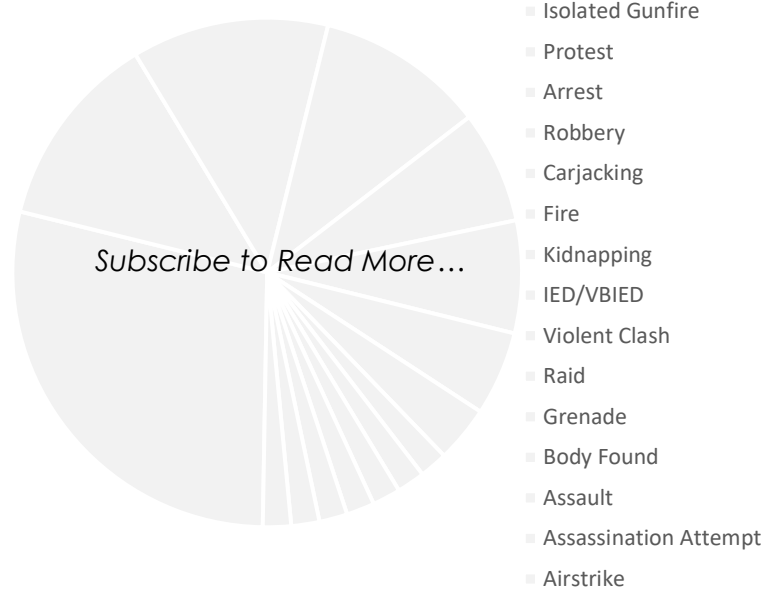
3. Nationwide Security Analysis

Surge in recorded nationwide fatalities due to 40 bodies found in Sirte

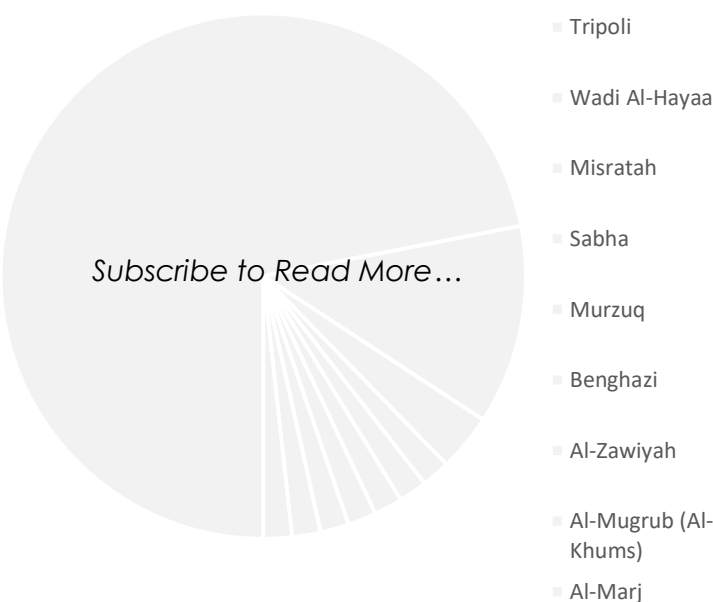
Nationwide fatalities by type of attack (Past week)



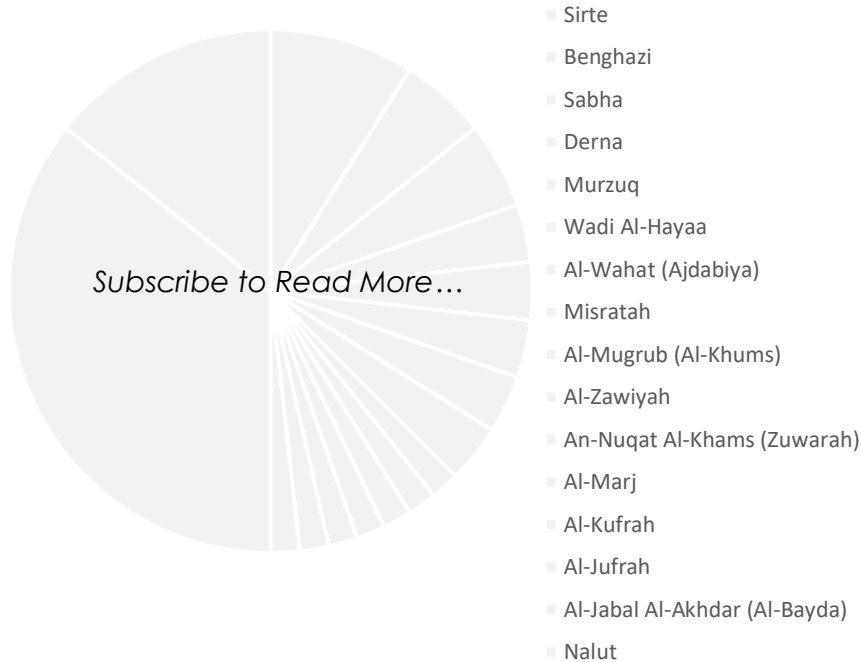
Nationwide incidents by type of attack (Past week)



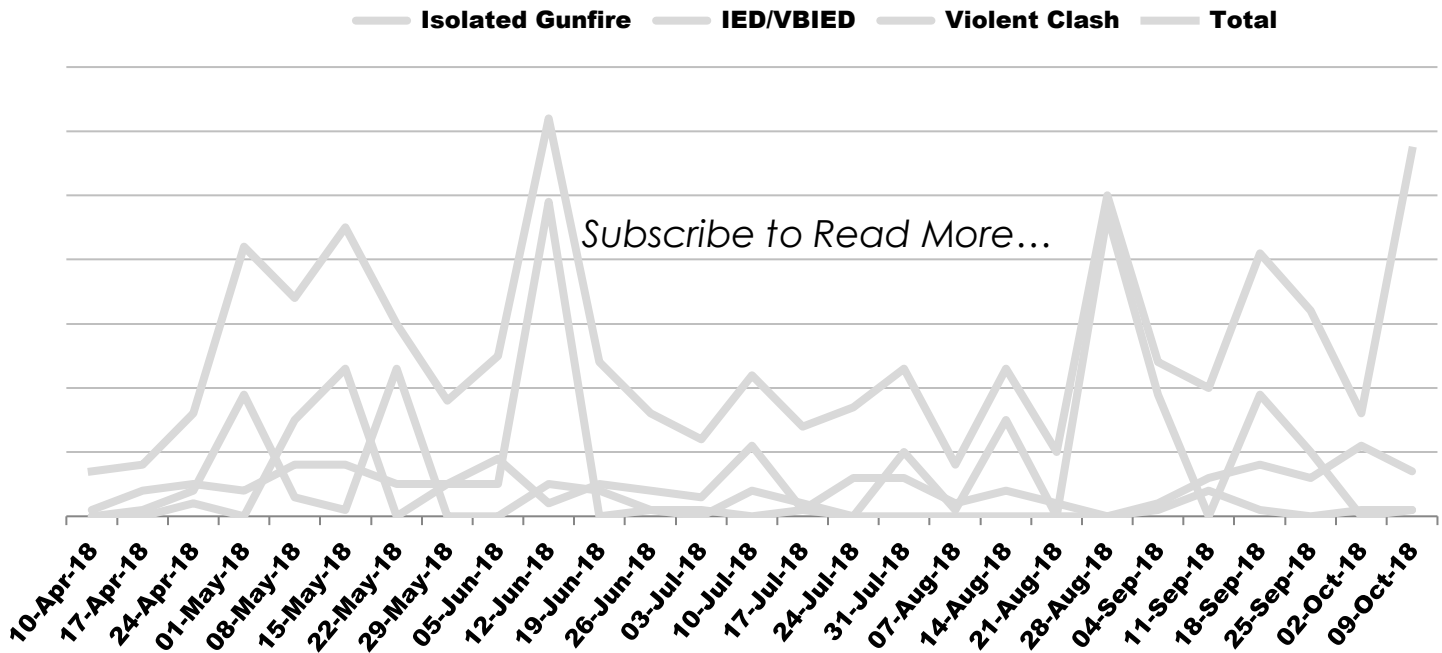
Nationwide fatalities by national district (Past week)



Nationwide incidents by national district (Past week)



Nationwide Fatalities by Type of Attack (Past 27 Weeks)



Data Analysis

Whispering Bell recorded this week a total of 57 confirmed deaths in Libya, which compares to 16 deaths reported last week and 32 the week before. This week, the discovery of a total of 40 bodies in Sirte contributed to the surge in nationwide fatalities numbers. Without this figure, the outlook would remain similar to the past weekly report, albeit with some limited variations. Several security incidents were reported throughout the country, including 16 cases of isolated gunfire, 7 protests, 4 carjackings, a violent clash, and 3 kidnappings.

In Western Libya, Whispering Bell recorded a total of 25 incidents, including 20 incidents in the capital city, Tripoli. This week was marked by reports of sporadic gunfire in Tripoli's Abu Salim area at approximately 0100hrs on 07 Oct. Initial reports indicate the gunfire was heard from the Tripoli Zoo, the headquarters of the Ghneiwa militia. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, there were reports of sporadic gunfire in Tripoli's Hai Al-Islami at approximately 2230hrs on 06 Oct, whilst explosions were heard in Al Dahra area due to a wedding celebration. Meanwhile, reports suggest a white KIA Cerato vehicle was carjacked in front of a house in Tripoli's Abu Salim area at approximately 0500hrs on 07 Oct. Similarly, a black Hyundai Azera vehicle was carjacked in front of a house in the Abu Salim area at approximately 0500hrs on 06 Oct.

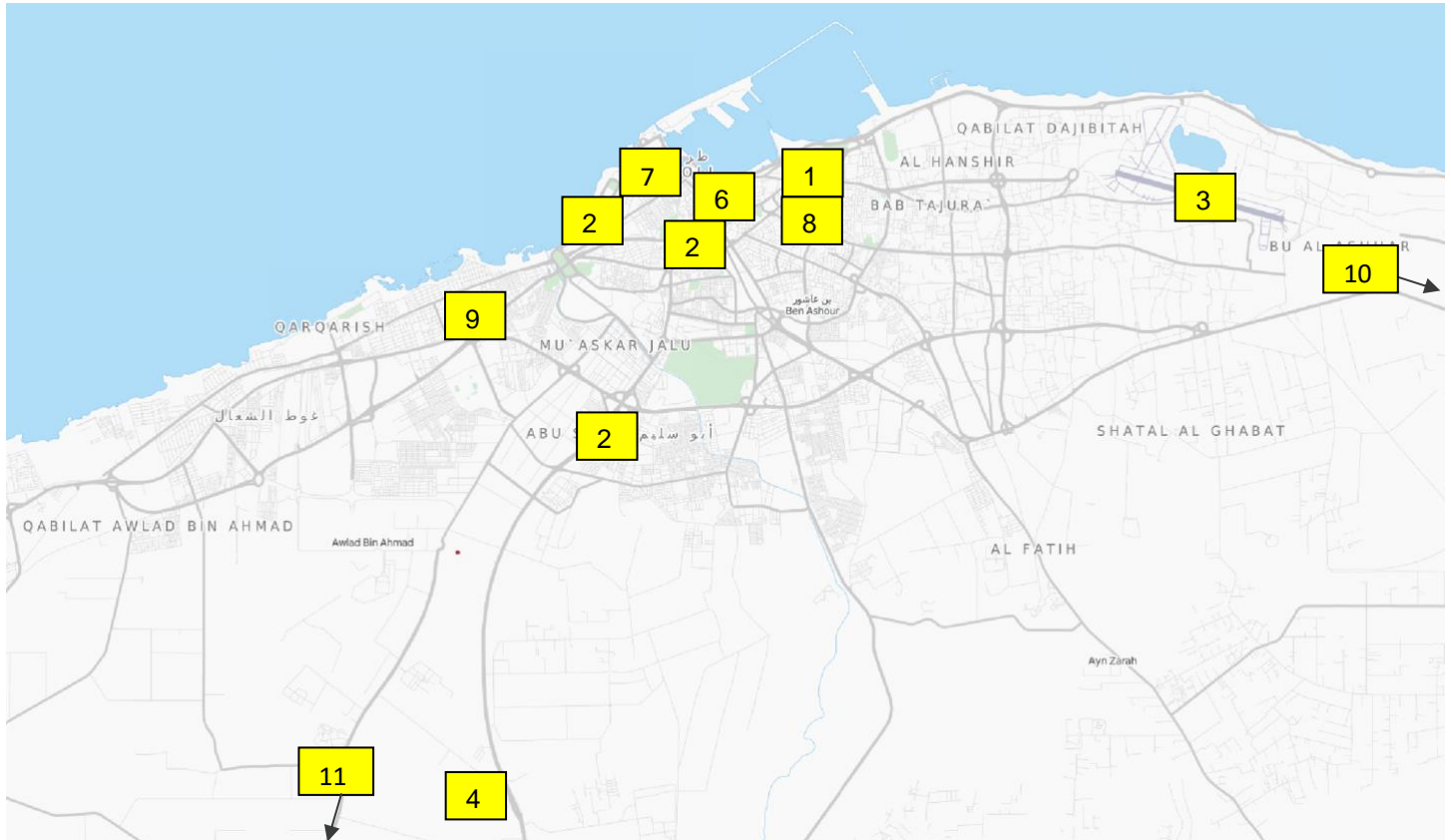
The week in Central Libya was marked by suspicious movements of likely Islamic State (IS) militants. Local reports suggest masked gunmen accompanied by military vehicles with black flags established a mobile checkpoint 70 kms South of Sirte, on the Abu Hadi - Waddan Road in the morning on 13 Oct.

Turning to Libya's South, there are tensions between foreign groups, including Chadian militias, and local katibas combatting criminal activity. Meanwhile, tensions between Tebu and Tuareg tribesmen could escalate into clashes in the short to medium term.

In Libya's East, there were controversial media reports suggesting Russia is increasing its presence and allegedly delivered S-300 and Kalibr missile systems. There is the possibility that Russia is indeed increasing the presence of intelligence and other military liaison officers. A Russian publication confirmed, citing a Russian MoD source, that a contingent of airborne units had been deployed to train Libyan National Army (LNA) troops, despite no official confirmation from the Kremlin. There is no evidence to indicate, however, that the motive behind the increase in units is to politically seize migration routes to exert pressure on Western countries, as stated by the media reports.

4. Tripoli Neighborhood Report

Clashes between Daman & Na'am militias in Tajoura; 6 fatalities



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (06 Oct) African narcotics dealer arrested in Zawiyat Al-Dahmani
2. (06 – 08 Oct) Carjackings on Shat Rd, Abu Slim & Amr Bin Al-A'ss St.
3. (07 Oct) Flights suspended from 0100hrs to 0700hrs at Mitiga Airport
4. (08 Oct) Ghneiwa militia rob American Embassy near Airport Rd
5. (08 Oct) 120 Mitiga-held detainees transferred to Al-Jdaida prison
6. (09 Oct) Owners & contractors of local companies protest in Al-Dahra
7. (10 Oct) Afriqiyah Airways' employees protest in Algeria Sq.
8. (10 – 11 Oct) Narcotics dealers arrested in Zawiyat Al-Dahmani
9. (12 Oct) Drive-by shooting targets Zintan CP
10. (12 Oct) Daman militia raid & control Na'am militia camp South of Tajoura
11. (12 Oct) LNA soldier shot dead inside house in Swani

Militia clashes in Tajoura

In the earliest hours of 12 Oct, the Daman militia raided and controlled the Na'am militia's camp in Tripoli's Beir Osta Milad area, South of Tajoura. Reports suggest at least 6 Na'am militiamen were killed and 10 others captured by the Daman militia. There is a long-standing rivalry between the two militias with reports of clashes in the past year. The Daman militia is affiliated with the Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade (TRB) while Na'am militia seceded. Meanwhile, there were reports of sporadic gunfire in the aftermath of the incident, in Tripoli's Nashee' area, the suburbs of Tajoura, by relatives of one of the 6 killed Na'am militiamen. There is a strong possibility of retaliation.

Drive-by shooting targets Zintan CP

Reports suggest Zintani militias were on high alert with the spread of anti-aircraft vehicles at Tripoli's Aldaran Roundabout, after a drive-by shooting targeted a Zintani-established checkpoint at approximately 1430hrs on 12 Oct. There were no reports of casualties.

Night flights halted at Mitiga Intl. Airport

Sources confirmed the Libyan Civil Aviation Authority's decision to suspend air traffic to

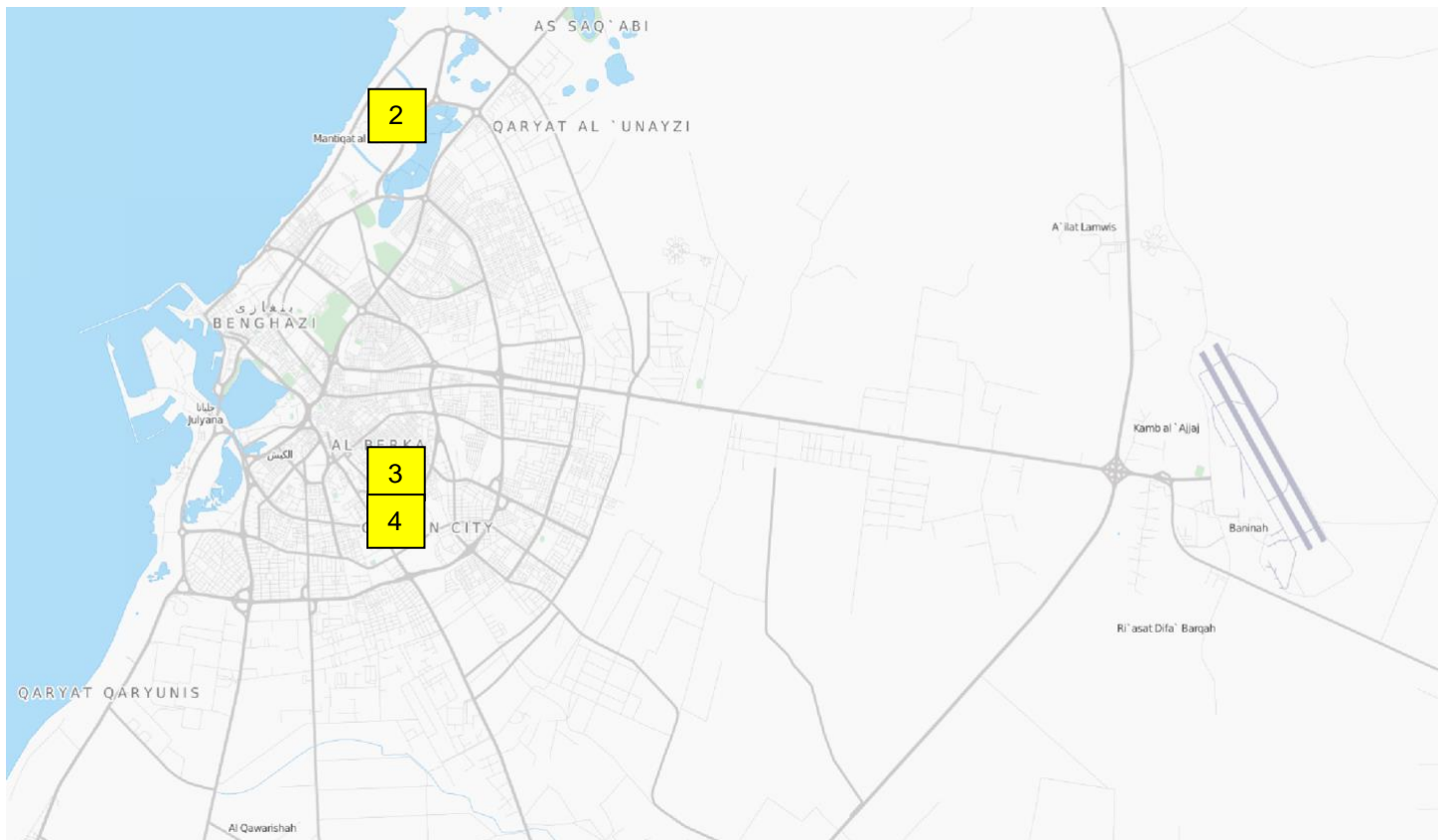
and from Tripoli's Mitiga International between 0100hrs to 0700hrs on 07 Oct. According to reports, the suspension of air traffic from 0100hrs to 0700hrs stands as a precautionary security measure. All airlines operating in Libya must re-adjust their flight schedules to adhere to the airport's new timings. The decision follows the targeting of Mitiga International Airport with a rocket on 02 Oct and its subsequent brief closure.

LNA soldier shot dead inside house

A Libyan National Army (LNA) soldier was reportedly shot dead by unidentified assailants inside his house in Tripoli's Swani area in the early hours of 12 Oct. According to reports, Al-Mabruk was visiting his family in Tripoli for the first time in four years from Benghazi. Al-Mabrouk reportedly participated in the LNA's long-standing battle against terrorist elements in Benghazi, the reclamation of the Oil Crescent in the Jun/Jul Ibrahim Jathran attack, and battles with Chadian opposition groups. According to reports, Tripoli's authorities have yet to comment on Al-Mabrouk's killing and there remains no further information available. The incident comes amid a widened East-West rift fueled by the Presidential Council's (PC) reshuffles which saw the appointment of figures that were largely disapproved by Eastern factions.

5. Benghazi Neighborhood Report

IED explosion in perimeters of Al-Wahda School results in 1 fatality



KEY INCIDENTS

1. (07 Oct) Teachers' Union announce open sit in-in
2. (07 Oct) IED explosion in perimeters of school kills one
3. (08 Oct) Investigation Unit members injured during raid
4. (08 Oct) Amusement park ride malfunctions; 12 injured
5. (08 Oct) UK pledge to assist in ERW removal

IED explosion; 1 fatality

An improvised explosive device (IED) reportedly exploded resulting in the death of an individual in the perimeters of Al-Wahda school in Benghazi's Al-Zrayreeya area in the morning on 07 Oct. According to reports, the school was closed due to the damage caused by previous clashes in the city.

Security forces injured in raid

Reports suggest three members of Benghazi's Investigation Unit were injured during an arrest in a house in Benghazi's Al-Majouri area on 08 Oct. According to reports, the house was used to manufacture alcohol. On 03 Oct, the General Investigation Unit of the Benghazi Security Directorate raided a house with 12 Ghanaian nationals following reports of the house being used for the trade of narcotics and sorcery in Benghazi's Al-Majouri area.

Teachers' open sit in

The Benghazi teachers' union announced an open sit-in on 07 Oct, and until the demands of its members are met, denouncing what they described as

"marginalization, threats and intimidation" of teachers and school principals, among other salary-related grievances.

Amusement park ride malfunctions

A ride at an amusement park reportedly broke down, subsequently throwing children on the ground and resulting in 12 injuries in Benghazi on 08 Oct.

UK pledge to assist in ERW elimination

On 08 Oct, in a televised statement, the UK's Ambassador to Libya, Frank Baker, announced that his country is committed to a project worth £1.5 million that aims to eliminate explosive remnants of war (ERW) and mines across Benghazi over the course of two years. Despite local efforts of sensitization campaigns, the city remains in need of further international assistance to fully rid Benghazi of ERW presence.

6. What's next

Prerequisites for holding elections by Dec 2018 remain absent

POLITICAL FORECAST

On 11 Oct, the High Council of State (HCS) discussed proposals put forward by the House of Representatives (HoR) to restructure the Presidential Council (PC) in Tripoli. Reports suggest the HCS voted unanimously to restructure the Sarraj-led PC on 15 Oct. The HoR proposes decreasing the PC to three members from each of Libya's three regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan. The HoR-HCS meetings regarding the reformation of the PC come amid reports suggesting the PC did not consult the HCS on the recent cabinet reshuffles. The HoR and other Eastern factions disapproved of the latter. Sarraj will likely focus on consolidating his position and portraying efforts of positive change across Tripoli in response to ongoing calls for the PC's reformation. Meanwhile, the electoral commission stated that the HoR has not sent the constitution referendum law and will therefore be delayed. Overall, whilst key political players continue to act unilaterally, municipal councils and civil society groups remain sidelined. Seventy-one municipalities with an expired mandate are due to hold elections in Oct, though they suffer from a lack of sufficient economic assistance and influence on the ground. Failure to reach an all-inclusive political process will protract the ongoing turmoil and fragmentation across Libya.

SECURITY FORECAST

This week, clashes erupted between the Daman and Na'am militias resulting in the death of 6 Na'am militiaman, whilst 10 others were captured in Tripoli. There is a strong possibility of retaliation given the long-standing rivalry between the two. Meanwhile, tensions between Zintan forces and local factions could escalate following reports of the targeting of a Zintan checkpoint. Additionally, in a clear indication of the fragile security situation, night flights were halted at Mitiga International Airport. There are unconfirmed reports of a Tebu force regrouping in Tarhuna to support Salah Badi in launching yet another attack on Tripoli's militias. West of the capital city, militia activity could prompt the NOC to shut the Zawiya refinery. In Sirte, the establishment of a likely Islamic State (IS) mobile checkpoint is yet another indicator of the presence of IS militants in remote desert areas. In the South, the killing of a Tebu man by a Tuareg could result in acts of retaliation. In the East, the capture of a prominent Egyptian militant came as a result of the LNA's security operations in Derna, with similar arrests likely in the upcoming period. In Benghazi, authorities will likely increase security ahead of a scheduled Oil & Gas Conference.

WHAT OTHER EXPERTS SAY

In an article for "*The Centre for European Reform*", the author, Luigi Scazzieri, discusses how the holding of elections in Libya's current security and political context, will fail to stabilize Libya, and the importance of European states reaching a consensus on how to address the Libyan conflict. "European disunity on Libya undermines the notion of a common European foreign policy. It also undermines the common European interest in a stable Libya. If Europe wants to have influence in shaping Libya's future, Italy and France must find a way to coordinate their policies on Libya. Italy is planning an international conference on Libya in Sicily in mid-November, which could be a chance for Paris and Rome to set their differences aside. Both Italy and France accept that a settlement needs to be based on a bargain between Libya's major players. But Paris is mistaken in focusing on Haftar and Serraj, and excluding other actors. The French approach risks strengthening Haftar and fuelling a violent reaction. A settlement should aim to hold Libya's factions in a state of relative equilibrium. On its part, Rome has now accepted that Haftar will remain an important actor in Libya, and that he cannot be excluded. However, it needs to give up on any illusion that it can stabilise Libya alone, as its resources are too limited." said Scazzieri.

LIBYANS AND THE ARAB STREET

In an article for "*Al-Monitor*", the author, Maxim A. Suchkov, highlights various comments in response to the recent reports of Russian military presence in Eastern Libya. "The calculations for potential benefits to Russia [in case of intervention into Libya] are based on foundations that are more shifting than the sands in the Libyan desert. They argue for Russia to get involved into a country with a seven-year-long civil war, a diarchy and a dozen of uncontrollable tribal militias. Stabilization in the country is a very distant prospect. Russia's right to interfere in all of this is doubtful. In Syria there was the government's invitation that is in accordance with the international law. Military aid to Hifter would mean another 'secret operation' that when revealed will turn into another shame for our country," Golts wrote in the dail Ezhednevny Journal Oct. 1 "The rumors over a Russian military base in Libya have been around for at least two years. Now they are saying there is a base in Benghazi. It is a relatively big city and there is no way you can hide an awl in a bag there – should there be a Russian military facility, local freelancers hunting for sensational stories would have been all over this news, which is not the case now," Lukyanov, a leading Russia watcher of Libyan developments, argues. He added, "A military presence goes against the stated interests of Moscow for it breaches the 'principle of equidistant' that Russia practices with key Libyan actors.

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